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Perspectives

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WHY IS LIFE SO FULL OF CHALLENGES?

New Letter of the Rebbe from the Mindel Archives

PRINCIPLED EDUCATION

Harav Chaim Mordechai Aizik Chodakov

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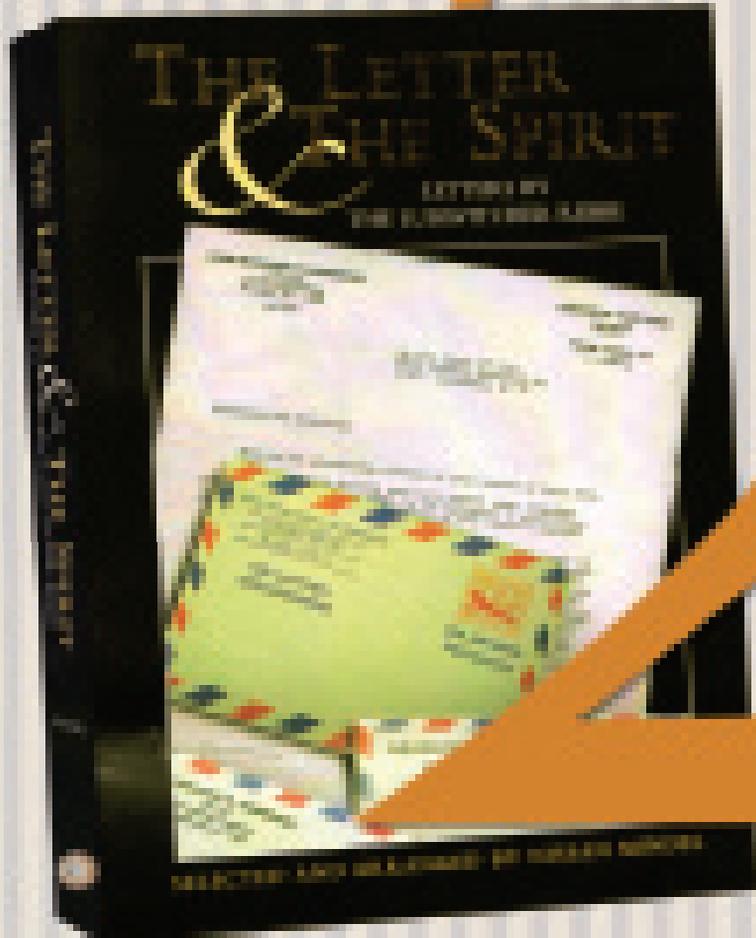
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

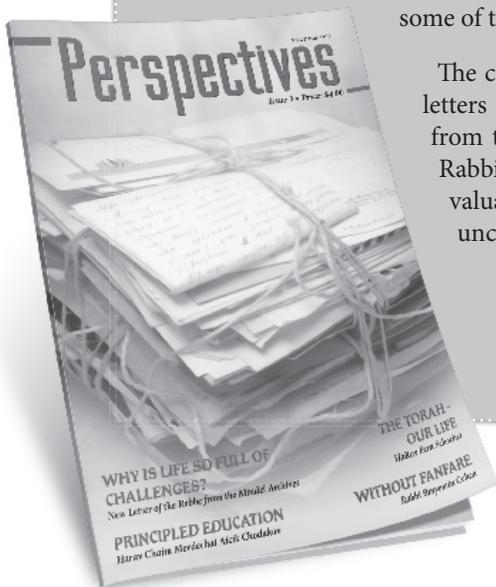
- 10** **THE MINDEL ARCHIVES**
Why is Life So Full of Challenges?
- 14** **THE REBBE'S PERSPECTIVE**
The Real Problem with College
- 16** **PRINCIPLED EDUCATION**
Harav Chaim Mordechai Aizik Chodakov
- 31** **THE TORAH - OUR LIFE**
HaRav Ezra Schochet
- 36** **WITHOUT FANFARE**
Rabbi Binyomin Cohen
- 40** **STACEY**
Golda bas Leah
- 43** **IS REAL DAVENING
WITHIN OUR GRASP**
Eli Rubin
- 46** **IN THE WORLD OF
ANASH**
- 50** **COUNTER
PERSPECTIVE**
- 56** **MY PERSPECTIVE**

About the Cover

Some years after the passing of the Rebbetzin, the Rebbe called in his personal secretary, Rabbi Nissan Mindel. The Rebbe pointed to two bundles of letters, bound up with twine, “Here, take these bundles. There will come a time and we will answer them.” Rabbi Mindel carefully transcribed the Rebbe’s words on a piece of paper that he stored with the two precious bundles.

During his lifetime, Rabbi Mindel appointed his son-in-law, Rabbi Shalom Ber Schapiro, to publish the letters that the Rebbe instructed him to write. Rabbi Schapiro has since established Nissan Mindel Publications to disseminate the Rebbe’s teachings stored in the Mindel archives. We are pleased to have the privilege to include some of these letters in this magazine.

The contents of these bundles, as well as the other letters in the archive, contain valuable guidance from the Rebbe on time-relevant issues. We wish Rabbi Schapiro the ability to continue sharing this valuable treasure, which was with *hashgacha pratis* uncovered in our time.



- FOREWORD -

Many solutions are being implemented to bolster the spiritual state in our times, combatting the spiritual decline occurring around us. Some solutions included expressing warmth and acceptance towards those who lacked it in their childhood; others invest energy to ensure that every family has the financial means for adequate formal and informal education; still others focus on increasing the appeal towards *Yiddishkeit* through exciting stimuli.

Discussion constantly revolves around the various causes for the downwards spiral, with solutions for each one. While each issue must be dealt with, there is an underlying problem that, if addressed, would undoubtedly alleviate much of the trend.

To have a *chayus* in *Yiddishkeit*, one must be exposed to its basic ideals and practices. A child (or adult for that matter), deprived of a solid education of *yiras Shomayim* and *Chassidus*, will struggle with long-term dedication to the Torah lifestyle.

Indeed, the Rebbe's approach to all communal challenges was to address their spiritual footing; with a sound foundation, the integrity of the rest of the structure will be sound as well. A strong foundation in Torah assures as that, "*hamaor sheba yachziram l'mutav*," the light within Torah brings them back those lost, and surely add strength and insight to those holding steadfast to the Torah way.

Unfortunately, many graduates of our system lack this basic component of *chinuch*. Irrespective of their academic success, they were not set on a foundation of ideals and values. Their *hashkofos* are confused and their values are warped; they were not prepared for life. Supreme priority must therefore be given to correct the problem for the upcoming generation, and to supplement the older students (and adults) with a coherent understanding of the underlying message of *Yiddishkeit* and *Chassidus*, and what Hashem expects of them.

Particularly in our times, when society fires a constant barrage of distorted values, the need to combat it with our true and holy education increases exponentially. An organized system of values culled from the treasures of Torah and *Chassidus*, holds the key to automatically dissolving, almost all the present challenges.

We hope this magazine contributes to this goal.

Rabbi Shimon Hellinger

Editor-in-Chief



The **MINDEL ARCHIVES**

Why is Life So Full of Challenges?

We are privileged to present a letter from the Rebbe, from the archives of the Rebbe's personal secretary for over forty years, Rabbi Dr. Nissan Mindel. These precious archives were entrusted by Rabbi Mindel to his son-in-law Rabbi Shalom Ber Schapiro, whom he appointed to preserve, promote and spread Chassidus with this rich material. May Rabbi Schapiro continue to benefit the many with his work as director of Nissan Mindel Publications (www.NissanMindelPublications.com).

By the Grace of G-d

Greeting and Blessing:

...You asked me to explain the following problem:

“Having been brought up to believe that G-d is the Master of the world, Whose omnipotent power is not limited in time and place, and Who, moreover, is the source of goodness and desires His human creatures to live a life based on justice and morality, and insofar as Jews are concerned - a life fully in accord with the *Torah* and *Mitzvot* -

“I find it difficult to understand why such a life is often burdened with difficulties, sometimes even insurmountable obstacles?

“I wish to add that I raise this question not as a skeptic, but because I believe in Divine Providence. Indeed, the more deeply I feel G-d's benevolence and at the same time unlimited Providence, the more difficult I find it to reconcile this seeming anomaly.”

This problem is, of course, not new. It is as old as humanity itself. The question has been asked and discussed in many a religious-philosophical work throughout the

ages. But the question is still being asked, because the average contemporary thinking individual no longer has direct access to Jewish religious philosophy, either by reason of a language barrier, or for lack of time or knowledge to find the sources. So, an attempt will be made here to give at least one explanation, and this, too, necessarily in a limited way, within the limitations of a letter. Obviously, the subject matter could fully be dealt with only in a book or lengthy treatise. Nevertheless, I believe that the salient points raised below hold the key to the problem.

Starting from the same basic premise that G-d is the Essence of Goodness, and that “It is in the nature of the Good to do good,” it follows that G-d not only desires the true good, but also that this good be enjoyed in the fullest measure. If such good were given to man by Divine grace, in other words, if it were to be achieved without effort, it would have an intrinsic flaw, for it would be, what our Sages call נהמא דכיסופא - “bread of shame.”

■ ■ ■

Obviously there is no comparison between something received as a gift and the same thing attained through hard personal efforts, after overcoming difficult obstacles both within and without, both material and spiritual.

■ ■ ■

To be sure, G-d could have established a world order wherein morality and ethics would reign supreme, with little or no effort on the part of man. However, obviously there is no comparison between something received as a gift and the same thing attained through hard personal efforts, after overcoming difficult obstacles both within and without, both material and spiritual, and sometimes even obstacles which appear to be insurmountable. Yet, knowing that there is a Divine command to follow a certain path in life, the person is resolved to fulfill his Divine mission, no matter what the difficulties may be. Indeed, the very difficulties and obstacles which he encounters are regarded by him as challenges to be faced unflinchingly and to be surmounted; and far from being stymied by such obstacles, they evoke in him untapped powers which reinforce his determination and stimulate his effort to the maximum.

Coupled with this, is the feeling of satisfaction which is commensurate only with the amount of effort exerted in the struggle, which makes the fruits of victory so much more delicious.

And from the above to a still further point and deeper insight:

The true and perfect way of fulfilling G-d's Will, which is embedded in the *Torah* and *mitzvot*, is not when it is prompted by desire to discharge an obligation toward G-d and fellowman; nor is it the gratifying feeling of having contributed something towards the world at large, that matters, a world that is apart from and outside himself. For so long as the Jew's compliance with the Will of G-d is externally motivated – however commendable such motivation is in itself – it is not yet quite complete. The perfect

fulfillment of the *Torah* and *mitzvot* is achieved when such fulfillment is an integral part of one's life, to the extent of being completely identified with the individual, that is to say when the *Torah* and *mitzvot* permeate his very essence and being and become inseparable from him in his daily living. This is the deeper meaning of the words which we declare daily in our prayer, "For they (the *Torah* and *mitzvot*) are our life" – meaning that just as a person and his life are one, making him a living person – so are the *Torah* and *mitzvot* and the Jew one and inseparable. Such real identification with a thing cannot be achieved and experienced if the thing is come by without effort, in striving for it, even to the extent of staking one's life in obtaining and holding it. Conversely, only a matter which is regarded as an indispensable and integral part of one's life can evoke one's innermost powers, even self-sacrifice.

The above provides an insight also into the meaning of the *golus* (the exile and dispersion among the nations of the world) which is at the root of most, if not all, the difficulties and obstacles confronting the Jew in his desire to live his G-d given *Torah* way of life.

To be sure, we recognize the *golus* as a punishment and rectification for failures to live up to our obligations in the past as, indeed, we acknowledge in our prayers: "For our sins we were banished from our land." But punishment, according to our *Torah*, called *Toras Chesed* (a *Torah* of loving kindness), must also essentially be *Chesed*. Since G-d has ordained a certain group, or people, namely the Jewish people, to carry the difficult and challenging task of spreading – in all parts and remotest corners of the world – the Unity of G-d (true Monotheism) through living and spreading the light of *Torah* and *mitzvot*, a task which no other group was willing or capable of carrying out – the greatest reward is the fulfillment of this destiny, or, as our Sages put it, "The reward of a *mitzvah* is the *mitzvah* itself." Thus the ultimate purpose of *golus* is linked with our destiny to help bring humanity to a state of universal recognition of G-d.

Our Divine Prophets and Sages explained at length the state of the ideal world which will eventually be attained, when all evil will be eradicated and "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb," etc. "they shall not hurt nor destroy," etc. Here again, at first glance, one may ask: "Why was it necessary to create vicious beasts in the first place, if they were ultimately – when the world will be filled with the knowledge of G-d – destined to be turned into docile and peace-loving creatures, so that "a small child shall lead them"? But the answer is the same as above.

Paving the road to the gradual achievement of the said destiny has always been the persevering and indomitable work of determined individuals and groups conscious of

■■■

The perfect fulfillment of the Torah and mitzvot is achieved when such fulfillment is an integral part of one's life, to the extent of being completely identified with the individual.

■■■

their responsibility. They dedicated themselves to the vital need of strengthening and spreading the *Torah* and *mitzvot* among the widest section of our people.

■ ■ ■

*It is a matter of
common experience
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is a firm will
and unshakable
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insurmountable.*

■ ■ ■

In recent generations, more than ever before, the main emphasis has been on the need to bring knowledge and practice of *Torah* and *mitzvot* to the widest possible segments of our people, in the greatest number of locations, without waiting for them to seek it – in the hope that they will sooner or later realize the need of it themselves. The most effective way to accomplish this is of course, through organized *Torah*-true education of the young, the young in years and “young” in knowledge. The pattern has been set by the founders of *Chasidus* and of *Chasidus Chabad*, who exemplify this approach with dedication and selflessness. The *Baal Shem Tov*, before revealing himself and his way of life, was a *melamed* – a teacher of small Jewish children. Similarly, the *Alter Rebbe*, founder of *Chabad*, a disciple of the *Baal Shem Tov*’s disciple and successor, began his work by founding his well known three “*Chadarim*”. This road has been followed also by his successors, the heads of *Chabad*, each in his generation. They personified an indomitable spirit and a disdain for any and all difficulties and obstacles in their work for the dissemination of the *Torah* and *mitzvot*. They also made it plain for all to see that whatever the difficulties, these are nothing but a challenge, to be expected and overcome. And by facing up to, and eventually overcoming, all obstacles, they had verified the truth of the basic tenets of our faith, namely

that G-d’s Providence extends to each and everyone individually, and that “He who is determined to purify himself and others, receives aid from On High.” It is a matter of common experience that when there is a firm will and unshakable determination, it soon becomes apparent that the difficulties are often largely imaginary, and even when real – not insurmountable. The forces of good are cumulative and self-generating, as our Sages indicated in their well known dictum, “One *mitzvah* brings another in its train.” If evil can be contagious, good is certainly much more so, and many who stand at the sidelines are inspired and willing to join in constructive and positive action, provided the lead is given and the way is shown.

The challenge of our time is to spread the knowledge of the *Torah* and *mitzvot*, particularly through the education of our young, until each and every Jew will attain the level of “Know the G-d of your father and serve Him with a perfect heart,” and the fulfillment of the prophecy “They shall now Me, small and great, and the earth will be filled with the knowledge of G-d, as the waters cover the sea.”

With blessing,



The Rebbe's Perspective ■

Prepared by Rabbi Shimon Hellinger

What is the goal of education? What is the biggest problem with college? Are schools today carrying out their mission?

In this sicha from Purim 5735¹ (1975) the Rebbe addressed these questions:

■ THE GOAL OF EDUCATION ■

There is a common mistake that a school is a place where one acquires knowledge, secular knowledge in a secular school and Torah knowledge in a Yiddishe school, but it is not meant to concern itself with the character, conduct and values of the student. In fact, it is possible that a child graduates the school with the same character traits with which he entered, though he mastered *Torah Shebiksav* and *Torah Shebaal Peh*.

Indeed we are assured that "*hamaor sheba machziran l'mutav*," the light within the Torah will bring them back. This, though, may take years or decades until it materializes...

The purpose of study, Torah or secular, must be to influence the child to fear Hashem and to follow His will. It is therefore understood why a child should not attend a school where they do not study Torah in the proper manner, where the child leaves with the same "wildness" as when he entered. By contrast, a school based on *yiras Hashem*, emphasizes that the child should grow up to be a "Yid" who will "fear Hashem and follow His ways" every day of the year, and recognize that there is a "master to this palace."

■ THE PROBLEM WITH COLLEGE ■

This is also the greatest problem with college, in light of which there is no need for

1. Unedited – printed in *Sichos Kodesh* 5735 vol. 1 p. 452 and onwards.

other reasons:

In college a person is told: “We will not mix into your personal conduct. We will teach you a trade or specialty (which is at times foolishness). When you demonstrate your proficiency in it, you will receive a diploma affirming that you are an accomplished person, and nothing more is required of you.”

A *yeshivah*, on the other hand, is based on the Gemara’s teaching that *yiras Hashem* is the gate that precedes the study of Torah. The Torah then serves as the key to a higher level of *yiras Hashem*. This is the ultimate purpose of Torah study...

■ ■ ■

Denying a child the education of yiras Shomayim, simply because it wasn't done in his days, is similar to a doctor refusing to heal an ill person on the basis that in the past people were healthy...

■ ■ ■

■ YESHIVOS TODAY ■

In recent decades, the same argument applies to *yeshivos*:

In previous generations, the situation was such that a child acquired *yiras Hashem* at home – from his parents and grandparents. A child was sent to *yeshivah* to study Torah, something that the parents did not have the time or ability to offer sufficient direction in. Torah observance was natural; this was all that he had seen in the streets of his hometown.

Today however things have changed, and it is necessary for the *yeshivah* to provide the child with *yiras Shomayim*...

To those who argue that the *yeshivah* should be consistent with how it was in their childhood must know that the times are very different. In their days, all a child had to be taught was Torah, as *yiras Shomayim* was received via osmosis. Today, denying a child the education of *yiras Shomayim*, simply because it wasn't

done in his days, is similar to a doctor refusing to heal an ill person on the basis that in the past people were healthy...

Today, everyone involved in *chinuch* is really a **doctor for yiddishe neshamos!**

■ ■ ■

■ IN SUMMARY ■

- Imparting *yiras Hashem* to children is the essence of *Yiddishe* education.
- Torah study must both be preceded by *yiras Hashem*, and bring a person to heightened level of *yiras Hashem*.
- Schools today must place their priority on instilling a constant awareness of *Hashem* in their students.



Harav Chaim Mordechai Aizik Chodakov

Principled Education

Trudging through the snow, his head buried deep between his shoulders, his step certain. The howling winds of the 5736 winter will not deter him, nor the biting cold. Like his saintly employer, he has for decades never taken a day off, and today is no different. Perhaps HaRav Chadakov's stoop is not only a protection against the weather; the responsibility he bears would weigh down any human being.

As he makes his way into 770, two *bochurim* step aside to let him pass, their conversation suddenly halted. They had never exchanged a word with the senior *mazkir*, but their reverence is palpable. *S'past nisht* – it's inappropriate to carry on with idle conversation in his presence.

As he walks he surveys the lobby and makes a mental note to add the latest Kehos *Siddur* to the display cabinet, and continues on to the office. There, before even glancing at the pile of paperwork waiting on his desk, he begins to sway over a large worn *Gemara*. First things first.

■ ■ ■

As he sifts through the mail, there is a soft knock at the door. An anxious *yungerman* wants to be advised on how to understand last night's personal *yechidus*. HaRav Chadakov listens intently, clarifies some linguistic nuance, and sheds light on the directive.

“The Rebbe uses this term to mean that you should not pursue this job opportunity. You ask why he did not say so explicitly? The Rebbe does not want chassidim to feel compelled to comply. However, if you are a true chossid, you will understand that the Rebbe does not approve.”

Enlightened, and with a lighter step, the *yungerman* leaves the office.

As HaRav Chadakov pens a letter to a *shochet* in South America, encouraging him to distribute the monthly *Talks and Tales*, the phone rings. HaRav Chadakov sits at his simple desk, his large *yarmulke* slipping to his forehead, and listens. That's how it always begins. The call is from a *shliach* in Europe, who wants permission to create a social circle for students to help stem intermarriage, and to give them *Yiddishkeit*. “I have everything set up, the

funding and the community backing. All I need is the green light,” he says enthusiastically.

HaRav Chadakov answers. How such a frail body produces such a commanding voice remains an unsolved wonder. After asking a few pointed questions, HaRav Chadakov shares his measured words: “You are fooling yourself. The students may be attracted, but it would be only for their entertainment, and you will not see results. Besides, even if it would bring success, such activities are not appropriate for us.”

“But I have a *hetter* from a *rov*,” argues the *shliach*.

“I understand that it could fit within the parameters of the dry *halacha*, but Lubavitch has standards. Others could do this work.”

The *shliach* knows that there is nothing further to discuss, thanks him, and grudgingly ends the conversation.

HaRav Chadakov replaces the antiquated phone in the receiver and begins to edit an article on *Chassidus* that has been prepared for a secular academic journal, when another call comes in from a *Litvisher rosh yeshiva*, requesting a *yechidus*. One minute later, the phone rings again. A quick glance at the clock tells him it’s from *Eretz Yisroel*, as this is the arranged time for the weekly report.

The conversation is concise, as long distance calls must be: How to confront the government, a new *maggid shiur* at the Yeshiva in Kfar Chabad, an unrelenting stance on *mechitzos*, advice on a publication, Chanukah *gelt* from the Rebbe to be distributed at army bases¹. All issues settled. Standards, strategies, policies—all administered from this tiny, austere office.

■ ■ ■

The clock strikes 3:15 PM, and everything is dropped. *Mincha* with the Rebbe of course overrides everything else. HaRav Chadakov sounds the words of the *davening* with the pure simplicity of a child, as if he has nothing else on his mind.

After *Mincha* it's time for a prearranged meeting with the principal of a local *moisad chinuch*. The curriculum must be seen to: the children are not being challenged enough, and he has heard that inappropriate content has been allowed to filter in. “Every detail must be scrutinized,” he explains. “Don’t perceive them as children; these are tomorrow’s fathers and mothers, *zeides* and *bobbes!*”

“But the parents *want* this curriculum!”

“You cannot regard the parents as the policy makers. They have chosen *you* to monitor the *chinuch*. A doctor doesn’t ask his patient for his opinion, even though he is paying him. Moreover, if the results are not satisfactory, only the doctor is at fault, even if he acted upon the patient’s

advice. You must understand that you alone will bear the responsibility for unwanted results of this *chinuch*, and the parents will be right in complaining why you did not stand up to them!”



1. The Yemei Temimim set, currently eight volumes, documents a selection of these conversations between Harav Chodakov and Harav Efraim Volf in Eretz Yisroel.

“But the parents... those with the money...” sighs the principal.

“This is not negotiable. A *chassidisher moisd* must provide a *chassidisher chinuch*. A drop in standards would defeat the purpose of the entire *moisd*. If we are not providing an uncompromised education, we might as well send our children elsewhere.”

HaRav Chadakov opens a window to let in some cold air. The frost is biting, but sweat beads show on his forehead. Rarely does he show emotion, but in this one area his soul ignites and his eyes are set ablaze. He speaks with the passion of youth and the authority of a veteran—on anything relating to *chinuch*.

“But how should I present it?”

“Tell it to them as it is. You should explain the importance, the ramifications—but it must be clear that you do not need their consent. If they don’t like it, they have the option of sending their children to a different school.”

“Oy vey! A different school?!”

HaRav Chadakov smiles. “Don’t worry; I believe you will not lose from it. People respect a strong stance. The only reason you are being taken advantage of, is that you are not projecting enough confidence yourself. Remember, this year [5736] is *shnas hachinuch*, **and** the Rebbe gives special *koichos*...”

Encouraged, the principal is ready to move on. “Could I ask you some advice on classroom management?”

The *mazkir* looks up smilingly and consents. Pearls of wisdom, gathered from half a century in *chinuch*, leave the listener inspired and enlightened. But more important, tranquil – the feeling that it was all thought out.

...

Again the phone rings, but this is another type of call – from the internal phone to the office around the hallway. Suddenly,

the commanding voice is gone, replaced by that of an obedient foot soldier. The man delegated to manage all internal and outreach affairs stands submissive.

There is a call for technical office work, a message to pass on to the prime minister of *Eretz Yisroel*, a directive to the transcribers of the *maamorim*, and a solution to a rift in the community. *HaRav* Chadakov may not comprehend the reasoning, but stands as a servant before his master. His own understanding set aside, the Rebbe’s wish must be implemented.

Moments later he passes on the directives, again with his field commander’s authoritative tone, as if the idea was his own...

...

Another soft knock is heard. Near the door stands a middle-aged member of *Anash*. He waits



Photo: lubavitcharchives.com

for *HaRav* Chadakov to get off the phone, and then he hesitantly sits down near the desk. He begins his tale with some trepidation:

"The reason I came today is to discuss the new regulation in the girls' school.

"Until very recently the girls did not have any school on Sunday. It was a day that they could spend with their parents – shopping for things that they need, or visiting grandparents who live in one of the surrounding communities. Other girls have other activities, such as piano lessons, that occupy their Sundays.

"However, now, because the Rebbe has named this year *Shnas Chinuch*, school was introduced on Sunday until noon. This poses a problem for these girls. Many of them are too young to shop on their own, and they need their parents to take them. Since the mothers who are home all week do not drive, they need their father, who is only home on Sunday, to drive them around.

"I discussed the matter with many of the parents who are all opposed to this rule, and even many of the staff at Beis Rivka are opposed to it. My wife is very upset, and she wants to take our daughter out of the school, to which I am very opposed. Since I have been told that the rule was mandated by you, *HaRav* Chadakov, I have come to plead that perhaps it can be changed and we can revert to the old system, so that the girls will be free on Sunday.

"Also, I don't understand the benefit of this arrangement. I understand why we should add hours for boys to study Torah, since they are obligated to do so. However, girls are not obligated to study Torah, so why shouldn't they enjoy a day-off from school?

"Besides, this change is not gaining them any more hours of learning. Until now they had a full day of school on Friday, and no school on Sunday. Now, they

have half a day on Friday and half a day on Sunday. What is the point of rescheduling the Friday classes for Sunday? Surely it would be much better to continue on Friday with a full day (since that time they don't need), and instead they should be free on Sunday.

"Moreover, since this is how it was done in the years of the Frierdiker Rebbe and throughout all the years of the Rebbe until now, why shouldn't it continue like this?"

HaRav Chadakov listens to everything he has to say, without uttering a word in response. Only then does his lesson in education begin, slowly and clearly, as follows:

...

■ SCHOOLS ARE FOR EDUCATION ■

The reason that children go to school is not simply to learn Torah and amass information (in which there is a difference between boys and girls), but rather it is for *chinuch* – education. Education of a child applies equally to boys and girls.

[It should be noted that even as far as learning is concerned, girls have plenty to learn to satisfy their obligations. For a start, as the Alter Rebbe *paskens* in the *Shulchan Aruch*, women must be thoroughly familiar with the all the *halachos* that are relevant to them. As the Rebbe has expressed himself, "If only all *rabbonim* would be knowledgeable in those *halachos* – they would be doing well..."]

Now, *chinuch* includes various aspects:

1. (a) Direct education that guides a child to proper values and conduct, and (b) indirect education, via the environment that we create and the example we provide for the child.

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“This is not negotiable. A chassidisher moisd must provide a chassidisher chinuch. A drop in standards would defeat the purpose of the entire moisd.”

■ ■ ■

2. Protection from harmful education, to ensure that the child is not misled toward negative values.

Chassidus explains that for every concept in *ruchniyus* we can find a counterpart in *gashmiyus*. This is actually a kindness that the *Eibershter* has done for us so that we can comprehend the *ruchniyusdike* concept better.

In this case we can understand the nature of *chinuch* from physical development of a child.

■ LIVING HEALTHILY ■

The most direct factor in physical health is the food that one eats. A child growing up must receive three full meals every day. Although he can live with only two meals a day, he will be clearly lacking in his wellbeing and development.

A mother, even when she is very busy, will not starve her child, telling herself that she will feed him more the following day. She cannot say to the

child on Sunday, "Why must you eat today? On *Shabbos* you had three meals and *melaveh malka!*" The child needs his nourishment every single day.

However, besides making sure that the child receives this provision, it is imperative that it should be nutritious and beneficial. It is not enough to fill the child's stomach with food; the food must give the child the nutritional value that he needs – an awareness that has recently become popular.

Furthermore, even such food must be handled properly. Some foods must be cooked and be kept in a refrigerator, otherwise they will spoil and can even become harmful.

The same applies to a more indirect element of health: the air that we breathe must be clean and not polluted.

The same principles apply to a child's spiritual development.

At school, he needs to grow in the knowledge of

Born to a family of Chabad lineage in 5662 (1902), *HaRav* Chadakov moved to Riga at a young age, where his studious and refined personality began to develop.

During the First World War, still in his mid teens, young Mordechai Aizik began his illustrious *chinuch* career, running an evening program for young refugees, where he taught *mishna* and *halacha*. When at the age of eighteen he was appointed principal of a local school, his reputation attracted many students, and the successful school quickly developed into a network of *frum* schools under his leadership.

Harnessing his organizational expertise, oratory skills and leadership qualities for *frum* education throughout the country, during the 5690s (1930s) he became a member of the Latvian government's board of education, where he served as a representative of the Agudas Yisroel party.

The Frieddiker Rebbe personally appointed Harav Chadakov to join him when he fled war-torn Europe in 5700 (1940), and already on the ship he instructed him to outline a plan for the forthcoming work for American *Yiddishkeit*. For the next fifty years, he stood by the Frieddiker Rebbe and by the Rebbe's side in establishing the infrastructure of Lubavitch outreach and *chinuch* programs, serving as chairman of Agudas Chassidei Chabad, director of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch and head of the Rebbe's secretariat.



Torah, so it is essential that we feed him as much Torah as he is capable of digesting. And in order for him to be spiritually healthy, he must learn Torah each and every day. We cannot deduct any time from his learning on any day at all, even if he will learn excellently for the remainder of the week.

■ HEALTHY VALUES ■

Then there is the second point:

By telling children that on Sunday they need not learn, we are giving them a warped education. They know that on *Shabbos* they don't attend school, since it is a holy day when they go to *shul* and *daven*, join in the *seudos* of *Shabbos* and participate in other *Shabbos* activities.

Then they are told that on Sunday they don't learn. "Why?" they wonder, "it must be that Sunday is a special day." They will not understand that it is purely for the practical purpose of giving them time to shop for their needs, for then Tuesday would do just as well (as in fact is the case in some high schools), or perhaps better, since many shops

are closed on Sunday. The fact that Sunday was chosen implies that we are a part of the secular culture that considers Sunday a day of rest.

The Rebbe *Shlita* has expressed his disapproval of scheduling *simchos* specifically on Sunday, since this reinforces the notion that Sunday is a special day. Of course at times it is necessary to hold events on Sunday out of various considerations; however, this is not the rule but the exception.

If a child needs time to go somewhere, permission can be granted for that. But to declare that on Sunday learning is not necessary is detrimental to the education we are trying to give him. It is anti-educational!

This is a misleading message that he will carry with him for life.

■ THE CONCEPT OF A FREE DAY ■

Psychologically, when the girl is told that he does not need to learn on Sunday, she receives the impression that there is something in life that is more important than learning, more important



than her education. Later when this girl becomes a mother, this understanding will express itself in the way that she in turn educates her own children.

It is important for a child to know that there is no such concept as a day that is free from learning.

Concerning Friday the contrary is true.

On Friday, children can help at home with the preparations for not only does this time away from learning not detract from their *chinuch*, but rather, it contributes to it significantly. Helping her mother prepare for *Shabbos* is an act of *kibud eim*, through which a daughter also learns to feel a responsibility to help out at home.

In addition, in order for one to experience the *kedusha* of *Shabbos*, it is necessary to have some type of *hachana*, a preparation to feel the holiness of the day. It is not in order that a girl should show up minutes before *licht-bentschen* to prepare herself for *Shabbos*.

In truth, it would be perfectly fine if on Friday, especially in winter when *Shabbos* begins earlier, that the girls should have no school at all. They could spend the entire day preparing *lichvod Shabbos*.

■ NEGATIVE REPERCUSSIONS ■

Then there is another point:

Many men need to work on Sunday, and are not free to go out with their children. The mothers may also not be able to out, since they are preoccupied with young children at home. Even in those homes where they do go out on Sunday, this is not always possible.

Not having what to do, the school-age girls spend their day wandering the streets, where they can interact with bad friends or with boys.

When the children are a little older the mother can no longer handle them at home and, not knowing any better, she sends them off to a 'Y' or other such inappropriate settings. If the mother does know better, she then suffers from having to put up with the children's complaints of why they can't join their friends who are going.

Many *frum* families come to complain of their suffering from children of all ages who are straying as a result of their visiting these places on free days. *Baruch HaShem* you don't know about such things, and may you never know; however, this is where the problems begin.

In other scenarios, the children visit a neighbor and watch television or they visit the movies, both of which are poison for a child's mind and heart. (On Sunday the theaters make special offers to attract the children who are off of school.)

Even when the family goes to visit grandparents, often the child does not join. The mother may enjoy spending three hours with her mother, but the girl finds this absolutely boring. So instead she joins her neighbor who offers her a free ticket to the movies.

This is just one example of the many *tzoros*, *Rachmana litzlan*, which children encounter as a result of having too much free time.

■ PURPOSEFUL LIVING ■

The entire basis of *chinuch* is *seder*, orderliness, training a child to be structured, not spontaneous and *hu-ha* excitement. A child must be raised in a purposeful and structured environment. It is unhealthy for him to feel "free" without any schedule or responsibility.

Instead a child should always be in some structure. When a girl finishes one item on her program, she immediately moves on to the next,

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■ ■ ■

whether it is learning, *davening*, eating or playing. The key is *seder*; she is following an orderly plan set out for her all day long. If the plan will be that on Sunday morning the children will learn to play piano that is fine, as long as they are following a plan.

In those weeks when the mother is not up to visiting the grandparents or is busy with other things, the child will be left without any structure and will look for something exciting to do. This can create a lasting impression of lack of structure (*bilti seder*) which can impact the child's conduct in many areas. This is the antithesis of *chinuch*.

When a child feels free and is left to wander aimlessly, he is bound to fall prey to vain and negative activities. Besides the empty time on Sunday, a girl also has all *Motzoei Shabbos* to wander about, since she doesn't need to get up for school the next day. The two consecutive days that are void of structure, *Shabbos* and Sunday, leave many children bored. It is thus no surprise that they fill their time with whatever they can find.

In truth, since some girls wander about on *Shabbos* with nothing to do, it would be good for them to have an organized program on that day. Directionless wandering is destructive to a child's *chinuch*.

■ COMMUNAL CONSIDERATIONS ■

These are the reasons that motivated us suddenly to change the schedule:

Firstly, a rule can only be introduced according to the level of the people involved. Before introducing this rule we researched what is being done in other schools, and when we found out that the other girls' schools have introduced school on Sunday, we were able to do so as well. This is especially important, since it is not appropriate that Lubavitch should be

more lenient than the other schools.

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Secondly, the world is becoming increasingly immoral and spending time on the streets is becoming more dangerous. In previous generations it wasn't necessary for children to attend school at all, since the streets had a *Yiddishe* atmosphere.

Even more recently it wasn't so bad, and the streets had a semblance of normalcy and morality. Thirty-forty years ago, there was no television, movies or the 'Y'; these challenges did not exist. Never in history have the streets been as immoral as they are today!

The streets have become filthy in every way. On the streets, children encounter elements of all three of the most serious *aveiros*: *avoda zara*, *gilui arayos* and *shfichus damim*.

Just recently a dreadful story occurred in Boro Park which was kept silent from the public. Without his parents' knowledge, an eight-year-old boy from a *frum* home was lured by missionaries, who gave him treats and even *seforim*, and the child was going along with them. This continued for a while until the parents found some of their literature hidden in his room.

Though this is not at all the challenge that our children face, this incident goes to show how far a child can stray when he is left without supervision.

The movies and other media are a real challenge. Children see their friends visiting the movies and they implore their parents to be allowed to go, too. Since the children who do attend are also from *frum* homes (where unfortunately the parents don't realize the harm they are causing), a girl cannot understand why they are allowed to go and she is not. Because of this, many parents have come to complain why their children are given free days off school.

When there is an epidemic, it is dangerous to wander in the streets unprotected, out of danger of contracting the disease. During an epidemic, a person must receive more nourishment than usual, and special medicine as well, to fortify him against infection.

So, the fact that for the last thirty-five years, during the lifetime of the Friediker Rebbe and of the Rebbe Shlita, Beis Rivkah had no classes on Sunday is irrelevant. For as mentioned, (1) only today has it become possible to introduce this better *chinuch* which previously would not have been accepted, and (2) the situation today demands such a stronger *chinuch*. And in general, it is illogical to reject a better conduct because one did not do it in the past; otherwise one would never grow.

In truth, Sunday should be a regular day of school, while Friday should be even shorter. (On Friday girls will not go to the movies, and instead will use their time in a positive manner. However, since their mothers demand that the girls be free on Sunday, we had no choice but to compensate for those hours on Friday.) And since it is impossible to set too high a standard, we have set it now for only half the day.

Finally: Even if some of the above concerns are not relevant to your child, we must take into consideration all the children in the school and cater to the needs of the general public.

■ A HEALTHY FAMILY ■

Besides, it is not clear why half a day does not suffice to visit grandparents or shop. At any rate, no one is rushing out of the house at nine AM to visit grandparents. The wife needs the few hours to cook for her family, and the husband stays in *shul*

longer to learn, especially since he is busy all week. At noon, he will come home for lunch, and after the child returns from school, they will go out for the remainder of the day. This leaves them plenty of time to visit whomever they wish.

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If they do rush out the door at nine AM, the wife will not have the time to cook a meal, the husband will not *daven* and learn properly, and the family will be left in a sorry state. What instead happens is that they leave later, and the daughter sleeps in for two more hours. This allows her to stay up later on *Motzoei Shabbos* and watch special programs on television, and the mother cannot tell her to go to sleep in order to wake up early the following day. Other children will not watch television, but will wander about aimlessly at home.

The only thing the mother will gain from not having school on Sunday is that she won't have to wake her daughter early and she will be able to sleep in. And for this we should endanger the *chinuch* of our children?!

■ ■ ■

HaRav Chadakov has finished his lesson. Wordless, the man thanks him and quickly leaves the room, and *HaRav* Chadakov returns to his work: Test marks of an overseas school have come in and they have to be passed on to the Rebbe; a *shliach* asks for direction on how to execute the new directives that the Rebbe issued at the *Shabbos farbrengen*; the Crown Heights *gmach* needs support.

Thus the packed day stretches on, into the night, when *HaRav* Chadakov will be giving his personal and focused attention to the questions and needs of the extraordinary variety of *yechidus* guests.

Article edited by R' Uri Kaploun.

Special thanks to Yosef Kramer and Rabbi Zalmen Leib Markowitz for sharing this recording with us.

The Educator of Educators

Throughout his years as director of the Lubavitch educational system, HaRav Chadakov dispensed tens of thousands of instructions and spelled out principles on the nature and method of education. These instructions cover a wide variety of issues including school policies, suitable curricula for boys and girls, standards for teachers and, most importantly, educating each individual student with values and ideals.

Many of these pearls were collected and arranged by Rabbis Chaim Meyer Dayan and Eli Friedman, and printed in Hebrew as **HaChinuch VehaMechanech**. The book was later translated by Yosef Cohen and published as **The Educator's Handbook**. We include selected excerpts with kind permission of Kehot Publication Society.

Browsing through these fascinating directives, it becomes clear that many of the current challenges in our educational system could be circumvented if we would only heed the wisdom in these tried and tested guidelines.

▪ MELAMED VS. SHLIACH ▪

Let all the young men committed to the cause of education have no doubts of the fact that the *melamed* is perhaps more important than the *shliach*. How so? The better part of a *shliach's* time is devoted to fundraising, whereas the sole concern of the *melamed* is to disseminate Torah among his students! And what could better crown his labors than the fact that in his spare time the *melamed* is also engaged in *mitzvot* (outreach activities of all lands) – this graces his existence with a touch of true perfection, far beyond what the *shliach* can achieve!

▪ YIRAS SHAMAYIM ▪

We are living in times of crisis. Our response must be to imbue our students even more deeply

with the fear of Heaven and the acceptance of the yoke of the kingdom of G-d, and to do this as a matter of urgency!

I am obliged to point out that, on this score, many schools are not living up to their responsibility, which is borne out by the fact that when I ask principals: – "What are you doing to turn out students who are truly Heaven-fearing? How do you rate your efforts in this area?" – no answer is forthcoming.

We must put on the table for intensive and in-depth discussion everything connected with the fear of Heaven, and learn with the students *maamarim* devoted to this topic – never forgetting that the study of *halacha* can, in and of itself, bring us to the fear of Heaven.

We must launch a new campaign on the theme of *yiras shamayim*, combining rhetorical skills with a sophisticated knowledge of the media in order to give it maximum publicity and to reach all age groups in the attempt. *Yiras shamayim* must become the burning issue, the hot topic of the day!

■ **THE THIRTEEN PRINCIPLES** ■

For reasons that are self-evident, every student must know the Thirteen Principles of Faith of Maimonides.

■ **EDUCATING FOR GOOD CHARACTER TRAITS** ■

Educational institutions must place a special emphasis on the *mitzvos* that deal with social relations of all kinds. They must seek to educate the heart of the student—helping him or her to develop the entire range of moral qualities, while avoiding a too narrow emphasis on intellectual achievement. The Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, once thundered at a farbrengen: "What is *Chassidus* without good *middos*!"

There is a general misconception that what belongs to the sphere of human relations is one thing, and what belongs to the sphere of "the fear of Heaven" – *yiras shamayim* – another. When we look into the Shulchan Aruch, however, we see that the former is a fundamental concern of Judaism, and that every Jew has an obligation to acquire good *middos*, no different, in essence, from the obligation to imitate the attributes of the Creator.

■ **IMPARTING GOOD MIDDOS** ■

The Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, was insistent on this point, that in everything that we study we should find an object lesson for our daily lives.

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Let all the young men committed to the cause of education have no doubts of the fact that the melamed is perhaps more important than the shliach.

The teacher must look upon everything that he or she teaches the child, the *parshas hashavuah*, for example, and of course the stories of our Sages, as a model for daily conduct and a spur to the acquisition of good character traits. A lesson devoted to the practical details of *halacha* is the ideal medium for this.

It is a good idea to set aside part of the lesson—either at the beginning or the end—for free and informal conversation with the students and, by bringing out into the open, (sympathetically and discreetly), some problem that has recently emerged, to help the students tackle it in an adult manner. The problem

should be addressed, not in a spirit of reproach, but in a way that leaves the student whose actions the discussion pertains to, in no uncertainty as to its relevance to his own "case."

■ **CONTROVERSY** ■

We have to teach the children, as soon as they are old enough to understand, that they must always heed the opinions and the feelings of the other person; then, even in their old age, this habit will not desert them.

For example, when a child who is in dispute, or has a quarrel, with his friend, comes to plead his case before the teacher, the latter must listen with all seriousness, (for to the child this is a very serious matter in the same manner that, when an *halachic* inquiry is presented to him, the adjudicating rabbi will take in all the details and delve into the matter most carefully. From such an example the child will understand the necessity of giving due weight to the other person's opinion, so that in adult life such a principle will not be the least alien to his thinking.

Furthermore, when the child sees that he has

the teacher's attention and is being treated like a grown-up, he will be that much more amenable to the teacher's counsel, allowing himself to be reconciled with his friend and acquiring in the process a fondness for the ways of peace-making.

If our educational institutions were to devote more time to instruction in the art of conflict resolution, we might see a good deal less conflict among adults, than that which we unfortunately do see today.

■ NOT TO VEX THE SPIRIT OF ANOTHER ■

In the Torah, (Bhar, 25:17), it is stated: "Do not afflict one another." The verse is referring to the type of oppression practiced by the tongue. In other words, we are forbidden to vex or distress a fellow-Jew even through speech, (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, 63:l). The Torah prohibits this no less than it prohibits the eating of swine, yet the students, in general, do not demonstrate awareness of the fact.

We must teach them the importance of understanding and considering the feelings of others, and of addressing them in the proper manner—saying what has to be said without causing pain or embarrassment, and leaving the other party satisfied that his or her point of view has been given due consideration, even if rejected.

When what animates us most is consideration for others, this may also function as an antidote to the poison of domestic strife. Only let him internalize the above-mentioned *issur* and there is every prospect that, when he marries and builds a *kosher* home, he will never become the type who makes the life of his wife and his children an unrelieved misery.

■ CIVILITY AND ETIQUETTE ■

When we turn our attention to the related subjects of etiquette and the cultivation of social graces, we find that ignorance, and the uncouthness that results, is the rule. Even schools that should know better make little or no provision for the study of the relevant halachos.

We educators must not neglect to give the children a proper grounding in these concepts: to show respect to the elderly, for example, through performing the mitzvah of "(You shall) rise before the elderly," (Kedoshim, 19:32), on bus and train especially, but wherever the opportunity presents itself. This is by no means a trivial point. As the Rambam emphasizes, (Hikhot De'os, 5:1), we recognize the wise by everything they do: not only by their actions, but by the way they speak, the way they eat and the way they drink—in a word, by their manners. All this is a fundamental principle in education.

Orchos Chaim of the Rosh and the *sefer* Archei Yisrael both provide us with practical definitions of civility and decorous behavior.

It is vital to restore this subject to its rightful place in the curriculum, and thence to the minds and hearts of the students. Admittedly, there is a temptation to downplay it because it only has to do with "externals," but — externals act upon the inner person and upon all that a person does, and, beyond this, help to shape and refine our moral being.

If we will only attend to this, the character and temperament of our students will be transformed before our eyes, bringing with it a *kiddush Hashem*, causing the world to sit up and take notice, and exclaim "See, how noble are their ways when we compare them to. . . ."

■ ■ ■

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"What are you doing to turn out students who are truly Heaven-fearing? How do you rate your efforts in this area?" – no answer is forthcoming.*

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■ **CLEANLINESS** ■

Cleanliness is a must in education. Of course, we all have an obligation not to go unwashed and unkempt, as taught in the Mishnah, (Sotah, chap. 9, *mishnah* 15) "Cleanliness brings one to a state of purity." Be it noted that the beginning of the Shulchan Aruch, which deals with the first activities of the day, is much occupied with matters of cleanliness, (the washing of the hands, examining oneself before prayer, washing out one's mouth, and so on).

The children must be taught these *halachos* and trained to be fastidious with regard to cleanliness of person, (a prerequisite for prayer), and of dress, (shoes polished, shirts immaculate) down to the last detail.

We therefore expect every student to maintain

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a high level of personal cleanliness, including - it goes without saying - the regular cutting and cleaning of the nails, (which can affect the validity of the washing of the hands).

Both in their person and in their dress they should look well groomed and make a pleasing impression.

■ **REFINEMENT IN SPEECH** ■

The students need to understand that there is much more to the idea of acceptable speech than the mere avoidance of the forbidden-as profanity, gutter language, and the like. In effect, they must

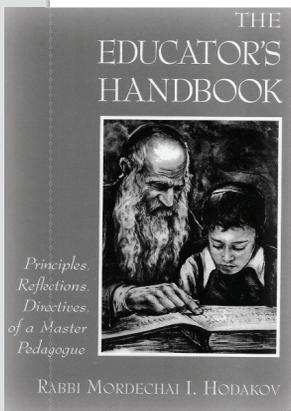
aim to cultivate a certain style, a style of speech without abrasiveness, discreet, tactful and refined, (even though refinement of speech is no guarantee

■ **FROM THE INTRODUCTION TO THE ENGLISH EDITION** ■

How clearly, as the following pages will show, did Rabbi Chadakov understand the implications of such common terms as "can't keep up in school," "roam the streets," "have to belong to something"; and with what simple unshakable faith did he point to the teachings of the Torah as the antidote for his condition - Torah, and the proud traditions of the Chassidic movement in the whole-hearted attempt to save those deemed to be beyond repair...

With the framework of modern secular society, Rabbi Chadakov was a defender of the faith and of the soul. He saw, rather he registered with all his senses, the phenomenon that he dubbed "the atmosphere of the street," and took up arms against it, for he well understood its seductive and pernicious charms.

The media, television in particular, were dominant elements of that atmosphere. He especially feared, because he understood, the influence of television on young minds the barrage of images against which they are defenseless (an observation confirmed, as it happens, by experimental psychology). Thus the mantra-like repetition, that what we see buries itself deep with the psyche and is able to rise to the surface, virus-like, even after being 'dormant' for many years.



of refinement of soul).

Chassidus explains that although the care that we take to moderate our speech is an aspect of our social relations, hence of the "external world," it (this care) nonetheless has a direct effect upon our inner lives, for the simple reason that the garment – in this case, the garment of speech – "acts upon the wearer."

Here too, we can learn from the conduct of the Rebbe, who took great care whenever he spoke to avoid the slightest suspicion of impropriety.

▪ BOORISHNESS IN SPEECH ▪

The *sefer* Orchos Chaim provides models of the civilized behavior and simple good manners that should be the norm in daily life. For example: "Do not talk like a boor," that is: one should speak in measured tones, without drawing attention to oneself, and not with a loud voice, like an uncouth person." When a child reared along these lines reaches manhood, he will have the good sense not to "bawl out" his own children, (something which can harm them psychologically and therefore affect their ability to learn), nor shake the rafters with his outbursts, in this way protecting the delicate bloom of domestic peace.

▪ "ISKAFYA" – SELF MASTERY ▪

Teach the student to leave a little of the candy-bar unconsumed, that is, salve to develop in him or her the state of mind capable of such a "feat": the brain dominating the candy, and not vice versa – the candy dominating the brain.

▪ ORDERLINESS AND SYSTEM ▪

We should expect of our students strict standards

■ ■ ■

When a child reared along these lines reaches manhood, he will have the good sense not to "bawl out" his own children, something which can harm them psychologically and therefore affect their ability to learn.

■ ■ ■

of orderliness, a virtue that will rain down blessings on them. To this end, the student must be given a clear picture of the important role that orderliness plays in every facet of his or her life-keeping his private space tidy; being punctual and constantly aware of the passing of time, enabling it to be utilized in the best possible way; tidiness of dress; an intelligent study-schedule, logical thinking, and so on.

"Order and system" are fundamental principals in Chassidus, as we learn from Hayom Yom, (7 Tammuz): that the Baal Shem Tov was orderly and systematic. The Maggid insisted upon order, and the Alter Rebbe taught the *chassidim* to be orderly. Indeed, the very bearing of a person testifies to the fact that he is orderly in all that he does, or to the exact opposite, as the case may be.

▪ ARDOR AND FEELING ▪

There was a time when chasidim were noted for their depth of feeling; indeed, these were among the elemental qualities of Chassidus. Today, however, things are performed by rote-without fire, without heart. For example: *simcha* – not just to dance with one's feet, but to experience joy in the depths of the heart. Giving *tzedakah* – not just the physical act of giving, but giving with a radiant countenance, from feelings of purest compassion.

▪ "MOSHIACH NOW" ▪

The Rebbe has called for a heightened awareness of Moshiach and the ultimate redemption-"We Want Moshiach Now!" The children should be asked if they ever stop to think about the meaning of this call; and if they answer in the affirmative-what has been the result, how has their thinking made a difference in the real world?

If there is truly a desire for Moshiach – the desire must express itself in practical terms, and everyone must ask themselves the question: what am I doing to hasten his coming?

In like vein, the students must be asked to give thought to what the coming of Moshiach will mean for them. The Rambam explains (Hilchos Melachim, 12:4) that the whole purpose of the coming of Moshiach is to enable us to learn Torah, free of all encumbrances. Hence, the question arises – nowadays, when we do have leisure and the obstacles to our Torah-learning have all but disappeared – do we seize the hour and actually learn more Torah?

■ SAFEGUARDING OUR INVESTMENT ■

Who can be indifferent to the fate of his handiwork? And who would not turn pale at the thought that all that he has worked and striven for could be ruined in a day? Take, then, a student with whom his teacher has shared his knowledge, investing in the process all his energy and skill. And consider how, at the end of the school day, when he is no longer under supervision, the baneful atmosphere of the street can wreak havoc with all that has been so laboriously achieved in the classroom.

Even a single moment spent beyond its pale can do a great deal of harm – as in the case of one who goes from a warm room into the cold air and risks catching a chill, or even a fever; as in the case of a soldier, crouching in his fox-hole with the bullets whistling overhead—who need only show his face to have his life snuffed out.

To what conclusion does this bring us? Obviously, the student must be kept busy every hour of the day, every day of the week, and particularly on

Shabbos!

■ A LIVING EXAMPLE ■

Parents must never lose sight of the fact that—from a child's earliest age—their own behavior, even in the world beyond the home, is a major determinant in the foundation of its character and to a much greater extent than they might think possible. A crucial part of the child's education depends upon the sights and sounds to which it is exposed at home, in the milieu created by its parents.

A boy, who regards his father as the living embodiment of certain qualities, will want to be like him, will respect him and will conduct himself towards him in the proper way. Incidentally, a great deal of this depends upon the mother, for the child's education is, more

than not, left to her discretion.

When the father makes the wisest use of his time, participates in *shiurim* and studies actively; *davens* regularly three times a day with a *minyan*; does not talk during *davening*; and so on – his example is absorbed by the child and becomes the blueprint for his own behavior.

It is futile to expect a child to have set times for Torah study when this is not the custom in his own home, (and a father simply cannot demand of his son something that he finds too bothersome to do himself). In the child's mind Torah learning will be lumped together with other kinds of schoolwork, and he will look forward to the day when he is "exempt" from it all – just like his father.

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If there is truly a desire for Moshiach – the desire must express itself in practical terms, and everyone must ask themselves the question: what am I doing to hasten his coming?

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HaRav Ezra Schochet



The Torah – Our Life

HaRav Ezra Schochet serves as Rosh Yeshivah of Yeshivas Ohr Elchonon–Chabad in Los Angeles, California.

The following article was adapted by Perspectives from his address at the annual dinner of **Yagdil Torah** – the organization to facilitate and promote Torah study for Anash worldwide.

■ THE ESSENTIALITY OF TORAH STUDY IN CHASSIDUS ■

The subject of Torah study, *limmud haTorah*, is a basic foundation of Yiddishkeit. More than just another *mitzva*, it is the backbone and basis of all the *mitzvos*, and the mandate of our people. Like a marriage contract that bonds husband and wife and establishes rights and obligations for the husband to provide for the wife physically and spiritually, the Torah is a marriage contract of our special and unbreakable connection with *Hashem* and it too establishes our responsibility to perform the *mitzvos*. In practice, the Torah takes precedence over the performance of *mitzvos* that could be performed by another, and when one is left with free time, his obligation, above all, is in Torah study.

Chassidus, in classic depth of explanation, offers deeper insight and weight to the importance of *limmud haTorah*. Torah serves not only as the source for deriving the *mitzvos* in their expansive array of details; it is also the energy source and

blueprint of creation in its entirety. Quoting the Zohar, *chassidus* emphasizes, "*Hashem* looked into the Torah, and created the world. A Yid looks into the Torah, and sustains the world."

In the Tanya we find something very interesting: the subject of *limmud Torah* takes a prominent position at the beginning of each of its sections, and each one touches upon a different aspect of this holy *mitzvah*.

In the first chapter of Igeres Hakodesh, the Alter Rebbe expresses his joy at having been notified that the chassidim in most communities have concluded the Shas, as per his instruction. He then goes on to explain the power of studying *Nigleh* and Gemara in strengthening a person's *emuna*.

The completion of Shas is also one of the instructions in the concluding chapter of the entire Tanya. Since Chazal say, "Everything is set according to its completion," it is implied that Torah study is fundamental to Tanya and to the path of Chassidus.

The significance of *limmud haTorah* for the Alter Rebbe is also apparent from his Hilchos Talmud Torah, the first set of *halachos* which he wrote and published during his lifetime. The Alter Rebbe also opens Kuntres Acharon, the final section of Tanya, by explaining the value of learning the stories recorded in Torah and of mouthing the words of Torah when learning.

Returning to the beginning of Tanya, we find yet a greater element of Torah study. In addition to Torah study being a worthy and valuable endeavor, it is incumbent upon a person to use out every opportunity to learn it.

■ VALUING TIME ■

In the first chapter of Tanya the Alter Rebbe states that one is obligated to learn at every spare moment.

In one powerful *sicha*, the Rebbe expounds on the importance of utilizing every moment. We tend to think that wasting a large portion of time is a tragedy, but wasting only a short period of time isn't really such a loss. The Rebbe explains that since each and every thing was created with a deliberate purpose, misusing any thing impacts the purpose of all of creation. Just as saving one life is saving "an entire world," since every person is indispensable, so too, utilizing every moment is essential, since every moment is indispensable too.

This is also expressed by the fact that Hashem continued creating the world right until the final moment before Shabbos. This teaches us the importance of using every moment possible. Since Hashem can stop exactly at the start of Shabbos, he utilized Friday in its entirety. This message is even more valuable than the message that would have been imparted had Hashem accepted Shabbos early and thereby teaching us to add onto the Shabbos.

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Like a marriage contract that bonds husband and wife and establishes rights and obligations for the husband to provide for the wife physically and spiritually, the Torah is a marriage contract of our special and unbreakable connection with Hashem and it too establishes our responsibility to perform the mitzvos.

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So, we are taught that Torah study is valuable and must fill every available moment in our lives.

■ THE LIFE OF THE WORLD ■

In the second section of Tanya, the Alter Rebbe explains the creation of the world by Hashem. He writes that Hashem created the world using the "*asara maamoras shebatorah*," the ten utterances in Torah.

The Alter Rebbe chose to emphasize the utterance's root in Torah in their title as the ten utterances, though it is common knowledge, because this emphasis explains the nature of the world and the nature of Torah. We tend to think that Torah and the world are two separate entities, which can at times even pose a challenge to one another. The Alter Rebbe teaches us that they are really one, for it is the Torah that gives life to the world. Through the eyes of Torah, Hashem created and re-creates the world, and through the eyes of Torah, those seeming obstacles to

Torah are created as well. However, the realization that obstacles as well are created from Torah teaches us an obstacle cannot, in its very essence, compromise the very place from which it is created, i.e. it cannot pose a true blockage to the Torah and what the Torah commands us to do.

This statement is very relevant to our daily service of Hashem. By learning Torah we are able to reveal Hashem's hand in the world. We go out in the world and engage in business and we often do not see how it is being orchestrated by Hashem. It is through Torah study that we are able to see through the '*helem*', concealment, and realize that there is all a *chayus*

eloki, a divine energy, keeping everything going. The Torah is source of the world and is the light into the truth of the world.

■ CLUTCHING OUR MEDALLION ■

Then we come to Igeres Hatshuvah. Here the Alter Rebbe gives us incredible insight into the vital need for Torah study to help in combating our *yetzer hara*. It's the Torah that holds the secret to overcoming the challenges that our *yetzer hara* embraces.

Here's the parable: A king wants his sons to grow into the role of nobility, and discover his unique talents and skills. To this end, the king sends him on a mission filled with trials, tribunals and hardships, where people will lure him away from his purpose and undermine his conviction and self-image. Knowing the hardships, the king gives his son a medallion. "Guard this medallion. Whenever you encounter a trial too hard to overcome, hold onto it, and I promise that you will be able to overcome it."

The king can forgive his son's mishaps along the way; after all he is only human. Any mistake can be reconciled, short of throwing away the medallion. Were there the prince, in face of temptation, to throw away the secret to overcoming temptation, he leaves himself no redeeming element.

The beginning of Igeres Hatshuvah highlights the maamar chazal that Hashem overlooks all sins, even those that for which one should have given their lives before transgressing. But Hashem can never forgive *bittul Torah*.

We are born nobility. Sent on a mission to uncover the true power of our souls, we face constant challenges and contradictions to our identity. Our medallion is the Torah. "*Borosi yetzer hara, borosi torah tavlin*" – I created the

yetzer hara, and I created a Torah which is the antidote. To access the deepest recesses of our soul and ourselves, we have the Torah.

We might be weak and sometimes we might fall. We are human, and Hashem can forgive that. He understands our frailties. But our medallion is Torah, and within it is the power to overcome all obstacles. Never can we let go of it, and never can we stop learning it. Hashem will not be able to forgive *bittul Torah*, throwing away the medallion.

In summary: The centrality of Torah study is apparent in Tanya, being presented as a central theme in each of the five parts of Tanya, and something which the Alter Rebbe gives personal attention to his interactions with his chassidim. Torah is fundamental to Yiddishkeit, and is the beginning, middle and end of Chassidus.



*Just as saving
one life is saving
"an entire world,"
since every person
is indispensable,
so too, utilizing
every moment is
essential, since
every moment is
indispensable too.*



■ IMPACTING THE WORLD ■

It is believed by some, that the only way to impact the world and make a *dira betachtonim* like Hashem wants, is by going out into the world and using it for *avodas Hashem*. This leads them justify pausing in their learning in order to go do *mitzvaim*.

The truth is that although *mitzvos* play a role in elevating the world, Torah has an equal, if not greater share in this mission (Lech Lecha 5745). The Rebbe explains (Shabbos Chanukah 5746) that through learning that takes place in the walls of

the Beis Medrash, the world is elevated, and the holiness reaches even those places that cannot and may not be reached through active influence.

Others believe that learning is for the learned, the wise, the diligent, or the brilliant. Our need for *limmud haTorah* with its full array the powerful effect comes with no prerequisites. There are no requirements to learn, other than actually learning.

Yaakov Avinu, "*ish tam yoshev ohalim*," receives praise not for brilliance, but for actual study.

We find that when Yaakov Avinu left his hometown, Rashi points out that a unique beauty and shine left the city with him. We find no mention of this phenomenon regarding the journeys of Avrohom and Yitzchok. Why is that? Was there no other individual before Yaakov or after, except the one other individual mentioned in Rashi?

My father said a *pirush* on this. Everyone recognized Avrohom as being a big *askan*, having made tens of thousands of followers. Everyone recognized Yitzchok for his *kedusha* that brought unimaginable *bracha* in material success, as the goyim would say, "Better the manure of the donkeys of Yitzchok than the best cattle of Avimelech." Yaakov by contrast was an "*ish tam yoshev ohalim*." He sat in his tent where nobody knew about him. It was specifically them that made the strongest impression upon their city. This teaches us the profound lesson that the biggest impact we can have on our cities, and the world by extension, is through consistent *limmud haTorah*.

■ A COMPLETE BODY ■

It is important to note *limmud haTorah* must consist of both *Nigleh* and *Chassidus*. *Nigleh* is compared to a body and *Chassidus* to a soul, and one cannot suffice without the other. These two puzzle-pieces in our study correlate to the two-part mission of infusing holiness into physicality; bringing the lofty soul to live in the lowly physical world, affecting the way we eat, sleep, and conduct business affairs. A study only of the soul and the lofty spiritual worlds is short-sighted, feeding the soul and abandoning the body, and thus the mission. Likewise, the literal *Gemara* understanding alone, without also learning the intricacies of the secrets of Torah, leans towards making Torah into just

another wisdom.

Without the soul of Torah, it likens to a lifeless body, identical to a worldly, and not divine, wisdom. Without the body of Torah, the soul has no grasp on the physical, and thus no way to effect change. A body without a soul is lifeless, and a soul without a body floats in the air. Together they form a vibrant healthy Yid.

■ NO MATTER WHO, NO MATTER WHEN ■

Wherever a person may be, there is no situation where a person is too far to study and to be empowered by the Torah. Whether in lofty levels, learning entirely for the sake of Heaven, or in the lowest levels, learning for personal pleasure or gain or out of habit, the obligation to learn Torah stands. Even if someone is very far from

the "right path", he is not free from learning Torah. He must study Torah, and specifically through his study, he will merit to come back.

There is a frightening passage in the *Gemara* stating that Hashem tells the *rasha*, "Why should you study my Torah?!" The logic of this is that when one studies Torah with inappropriate motivation, he lowers the Torah he learns to *klipah*.

Nevertheless, the Alter Rebbe writes in *Hilchos Talmud Torah*, that the *rasha* must continue to study Torah. Despite the fact that indeed he is temporarily feeding the *klipos*, nevertheless the holiness of the Torah will give him the strength to return to the path of righteousness. When he does *teshuvah*, and when he then learns Torah with the correct motive, all the Torah that he learned with improper motives will be elevated to *kedusha*. Thus, all that learning was of great benefit.

■ THE WOMEN'S JOB ■

Torah study is for types of people, men and

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women, righteous or not yet so righteous. The women have a tremendous role in upholding the study of Torah. The Gemara says that the women have a merit in Torah study because they help their children go to cheder, and they allow and encourage their husbands to go to the Beis Medrash. In fact, the Gemara says, “the merit of the women is greater than the men, since they extend themselves for Torah study without the enjoyment of actual study.”

Although women themselves must also learn Torah to enable them to fulfill the mitzvos properly and full heartedly – to the extent that the Rebbe would say “*halevay* men would know half of what the women are supposed to know” – yet, it is specifically the assistance to their husbands which brings them the *zchus of limmud haTorah*. It is for this reason that we wish parents of a newborn girl to raise their daughter “to Torah,” as the Rebbe would wish in his letter to the parents.

▪ BRINGING THE GEULAH ▪

Above all, *limmud haTorah* plays a significant role in the Geulah and in the preparation thereof.

In defining the advantage of the messianic era the Rambam writes that it is when we will merit “*shleimus haTorah vehaitzvos*,” the complete observance of Torah and of Mitzvos. Only then will we be able to understand the depths of Torah and carry out Mitzvos in their entirety.

In order to usher in this era, we prepare mirror the anticipated reality. How can we observe Mitzvos in their entirety if Moshiach has yet to arrive, and so many Mitzvos depend on the Beis Hamikdash? The answer is Torah. Chazal say that one who studies the portion in Torah discussing the halachos of a *korbon olah*, is considered to have actually brought that korbon. Thus, by studying

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Wherever a person may be, there is no situation where a person is too far to study and to be empowered by the Torah. Whether in lofty levels or in the lowest levels, the obligation to learn Torah stands.

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Torah we are able to ‘perform’ all of the mitzvos, thereby hastening their physical performance.

In a fascinating sicha (Lku's vol. 4 p. 1243), the Rebbe makes a powerful point about the uniqueness of *limmud haTorah* and its connection to the days of Moshiach.

In Hilchos Teshuvah, the Rambam describes the triviality of food, drink and all physical pleasures, and how the neshama of a person has no desire for them. Yet, at the conclusion of Hilchos Melachim, when describing the value of the times of Moshiach, he writes again: “the *chachomim* and *nevi'im* did not desire the days of Moshiach so they can eat

and drink (material abundance) ... rather that they should be able to study the Torah and come to recognize Hashem.” It would seem that this passage is unnecessary, as the Rambam has already said that physical pleasures are unimportant.

The Rebbe explains that this passage negates another possible misunderstanding. Knowing the tremendous value of elevating the sparks of kedusha found in the physical, causing one to reach the supernal source of these sparks, one may think that elevating the sparks through the performance of *mitzvos* is greater than the study of Torah and will assume that being such a lofty activity, *mitzvos* will be the main focus in the times of Moshiach. To correct this notion, the Rambam says that the study of Torah is even greater, for through it we reach a complete union with Hashem Himself.

Similarly, in the times before the coming of Moshiach, the study of Torah plays a crucial role in hastening his arrival. We validate our cries of “We Want Moshiach Now” by starting now to live with the Torah in the full form; as close as we can get to what the Torah will be in the actual times of Moshiach.



Rabbi Binyomin Cohen



Without Fanfare

Rabbi Binyomin Cohen serves as the Rosh Yeshivah of Yeshivah Gedolah of Melbourne, Australia.

The steamship Sorrento had left the Italian port of Genoa some five weeks earlier, and was due to arrive in Melbourne on Saturday September 10th, 1949. Among the many Jews on board were the Serebryanski family, who realized that a problem of disembarking on Shabbos was looming on the horizon. They were therefore not unduly perturbed by the stormy winds which the Sorrento encountered upon leaving Fremantle. These gales, in addition to causing most of the ships' passengers to be sea-sick, also managed to considerably hinder the progress of their journey. After a delay of two days, it was only on Monday September 12th that the Sorrento finally steamed into Melbourne.

As far as the head of the family, Reb Zalman Serebryanski ז"ל was concerned, there was another advantage to the delay, quite apart from the increased degree of Shabbos observance which it had facilitated. That Monday was also the 18th of Elul, otherwise known as Chai Elul. This day, the birthday of the Baal Shem Tov and The Alter Rebbe (the Baal HaTanya), is celebrated by the Rebbeim of Chabad and their followers as a Yomtov. Reb Zalman saw the hand of Hashgocha Protis (Divine

Providence) as having arranged that their arrival in a new country and home should take place on this auspicious day. Little wonder then that he felt impelled to mark the event annually by arranging a special farbrengen (Chasidic gathering) on every subsequent Chai Elul. During the course of the farbrengen, at which he was the main speaker, he would make special mention of the fact that this was the day upon which they had arrived to start a new life in Australia.

Let it not for one instant be imagined that Reb Zalman was seeking an opportunity to take center-stage or to impress his listeners with his oratorical skills. On the contrary, he was a quiet soft-spoken man who had a natural aversion to public speaking. He especially disliked the idea of lecturing or rebuking others, and found it difficult to stomach the pomposity which often accompanies such well-intentioned exhortations. Consequently, his farbrengen tended to be a collection of anecdotes as to how Chassidim of earlier generations had conducted themselves. Hopefully, this would present an opportunity for the listeners to derive for themselves an appropriate message, and thus a story was transformed into a lesson to be

implemented in one's everyday life.

On Chai Elul 5736 (1976), twenty-seven years after his arrival in Australia, Reb Zalman held his farbrengen in the Yeshivah Gedolah. There he spoke about the Mitzvah of Hachnosas Orchim (welcoming guests into one's home) and the manner in which this should, ideally, be performed. In order to illustrate his point, he related an episode in which he had been personally involved some thirty-five years earlier. The exact details are slightly obscure, but it seems that, having been conscripted to serve in the U.S.S.R. army, Reb Zalman once found himself near the home of Reb Shloime Chaim Kesselman Z"l. Reb Shloime Chaim was renowned as a Mashpia (spiritual guide) and teacher of Chassidus, but Reb Zalman was not seeking spiritual enlightenment at that precise moment. What he did need was a place where he could find a kosher meal and stay the night, and the most suitable option seemed to be the house of Reb Shloime Chaim. On the other hand he was rather hesitant, since he knew that in that particular home things were, at present, rather difficult. Reb Shloime Chaim's daughter had contracted a sickness and her condition was critical. "Everyone knew that she was going to die," continued Reb Zalman, "and yet I still needed a place to stay. I knocked on the door with some hesitation, and when Reb Shloime Chaim opened it and saw me standing there in my army uniform, he invited me in. I asked him if I could stay the night and he immediately agreed. He prepared some food for me and, as I ate it, he went around the tiny dwelling collecting various items of bedding in order to arrange a makeshift place for me to sleep."

"It was impossible not to notice the bed standing in the corner of the room on which his sick daughter was lying. She must have been close to death, but her father busied himself with preparing my bed as if nothing unusual was taking place.

He could easily, and, under the circumstances, perfectly justifiably, declined to welcome guests into his home. I would have very well understood if the family did not want strangers in their midst at such a time. However, not only did he not refuse me entry, but at no time did he even hint through action, word or expression that there was anything disturbing or pre-occupying him. Had I not known what was going on in the corner and what he must be feeling, I would have assumed that everything was perfectly normal and that I was in no way imposing on him."

When I feel almost helpless, and hence incapable of dealing with my own difficulties, how am I supposed to successfully address the needs of others?

The point of the story and its message could be divided into two. Firstly, we all occasionally experience trying times, when we find it quite difficult to behave normally. We are, after all, human beings and not machines. I can turn the kitchen tap on and off, but hardly possess the same degree of control over my emotions. To trust in Hashem is essential, and also extremely helpful in coping with crises, but it is not always an instant remedy. When the going is tough and too much is happening for me to be able to handle, I tend to just give up on everything. It is indeed comforting to know that others can accept far greater challenges with equanimity. I am inspired by their fortitude and strength of character, but find myself incapable of a similar reaction. At times like these, most

of us do not feel overly inclined to go out of our way to help others. When my own house is in order, my feelings of inner stability and self-confidence make it easier for me to reach out to those who could do with assistance. When, however, I am acutely aware of my own problems; when I feel almost helpless, and hence incapable of dealing with my own difficulties, how am I supposed to successfully address the needs of others?

Of course the approach is neither rational nor reasonable. Wallowing in my own misery is not going to help me get out of it. Nevertheless, stressful circumstances and serious personal

problems rarely encourage us to react either sensibly or positively, and a negative outcome is almost inevitable.

Major problems can precipitate a comprehensive withdrawal, but minor irritants can also do their damage. I may have had a rather trying day at work, full of disappointments and frustration. By the time I get home in the evening, I am emotionally drained and in a pretty bad mood. I know perfectly well that a good night's sleep will work wonders and that by tomorrow morning everything will be fine. Meanwhile, however, I just cannot muster the strength (of character) needed to sit down and hear my son say his Chumash, or to listen sympathetically to the story told by the collector knocking on my door as he solicits a donation.

All of the above are typical reactions to, and a natural consequence of, an acute awareness of one's own self and problems. Reb Shloime Chaim's approach and example encourage and inspire a person to be less focused on himself, and more on the needs of others. He would then discover opportunities to be involved in doing something positive to provide assistance to those who could benefit from it. Such involvement creates a framework of activity in which personal worries and frustrations can be dissipated. Being occupied with the needs of others can help to either completely avoid, or at least to minimize, the tendency to choke on one's own frustrations or to drown in one's sorrows.

So much for stress-related situations. A rather different, but far broader lesson to be derived from the above story, concerns the way in which a person should go about doing a Mitzvah. There is a well-known anecdote about a Chosid who,

being a man of means, was asked by his Rebbe how much money he gave to Tzedakah (charity). "Oh, I really give quite a lot, but you know Rebbe I don't talk about it", replied the Chosid, his self-effacing modesty shining through his words. "Give more and talk more", was the Rebbe's sharp rejoinder. Some people do not just expect, but really need recognition of all that they do. To tell such a person to take an entirely different approach will achieve nothing. The appropriate response is, therefore, to recognize and accept that this person gives when others know about it, and to make sure that he receives the maximum recognition

warranted by the size of his donation. The manner and degree of recognition varies from person to person, but the basic craving could possibly be part of the reason for the Rabbinic recommendation: - מצוה לפרסם עושי מצוה - it is a Mitzvah to publicize those who do a Mitzvah.

There is ideally, however, a totally different approach, as the Mishnah says in Pirkei Avos (1, 3): - הוו כעבדים - המשמשים את הרב שלא על מנת לקבל פרס - be like the servants who serve the master without the intent of receiving a reward. The main thing is the Mitzvah itself. All of its benefits, be they spiritual, material or social, are, by comparison, totally

insignificant. Why then should we focus on that which is secondary, at the expense of that which is really important? In order for a person to genuinely achieve this level, his main focus will need to be on the task at hand, i. e. the Mitzvah itself, rather than an obsession with the fact that **he** is the one doing it. Given that there is a Mitzvah which needs to be done, and that he has the opportunity and the Z'chus (merit) to be able to do it, he is happy to do just that. The simplicity and straightforwardness of this approach leaves no room for "not feeling up to it". The Mitzvah will be performed eagerly and yet

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quietly, as appropriate when one chooses the only option.

If Reb Shloime Chaim could devote himself to taking care of his guest at a time of great personal tragedy, it was surely because he drew on a level of simplicity within himself which far transcended his own personal feelings. No-one is suggesting that a person aspire to be some type of human robot or heartless machine. We could, rather, appreciate the dignity, or maybe even majesty, of a person who puts himself and his feelings on one side as he harnesses all his powers in the service of Hashem. As our Rabbis put it: עבד מלך מלך – the servant of the king is himself (considered as an extension of) the king.

Reb Zalman Serebryanski, who saw in Reb Shloime Chaim's conduct an example of this manner of performing a Mitzvah, was not content with merely relating this to his listeners. For him the practice was far more important than the preaching. He himself, therefore, invariably went down the same path of quiet simplicity and lack of fanfare in all that he did. One doubts whether Reb Shloime Chaim had even realized how powerful a message he was sending as he set up the bed. Reb Zalman, however, clearly absorbed the lesson in its entirety – something which was subsequently expressed in his every action.

Three weeks after the Chai Elul farbrengen, I found myself travelling with Reb Zalman on the airplane from Melbourne to New York. The boredom and monotony of sitting for many hours on a long journey can help induce a desire for food, and by the time we arrived in Los Angeles I was feeling quite hungry. Reb Zalman must have somehow sensed this, and, casually digging into his travelling bag, he offered me some of his food, saying that he had brought too much with him and he was anyway not going to eat it. In case you see nothing remarkable in that, allow me to point out a major difference between the

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*Reminding
ourselves of
the quiet and
unobtrusive way in
which Chassidim
of a previous
generation helped
their fellows,
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easier for us to do
likewise.*

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travelling habits of Reb Zalman and those of Binyomin Cohen. Reb Zalman never ate any of the food served by the airline but took all his food from his own home, and carried it with him on the plane. Binyomin Cohen, on the other hand, was, and still is, quite prepared to eat an airline meal as long as it has an acceptable hechsher (kosher certification). By the time we arrived in Los Angeles, I had already consumed several such meals and could hardly be considered to be on the verge of starvation. Reb Zalman's bag was fairly small and already contained his Tallis, Tefillin and several Seforim. There could not have been too much food in it even at the beginning of the flight,

and I had not noticed him eating anything more than a few crackers during the journey. Now, in Los Angeles, his only concern was that Binyomin Cohen, who had been eating and drinking more or less non-stop for the duration of the flight, should not be hungry. What, however, amazed me most of all, was the **manner** in which he offered. Not a trace of condescension or "I am the one who has. You do not have. I am giving **you**." Rather, a simple matter-of-fact suggestion that I help him dispose of his surplus supplies.

Those who knew Reb Zalman will confirm that the above incident was by no means exceptional, but rather typified his way of behaving towards others.

We live in interesting times. The study of Torah is flourishing and there were never so many Yeshivos. Similarly, unprecedented opportunities often exist to be scrupulous in the performance of Mitzvos in ways unavailable to our parents and grandparents. However, total simplicity and lack of pretentiousness are virtues which are in short supply even amongst the most pious and religious. Reminding ourselves of the quiet and unobtrusive way in which Chassidim of a previous generation helped their fellows, would make it easier for us to do likewise.

This article first appeared in the Yeshivah Shule magazine of Melbourne, Australia, and is reprinted here with their kind permission.



Golda bas Leah



Stacey

This article first appeared in *Di Yiddishe Heim* issue 74 – Winter
5738 (1938)

Her name was Stacey — and although it really isn't proper for a Jewish woman to think so, I must admit that I hated her. There was something about her poise, her worldly polish, her thick-set makeup, bulging rings and obvious air of superiority that made me feel, to put it mildly, uncomfortable in her presence. As you can imagine, she was quite well-to-do, with friends quite the same as she, most of them uncommitted Jews. Yet she was one of us. The most honored at all dinners, the most successful at all endeavors. Candlesticks? Stacey distributed fifty at a time, with seemingly little effort. Donations . . . Even to get women to attend a shiur . . . with a mere shake of a sleeve.

Was I jealous? Insecure? — NO, NO — I could have been like her. Didn't my parents want me to have a college education and become a professional? How I rejected their materialism, how idealistically I wouldn't touch a red cent of theirs because I wanted things only perfect — *Yiddishkeit*, idealism, and helping out another Jew. With joy I would polish, even paint, our iron beds, try to comb and redo my old sheitel, and wear for the umpteenth time the same dress to every wedding and Bar-Mizvah

I attended. My time was spent in endless research, learning the Tanach, Chassidic philosophy, every Halacha and its meaning. I was endlessly thinking and trying to understand. (That was, I guess, at the beginning, before the bills, the children, and the acquaintances we were always inviting seemed to multiply at extreme speed).

It was my idealism being put to a test, I would argue with myself, and with my children, who had to be encouraged that their father was learning more Torah than other fathers, and therefore we couldn't afford a weekday and a Shabbos coat. But our old furniture seemed to fall apart so easily with the wear and tear of the kids, and the same with the floor coverings and curtains! Was I sorry? Sorry I didn't have a beautiful home? Carpeted floors? Chandeliers? NO, NO, No! I was still determined — old sheitel, last year's dress and all. I knew I was right, even though the pill was getting harder to swallow.

But if I did manage to do things right, not skip any letter of the law, give my life and my family to the cause, (according, of course, to my own calculations) I certainly wasn't ready to praise those

who took the easy way out, who took so much time in the morning to “make themselves up” and then explained how they had no time to daven, who ran to work so that they could have chandeliers and fur coats, and who were endlessly talking and breathing of nothing but money, money, money, and shopping, shopping, shopping. And yet — why didn’t I just pity them rather than dislike them? Why was I shy in their presence instead of outgoing and trying to educate them? Did I feel that they were looking down at my incapacities? Did I sometimes put on a front of overconfidence to waive my inner insecurity? In any case, I tried to keep my distance from those people who seemed not to share my feelings and lifestyle.

It was a cold winter morning, cold enough for me to cancel some of my scheduled activities. As the snow piled up and the children’s school was closed, life came more or less to a standstill. That evening the telephone rang. Our Mashpiah was organizing a Bikur Cholim emergency campaign. In the nearby community hospital, very few nurses were available. Many were snowbound, others were sick. We were to pair up and go to different parts of the hospital to help out. My partner for the campaign was to be ... Stacey. We were to be ready at 9:15 the next morning.

I tried to talk myself out of my appointed partner, but my Mashpiah wouldn’t hear of it. Stacey it was, and Stacey it would be. She would be calling for me about 9:00 a.m., since she had a car. As I hung up the phone, my first thoughts were — what was I going to wear, after all, working hand in hand with Stacey the next day! My *sheitel* had seen better days. My coat? I’ve been saying for two years’ time that I really need a new one. And what if she decided to come inside for whatever reason? I must think of

what to cover the tear in the couch with, and find a picture to hang in the living room to cover the peeling wall. My head began to spin, my patience at the supper table diminished. My children, who were bored with a day at home and looking for a little excitement, couldn’t understand my sudden change of temperament. I was suddenly frantically cleaning and polishing. At least let everything be sparkling when she arrives. Walls had to be scrubbed from children’s marks, all wobbly chairs hidden, and the rest, well the rest would just have to stay the way it always was.

And what would we talk about? Her interests? Probably theatre shows, television, styles and fashions, or where to buy expensive objects. I began to prepare in my mind all the proper answers to her challenge of my values. I would tell her once and for all! My ignorance of fashion was not mere stupidity. I too, represent a school of thought. I guess I’d have to admit the truth to myself, that all I was preparing to say about combating the world’s idol worship of materialism was not as strong and natural a conviction of mine as it should be, or I would merely have to calmly state it and not practice my lines with numerous ‘rehearsals.’



Stacey came a little early, and did come in for a cup of coffee as I made my last preparations. We spent a long day together helping out in the hospital, and on my arrival home, the first thing I did was call my Mashpiah. I had to thank her for giving me an experience I would long remember. Stacey and I had become good “friends.” It was Stacey who appreciated my “broken down” house, and couldn’t stop talking about how it reminded her of her mother’s house and of her youth. She explained to me how dear were her memories of the happy “heimishe atmosphere” in a natural situation where

people could be themselves and not have to play up to society and friends. “It’s people like you who keep us going,” Stacey remarked. “We always talk about our devoted few, the ones who don’t need gold and riches and who don’t change with social pressure.” Stacey didn’t only give me a pat on the back. I knew too well how I really wasn’t as strong as Stacey played me up to be. I had long forgotten the role I should be playing.

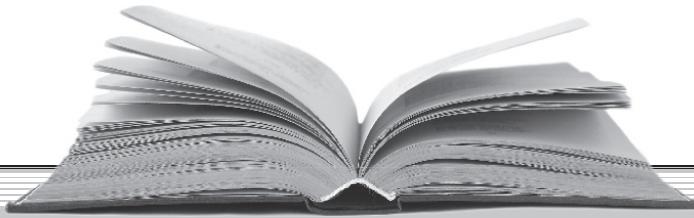
I shall long remember the sweat trickling down Stacey’s forehead as she “rolled up her sleeves” and heartfully cared for every wish of our assigned patients. She barely took time for a snack in her anxiety to rush back to them — on her feet and on the go with a warm smile and

a kind word to everyone all that long day. And as we parted, can I forget how Stacey looked me in the eye, and with a worried sigh said, “Goldy, I know what I am and I know what you are — and I’ve been thinking and thinking . . . What will my children be?!”

Stacey’s honesty and warmth with people gave me a lift, and her reminding me of what I should be gave me much to think about. The day we spent together began a friendship between the two of us which still continues. I will never be Stacey, and maybe Stacey will never be me, but we have learnt that we both have much to teach each other.

*“We always talk
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BOOK REVIEW

Is Real Davening Within Our Grasp? The authors of a new ‘illuminated’ siddur believe it is.

By Eli Rubin

In the year *tof reish samach vov* (1905-6), Nochum Shmaryahu Sossonkin arrived to study in the great yeshiva *Toimchei Temimim Lubavitch*. One of the first things that struck him was “the feeling that in Lubavitch *tefillah* holds an important place.”

“In Lubavitch,” Rabbi Sossonkin later noted, “*tefillah* is not like a burden, or an obligation, which you need to get over with. Here, you feel that davening is one of the most important things in the world...” (*Zichronosai*, Chapter 6.)

Today, when we think of the great ideal of *chassidishe* davening that was achieved by chassidim of bygone generations, we sometimes get carried away. We imagine that we, chassidim of the 21st century, cannot hope to reach the lofty heights of “real” davening. “We are Chabad chassidim,” we say to ourselves, “we know what real davening is. How can we even pretend that we have any connection to such a lofty ideal?”

Instead of allowing ourselves to enter into the spirit of davening, we rush through our *tefillah*; guiltily mumbling the words faster than our lips can move. On the one hand, we feel that as Chabad chassidim our davening should be different. On the other hand, we convince ourselves that as Chabad chassidim we cannot pretend to be what we are not. As the Rebbe Rashab heard in *yechidus* from the Rebbe Maharash: sometimes the *nefesh habehamis* dresses in the garb of a complete *tzadik*... in order to prevent you from *davening* as you should. (*Hayom Yom*, 23rd of Sivan.)

The truth is that most of the students in Lubavitch did not daven for an especially long time. On the yeshiva schedule the time between 10:30am and 12:30pm was set aside for both *shacharis* and the midday meal. As we know, there were some students who did pray for many hours each day. But they were a small group, uniquely gifted with the ability to engage deeply with abstract ideas and concentrate on their application for long periods.

The majority, however, were actually not allowed to daven at a slower pace than the *minyán*.

In *Kuntras Ha-tefillah* (Chapter 14) the Rebbe Rashab described the main features of the *chassidische* davening—which was exemplified in *Toimchei Temimim Lubavitch*—as follows: “They should daven in a fixed place, reading the words from the siddur with attentiveness, and paying attention to the meaning of the words. The davening should be audible, clearly articulated—so that the words are enunciated properly, and alive and luminous with the feeling of what the words mean.”

What was special about the davening in Lubavitch? Not the extreme contemplative depth or the tumultuous passion, but the simple care and presence of mind with which each word was said. As Rabbi Sossonkin described it, “they davened with moderation and without haste, with attentiveness and with enthusiasm. The words of davening that they enunciated were luminous—pronounced with energy and feeling. The two hours spent studying chassidus before davening were like a spiritual pump injecting life into their *tefillah*.”

Clearly, the study of chassidus is the foundation of a *chassidische* davening. Chassidus helps us understand Hashem’s role in the world, and in our own personal lives; chassidus even helps us to understand something of the lofty nature of Hashem’s essential being. Only if you learn chassidus, can a conversation with Hashem—or a conversation with yourself about Hashem—be injected with real meaning and vibrance.

In the *maamorim* of our *Rabbeim* the connection between chassidus and davening is more than explicit. The concepts expounded are often

interwoven with passages from the *nusach ha-tefillah*, or even presented as explanations of those passages. When you learn chassidus, you study these concepts with your head; when you daven you express them from your heart.

Several years ago, veteran Maryland shliach Rabbi Shmuel Kaplan and his good friend and supporter, Reb Yaakov Cohen, began a twice weekly study partnership focusing on the meaning of the *nesuch ha-tefillah* as it is uniquely illuminated by chassidus. Eventually their partnership grew into a larger project, which is now coming to completion. A team of scholars—including Rabbis Eliyahu Touger, Uri Kaploun, Sholom Ber Weinberg and others—have collected many insights and explanations scattered throughout the vast corpus of chassidus, rendered them in accessible English and arranged them as an accompanying commentary to the siddur.



Rabbi Shmuel Kaplan and Reb Yaakov Cohen prepare the siddur

The new commentary, *The Siddur Illuminated by Chassidus*, will soon be published by Sichos In English and Kehos. All the explanations offered are drawn directly from the *maamorim* of the *Rabbeim*, and the detailed footnotes

allow the reader to look up the source and learn it in its original form. According to Rabbi Kaplan, this work is not an introduction to Chassidus. Rather, it is designed for people who already acquired a basic knowledge of Chassidus, providing them with a collection of thoughts and insights that can directly illuminate the words they say each day.

The material that has been collected far exceeds what can be presented in a single volume, and a special website has been set up (Chabad.org/SIESiddur), presenting a line by line translation of the siddur alongside the related commentary. The web format allows the user to view all the sources in their original form, providing a useful resource

for anyone who wants to explore the *chassidische* understanding of davening. The print version, on the other hand, has been designed not as a book about prayer, but as a siddur that can actually be used to daven from.

Appended to the new siddur is a collection of essays entitled “*An Approach to Chassidic Davening*.” Here, Rabbi Kaplan has provided a more general overview of the ethos and method that lays the groundwork for a *chassidische* davening, carrying it through from inspiration to application.

“This siddur,” says Rabbi Kaplan, “is a response to the claim that we are simply incapable of davening in the way that we know we should. You don’t need to go to an extreme. This siddur enables you to increase your understanding bit by bit, focusing on one

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part of davening at a time. After a while your davening is completely different.”

The Friediker Rebbe once said, “Chassidim of previous generations would fold over a page in their siddur each day, ‘today I davened till here.’ Of course, they would finish the whole *tefillah*, but only till this point was ‘*gedavent*.’ The next day he would daven a little bit more, and make another fold in his siddur... Chassidim of previous generations never ‘finished davening,’ they were always holding ‘in the middle of davening.’” (Sefer Ha-maamorim Tof Shin Yud, page 188.)

To daven as Chabad chassidim should certainly demand effort and commitment, but it is not as difficult as we often prefer to imagine.





In the World of **ANASH**

Hundreds Searching for Chassidishe Chinuch

The Razag Ballroom was full. Hundreds filled the Crown Heights location for an address of several prominent *mechanchim*. Hundreds more tuned in via live video and audio broadcasts. The evening, dedicated in honor of the first *yahrzeit* of the beloved *mechanech* Rabbi Yeshayah Schtroks *a"h*, tackled the challenging and ever-relevant topic of “How Do I Give My Children a Chassidishe Chinuch?”

Rabbi Shimon Hellinger, director of Merkaz Anash, introduced the evening. *Chassidishe chinuch* connotes much more than *yiddishe chinuch*. Chassidus in general, Rabbi Hellinger explained, contributed to *yiddishkeit* in particular areas, namely, new concepts, *minhagim*, and, most importantly, a newfound depth in and energy towards *yiddishkeit*. *Chassidishe chinuch* mirrors Chassidus, comprised of the *chassidishe inyonim* we transmit to our children and the *chayus* and inner joy we inspire into their every step and breath.

With a set stage, Rabbi Mordechai Lipskier, director of The Beis Medrash and life-long student of Rabbi Schtroks, shared some thoughts about the power of a positive role model. Role modeling breaks in direct and indirect influence. Of the

two, indirect influence, the projecting an overall approach to *yiddishkeit*, carries far more weight than direct influence, the modeling a specific behavior.

A child recognizes priorities. The way we spend our limited free time and the way we view and portray teachers or *Rabbonim* leaves a most powerful effect. Rabbi Lipskier articulated his point with a collage of stories, including many memories of Rabbi Schtroks.

Continuing the theme, Rabbi Zalman Leib Markowitz, addressed the challenge of peer pressure and negative atmospheres. From his experience of nearly two decades as teacher and principal in Morristown, NJ, and his current post as Educational Consultant for Merkos Linyonei Chinuch and worldwide *chinuch* mentor for Shluchim, Rabbi Markowitz shared three thoughts.

Create a positive environment. Through highlighting the positive elements *yiddishkeit* in life and in our surroundings, we uplift our children. Automatically, the challenges of spiritual negativity fall away. When facing spiritual negativity it is important to avoid feeling dejected, adapting to the

negative influences, or looking down on those who pose the problem. Project positivity and uplift.

Be in-tune with the needs of your child. Ignoring emotional needs is equivalent to ignoring the cries of a hungry infant. Ascertain the troubles, sympathize, and when possible, help your child resolve the issue.

Appreciate what we have. Thousands of people, from the entire spectrum of backgrounds, flock towards the Rebbe's *Chassidus*. Growing up with Chassidus leaves us in need of constant reminders of our great treasure. To that treasure, each child connects in a unique way, be it a Rebbe video, a *niggun* or a Chassidische story, or the like. Encourage your child towards their unique stimulants. The Frierdiker Rebbe writes that pushing children towards a stimulant not well-suited for them can, R”L, “lead them completely off the proper path”.

To top off the evening, Rabbi Shmuel Lew, veteran *shliach* and *mechanech* in London UK, touched on passing the torch of passion. The most important factor of *yiddishkeit* is our passion, and the lacking of passion limits our adherence to *mitzvos*. Imparting the passion and joy for a *mitzvah* in our children prevents them from seeking other sources of enjoyment.

Generally, we strive to match the inspiration (“*ohr*”) with our child’s capabilities (“*keli*”), not overdosing and not coming up short. At the same time, the Rebbe taught that when one seems very distant (weak “*keli*”), a little extra dose of inspiration of *yiddishkeit* is powerful enough to draw them close. The tens of thousands of recent *ba’alei teshuva* stand as testimony. Our role as parents is to keep our children loaded with joy for *yiddishkeit*. The Rashbatz once told the Frierdiker Rebbe as a child, “Better to be outside looking in, than inside looking out.” With passion and pride, our children’s focus remain inwards.

With handfuls of insights, plenty of food for thoughts, and stacks of publications from Merkaz Anash, the evening was a hit. After it all, the *mechanchim* lingered on to discuss individual’s questions.



A Window of Light

Navigating through the terse and concise style of the Alter Rebbe's Torah Ohr or Likutei Torah sometimes proves quite challenging. The weekly publication that unlocks these works, Di Chassidishe Parsha, gains tremendous momentum, currently producing 2000 hard and 500 virtual weekly copies.

Three years ago, Rabbi Levi Gelb began laying the roots for the publication that would be called Di Chassidishe Parsha. The publication, whose name reflects the high esteem for Torah Ohr and Likutei Torah coined by the Alter Rebbe himself, packs explanations and insights of the section of the Chassidic works connected to the weekly Torah portion.

A regular companion to learners in shuls and homes world-wide, Di Chassidishe Parsha has come a long way since its roots were penciled in to Rabbi Gelb's personal copies of the Kehos publications. In following the Rebbe's directives for the annual study Torah Ohr and Likutei Torah in their entirety, Rabbi Gelb first undertook the task in his *bochur* years. For the second cycle of study, the same seemed inadequate. An in-depth study of one of the several weekly *ma'amorim* joined his schedule, and with it, notes marking insights and markers for ease of reading, produced by his in-depth study. The following years brought even further understanding.

The next step for Rabbi Gelb was the eye-opening depth offered to these vital *ma'amorim* in the works of the later Chabad Rebbeim. Throughout the years, the six subsequent Rebbeim said or penned unique *ma'amorim* on practically each discourse of the Alter Rebbe. "It's a sensation that you can not imagine continuing without it," Rabbi Gelb said. The works of the Rebbeim give attention to details

otherwise overlooked. With their guidance, a new dimension of the original words and concepts are unlocked. Naturally, the study of these *ma'amorim* soon became a regular regimen of his work.

To beat the fading of pencil marks, and mainly to better organize his thoughts, leaving room to add more notes as time would tell, the project took its first virtual format. And then it all happened; Di Chassidishe Parsha was born.

Out to help others navigate the texts, Rabbi Gelb shared his notes and ideas with a few close friends. He then printed it for his shul, and emailed it to a few contacts. Positive feedback from friends and strangers alike helped him accept the mantle of produced a widely distributed weekly publication. Turning to friends, mentors, and professionals for tips in formatting and language, and with ongoing feedback and interest, including from other Frum circles, Rabbi Gelb arrived at the popular style to which we have grown accustomed.

Designed to offer aid to all learning levels, Di Chassidishe Parsha explains the flow, clarifies difficult sections, and notes insights from other Chassidic works. For those who need, or even for those who enjoy a review in clear and concise language, Rabbi Gelb adds elaborate explanations of the basic concepts of Chassidus. Marking the first anniversary of Di Chassidishe Parsha, an English translation of the appraised companion has recently entered the scene in two periodical editions, and many more in the works.

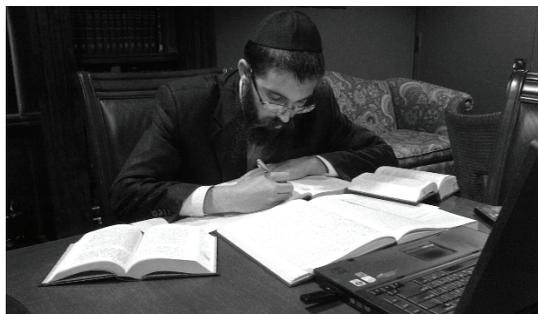
You can find the catchy cover page and easy reading companion printed world-wide. 700 copies cover Crown Heights, Boro Park, Monsey, Morristown, Montreal, and the Ohel, thanks to a generous ongoing donation of Reb Shalom Laine

and The Print House. 1000 weekly copies make it to the press in Eretz Yisroel, thanks to the donation of an anonymous donor, reaching dozens of *shuls* from north to south. Special mention goes out the facilitator of this feat, *Le'Ovdecha Be'Emes*, an organization that works to bring *Toras Ha'Ba'al Shem Tov* to yidden of all walk in Eretz Yisroel. Down under, the *ma'amorim* are distributed to Lubavitch, Chassidish and Litvish shuls in Melbourne, Australia. And to top it off, 500 adamant readers learn the work right out of their emails, several of them sharing homemade print-outs with their *shuls*. These numbers include 7 people in Kansas, 7 in Wyoming, and 4 in Oregon.

Interestingly, one of the biggest bodies of readers is the Shluchim around the world, including the respected *mashpia* HaRav Mendel Vechter, who use the beginner friendly break-down and tangible explanation of terms and concepts to prepare for their local *shiurim*. *Bochurim*, too, enjoy the learning aid, resulting in several *yeshivos* including those in Los Angeles, Montreal and Toronto, Canada, and Melbourne, Australia, to print it out for the *bochurim's* benefit.

Di Chassidishe Parsha makes sure to keep up with the times, making ongoing adaptations and special appearance on some recent special occasions. At the most recent Kinnus HaShluchim, The Print House supplied 2500 copies to fill the bag of each attending Shliach. In honor of Yud Shevat, 2000 copies were printed just for the Shabbos before Yud Shevat in the Ohel. For Lag Ba'Omer, a whopping 7000 copies were distributed in Miron by a group of volunteers selling and distributing *sifrei Chassidus*. Most recently, a generous donor sponsored 4000 copies of a unique Shavuos edition for the Tri-State area, including Lakewood, Boro Park and Williamsburg. This special edition was a new smaller *kuntres* that focused on an elaborate introduction outlining the importance of learning Chassidus. Rabbi Gelb aims to start having the *ma'amorim* available weeks in advance at Judaica stores including those in Crown Heights and Boro Park.

A regular reader and supporter to Di Chassidishe Parsha commends Rabbi Gelb for his work: "Di Chassidishe Parsha gives a clear picture of the main point of the *ma'maar*, elucidating many vital



Chassidus concepts and at the same time presenting the 'big picture'. The footnotes are amazing and so is the introduction. The Loshon Kodesh is clear and concise. A job well done!"

"Throughout this process I've really enjoyed delving into the *ma'amorim* more thoroughly", Rabbi Gelb comments. He shares his dreams of publishing notes on *Toras Ohr* and *Likutei Torah* in their entirety, including *Shir Hashirim*, and the notes of the *Tzemach Tzedek*. Make room on your bookshelves for the nearly thirty volumes of hardcover books into which the past and projected weekly publications will eventually be compiled. Thank you Rabbi Gelb and those that make his work possible, for a sweet window into the timeless legacy of *Toras HaChassidus*.

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COUNTER PERSPECTIVE

RESPONSES TO PREVIOUS ARTICLES

Who Needs Chassidus?

A CURRICULUM FOR BEGINNERS

Compliments on the amazing interview with Reb Yoel Kahn. It is a tremendous value to have such a *mashpia* with us, though unfortunately his voice is not heard much. You've done an incredible kindness by exposing him to us English speaking *anash*.

I would like to ask you if you could clarify with Reb Yoel the following point. Reb Yoel mentions in his interview that the Chassidus that one learns should be set according to their level, and that he finds too many people that are getting ahead of themselves. Could Reb Yoel perhaps list a detailed *seder* in Chassidus for our young students and other beginners?

Much appreciated,

Avrohom

■ REB YOEL RESPONDS ■

In general, it is difficult to give an exact *seder* without knowing the exact nature and capabilities of the individual person. However, there is a general point that everyone must consider.

Since the primary purpose of Chassidus is to shed light upon one's *avodas Hashem* and arouse a person to some feeling of love and fear of Hashem, it is necessary that Chassidus be recognized as the reality of creation, not merely a theoretical

concept. A person must therefore fully understand and internalize the concepts in Chassidus that they learn. When studying Chassidus one should regularly assess whether or not he logically understands and appreciates what he is learning.

[Just to offer one example: We learn in Chassidus about the unique *neshama* of a *Yid*, its infinite powers and the vast difference between a *Yid* and a *goy*. This is not a study about an idea, but a real force within each one of us that motivates our behavior every day.

I heard a story from one of the elder Chassidim that illustrates this point: There was a time during the Bolshevik Revolution, that fighting took place in the streets of Rostov. It happened once that the Rebbe Rashab was standing with his son, the Friediker Rebbe, and he pointed to the fighters in the distance and said, "Look carefully and you can notice the difference between *Yiddishe mesiras nefesh* and this *goyishe* madness ('*hefkeirus*')."

Of course, seeing this difference requires very refined senses. However the approach must be that this is something real that, and with the right measure of sensitivity it can be seen with the human eye. The same applies to all other concepts found in Chassidus.]

At the same time, caution must be taken when sharing this message with beginners. Very often they will run ahead of themselves and learn ideas that are beyond them. It is important not to cool

them off from their enthusiasm about the study of Chassidus. We must not discourage superficial study, rather we must teach them how Chassidus

can be understood. Once they have tasted the true understanding, they will naturally continue on that path.

Under-Age Chinuch?

APPROPRIATE AGE FOR SHUL

Thank you to Rabbi Gancz for the clear and resourceful guidance on the age of *chinuch*.

One issue that was not addressed was the subject of bringing children to *shul*. According to the guidelines set, at what age should a child go to *shul* on *Shabbos*?

Chaim M.

■ RABBI GANCZ RESPONDS ■

When discussing the question of taking children to *shul*, the first question you must ask yourself is: Why do I want to bring my child to *shul*? If the answer is "to let my wife be able to rest" (the same way you would take a child to the grocery store), then it is not a *chinuch* question, but a *shalom bayis* question, and is unrelated to the subject of the article. Indeed, if the child will not disturb, often it is a valid option, especially during the weeks after a woman gives birth or other stressful times. Of course, all things must be considered and a rational decision must be made. *Chinuch*, though, means thinking about the needs of the *child*.

The question then is: At what age is it possible and educational to bring children to *daven* in *shul*?

As we mentioned in the article, even young children who are not ready to daven the entire davening can benefit from sometimes coming to shul and answering Amen and kedusha. As the Alter Rebbe writes in Shulchan Aruch that from the time a child answers "*amen yehei shmei raba*" he merits a portion in *Olam Haba* (OC 124:10).

Of course the child must sit quietly throughout davening and not disturb. If the child has difficulty sitting so long, he should be allowed to come late, leave early (if he is able to walk to shul on his own), or go outside for part of davening.

There is no need for concern that the child will grow up thinking that this is valid conduct for an adult. The child understands that he is unable to do everything that adults do. (Only regarding *issurim* (forbidden activities) do we find a concern of '*shema yisrach*', that the child will grow up and continue the prohibited practice, like asking him to perform a *melacha* on Shabbos, or giving him to drink a cup of wine at a *bris* on Yom Kippur).

If, for whatever reason, the child disturbs the *davening* in shul, one should not bring him. It is wrong to ruin the davening of adults, who are obligated to come to shul, for the sake of the child, who is not obligated.

It is important to note that the child should not be forced to sit in his seat for the entire duration of davening. This will most likely cause him to dislike *shul* and *davening*.

This is all concerning when it is possible and even beneficial to bring a young child to *shul*. As the child grows older, one should actually be *mechanech* the child to *daven* in *shul*, even during the week. When a child reaches begins *davening* most of the davening, he should be taught that the proper manner of *tefilah* is in *shul* with a *minyan*.

This is of course only if going to shul during the week is a practical option. If the hour is late or the *shul* is far, the child should be guided to daven at

home. Common sense must be used to ascertain what the capability of the child.

■ ■ ■

WHY THE RUSH?

Yishar koiach for such a wonderful publication.

The article from Rabbi Gancz about the proper age for *chinuch* was most appropriate. Unfortunately many parents today rush their children through life (in *gashmius* and *ruchnius*) without letting them develop naturally. Some are out to outshine their neighbors ("my child knew the Alef-Beis at 22 months") or to make themselves feel like good parents; these parents are less likely to change. However, at the same time there are many parents who are rushing their children

because they were led to believe that this is the correct way of *chinuch* ('more must be better'), and are open to a better method of *chinuch*.

I do not allow my children to go to *shul* until they are ready to participate in the entire *davening*. We teach them that a *shul* is a "*makom kadosh*" dedicated to davening to Hashem. When our five year old son pleads to go to *shul*, we explain to him that only when he is able to daven the entire *davening* will he be allowed to join his father and brothers in *shul*.

This practice does not discourage children from wanting to attend *shul*; on the contrary, it increases their desire and their value of being there.

R.H.

One Size Fits All? (2)

In his article "One Size Fits All?" Ben Hei Hei discusses the various types of *avodah* and writes that they are "not better or worse; they are different, and equally important." He elaborates on this theme, quoting various sources, to the effect that everyone has their *avodah*, according to the qualities given to them by Hashem, and people should be "happy with their lot".

While there is much truth in this, I believe the writer has gone too far. He is forgetting the Torah view, historical fact, and pragmatic considerations.

THE TORAH VIEW:

Does the *halacha* not prescribe that only for a *talmid chochom* should one stand up? Did the Rebbe not encourage paying respect to a visiting Rov, Mashpia, *ba'al mesiras nefesh* in Russia or dedicated *shliach*? To borrow the terminology used in the article: Indeed the *avoda* of Zevulun is

not to be Yissachar. However, would you suggest that Zevulun has the same status as the *talmid chochom*?

The Rebbe explains on numerous occasions (see Shabbos Mikeitz 5744) that although a person may not be 'cut out' to be a full time 'Torah Yid,' this should bother him. He should realize that he is 'missing out.' This, the Rebbe explains, will empower him: Although he is not a 'Torah person' *per-se*, he will set up a daily *chavrusah*; although he is not a full time *shliach*, he will do *mitzvoim* on a weekly basis, for 'every Yid is a *shliach*'.

HISTORICAL FACT:

Have we forgotten those wonderful descriptions in the Frierdiker Rebbe's memoirs of the simple villager whose sole wish was to have a son or son in law who is a *talmid chacham*? This wish, although usually not fully realized, was a driving

force behind daily shiurim in *shuls* and financial support of Torah study throughout the ages.

Indeed, many did not merit giving their son a full torah education, usually due to financial restriction. However, let us not forget that Gedolei Yisroel considered this a calamity, which resulted with tensions and frustrations, as well as the various secular movements plaguing us to this day. To use this as paradigm for ourselves is wrong. The historical example, which was lauded by our sages, is that of king Chizkiyahu who set up an educational system, where there was not a child in the land of Yehudah not proficient in all the halachos of *tumah* and *tahara*.

PRAGMATIC CONSIDERATIONS:

While the above is true on a philosophical and historical level; the practical ramifications are of no less importance. If a child is not taught to realize the *zechus* of being a *shliach* instead of a businessman, why should he aspire to go on *shlichus* when he could lead a comfortable life in business? Indeed, how many would have gone out on *shlichus* if not for the constant flow of *sichos*, and *farbrengens* of *mashpiyim*, stressing the superiority of *shlichus* over business? The same goes for aspirations in davening and learning.

Every educational system must have heroes and role models. This is what the Rebbe said when he selected the fourteen greatest learners at the 770 *yeshiva*, accorded them with titles and respect, “to create a competitive learning atmosphere.” Yes, that’s the way it works.

This is not only important for the gifted students, who would otherwise not fully realize their potential. It may be even more vital for the average student, who will push himself when the bar is raised (see *sicha* above).

In other words: According to the writer’s approach, the *mashpia* in the *yeshivah* is not a good role model for half of the *yeshivah*, since their mission is not the same as his; to learn or to be a *frum* businessman. What would logically follow is that we should bring businessmen to *farbreng* in *yeshivah*, so that the Zevulun-born youths will learn to emulate him...

Agreed, everyone must be happy with his or her lot; but how many times have we heard the Rebbe say that this does not refer to matters of *ruchniyus*?

The writer brings a story, where an academically challenged bochur wrote to the Rebbe expressing his frustration. The Rebbe answered him that man’s purpose is to serve Hashem, and this gave him much encouragement in his learning. Although the writer brings this story to prove his point, the Rebbe’s answer actually refutes his message.

According to the author of the article, the Rebbe should have answered him that his life’s mission is to be a *baal eisek*, to support Torah etc. The Rebbe answered differently: **Every bochur** must learn, no matter his capabilities. Regardless of his success, the mission of a *bochur* to toil in learning does indeed ‘fit all’!

In conclusion, the need to address the various needs of the students is indeed vital. However, contrary to the writer’s belief, anyone involved in *chinuch* today will agree that this is not under-addressed at all. Quite the contrary, in our age – where twelve year old boys declare that they are “not cut out for *gemara*,” and teenagers have already decided that *shlichus* is “not for them;” when every weakness of the *nefesh habehamis* is justified by individuality and *mechanchim* who demand more from the student are hindered; when parents without aspirations for their children stem their growth under the cover of sympathy – the pluralism the writer calls for is all too rampant.

Indeed, one size doesn’t fit all, but double standards, giving different messages to different people, is much more damaging. Yes, there are problems. The fact that many youths today have a great ambition to grow in learning, and to be a full time *shliach*, is part of the solution. Changing that would be shortsighted and irreversibly destructive.

I believe it’s time we protect our children from the growing resistance to their accomplishment, to shield them from parents and teachers who hide their laziness behind popular terminology, and to cultivate positive *chassidische* social pressure alongside healthy academic competition.

Rabbi Y. Katz

■ BEN HEI HEI RESPONDS ■

Thank you for raising these important points. Dialogue is very important to help clarify our ideals.

Your letter seems to confuse two distinct points: the appropriate *avoda* for the individual and the person's value system. Understanding the different points will help answer the questions in your letter.

HIGHER OR BETTER?

The purpose of my article was to point out that there are differences in *avoda* between individuals, and as great as a specific *avoda* may be, it will not be suitable for all people. A *baal eisek* must recognize that working is his form of serving Hashem.

However, while a *baal eisek* must know his own mission and value it, he must recognize that the *avodas Hashem* of the *yoshev ohel* is higher than his own is. The *yoshev ohel* dwells in a place of *kedusha* and spends his time involved in holy pursuits, while the *baal eisek* spends his time and energy on mundane matters in the physical world. This does not mean that the *yoshev ohel* is better (and perhaps the contrary! – see Hayom Yom 29 Av), nevertheless, he is more connected to *kedusha* in a revealed manner.

Therefore, if a *baal eisek* appreciates *kedusha*, he will automatically appreciate and admire one who is steeped in *kedusha* through *davening* and learning Torah.

LOOKING UP

Being aware of other types of *avoda* is vital for the *avodas Hashem* of the *baal eisek* himself. Only when the *baal eisek* appreciates the supremacy of Torah and *avoda*, can he succeed in his own *avoda* of elevating the world.

To explain:

The advantage of the *baal eisek* is that he brings the light *kedusha* into the darkness of mundane life, a place where the *yoshev ohel* does not enter. However, that holy light is found in the realm of Torah and *avoda*. For this reason, the Rebbe explained, a *baal eisek* must begin his day with

davening and a *kvius itim* of learning, so that he has the light to take with him into the world.

Simply said, only when the *baal eisek* recognizes that Torah and *avoda* reign supreme, will he approach the physical world with the power to raise them to *kedusha*. If, however, he is engrossed in his business, he will lose touch of his goal, and the world will only drag him down.

[A joke related among chassidim that illustrates this point:

The *sfira* of *Chochma* expressed interest in making a *shidduch* with the *sfira* of *Malchus*. At the vort, *Malchus* began to list off all its *yichus* – having originated from *Kesser*, which is higher than *Chochma*.

Hearing this, *Chochma* was disappointed, "The reason that I chose you was because of your *bittul* and ability to receive from me, which ultimately brings out your inner greatness which emanates from your source. If however you recognize your greatness and are unable to subjugate yourself to receive from me, then your source will not be revealed and you will remain lower, and I am no longer interested in the *shidduch*."

This is actually the theme of the *maamar* *Lecha Dodi*, taught at the *kabolas panim*, in connection with the relationship of a husband and wife.]

A *baal eisek* who understands this, will appreciate the contribution a *yoshev ohel* makes towards his worldly *avoda*. He will want to attach himself to him and receive the *kedusha* that he has to offer.

In conclusion: Yes, the *baal eisek* must appreciate and value the one who is attached to *ruchniyus* and *kedusha* all day, yet he must recognize his unique *avoda* and not abandon it.

THE POSITION OF THE SHLIACH

A side point:

In your article you use a shliach as an example of a *yoshev ohel*. It should be noted that this depends on the *avoda* of each particular *shliach*. If the *shliach* spends his time *davening*, learning and giving *shiurim*, then he is a *yoshev ohel* (one who

sits in the 'tent' of Torah and *tefilah*). However, if he is also involved in organizing events, meeting with supporters and managing a Chabad House, he is actually a *baal eisek*.

Understandably there are differences among *baalei eisek* as to how far into the world they draw *kedusha*. The *shliach* is only engaged with the world as it pertains to *kedusha* directly (managing a Chabad House and raising money for spreading *Yiddishkeit*), while the *baal eisek* is stooped in worldly matters *per se* (albeit with the *ultimate* goal of using the money for *kedusha*).

As always, there is an advantage in each one:

One who is still involved with matters of *kedusha* stands higher and closer to his source, while the one dealing in business has the advantage of elevating even those areas completely devoid of any *kedusha* (pure business).

BEING HONEST

There is one more point that you raise that should be addressed:

It is obvious that all that we have written was for

those who are seeking the truth, and are willing to pursue it even at great effort. If someone wishes to use these concepts to "hide their weaknesses behind popular terminology," the loss is their own. However, the truth must be said for the benefit of those who seek it. [As Chazal explain that Hashem does not destroy the sun and moon, even though they are served as *avoda zara*, "Should he destroy his world because of those fools?!"]

Indeed, there are unfortunately parents today who knock the importance of any serious learning, claiming that their child is incapable. This should not withhold us from fulfilling our obligation of guiding our children, each one on the path appropriate for him, and not "lead him entirely off the proper path" (as the Frierdiker Rebbe writes).

For this reason, it is imperative that all *shailos* be brought before *rabbonim* and *mashpiim* who are competent in the field of chinuch, so that they can distinguish between a cop-out and a *bona-fide* difference in *avoda*.

Is it our sincere hope that readers will take this concept to heart, and see to it that steps are taken to give our children the guidance and direction appropriate for them.





my PERSPECTIVE

Two Sides of Social Pressure

Aharon Lindenblit

▪ UNDERSTANDING OUR MOTIVATION ▪

There are many trends, which on the surface seem to be innocent, yet upon further investigation emerge as negative developments.

A reader will naturally ask, "what difference does this make?" After all, these trends are being followed regardless, so what benefit is there in analyzing and understanding the underlying motivation?

There is great value in pointing out such undercurrents and raising a constant awareness. Most of us do not knowingly choose to do wrong. We simply have *taavos* and at times succumb, without fully appreciating the severity of our actions. However, when the subconscious motivations and far reaching results are pointed out, there is a great chance that the newfound awareness will bring us to improve our behavior.

Besides, understanding the issue is worthwhile even for those who do not engage in the specific behavior. By clarifying and distilling the correct *hashkafos*, they know what to avoid, and they will recognize the threat even when manifest in other guises.

▪ SOCIETAL IMPACT ▪

Merely living in Western Society, among values drastically different from Jewish values, poses a constant challenge for those striving to live by the ideals and values of Torah. This challenge is not only concerning behavior, or the aggressive means used to entice the masses to indulge in popular culture, but also, and in fact more hazardous, is its influence on the underlying core values of a Torah-based lifestyle.

One example of this phenomenon is the heightened importance lent in western society to the ideal of personal autonomy – the notion that "It's my life and I decide what to do with it". From a Torah perspective, a person does not have the right or freedom to choose one's path. On the contrary, one is created to complete a very specific task and mandate, regardless of one's interest in serving Hashem or not. It's not about personal preference or choice.

Obviously, a person can choose to ignore his destiny and turn his back on the mission he was given, however, that would be a missed opportunity and disastrous offense. Freedom, in the sense of being able to pursue one's own passions, is not a value in Yiddishkeit.

This aspect is difficult to accept for those of us raised in a democratic country. We intuitively feel that something is fundamentally wrong with a Yiddishkeit based on *kabolas ol*, a binding obligation to follow Torah irrespective of the person's interest or passion.

It is for the same reason that we have difficulty submitting to spiritual authority. If we agree with the authority we heed their advice, and if not, we ignore it in favor of the prevalent notion, "It's my life and I choose how to live it". Obedience when one agrees is not submission.

■ COMMUNAL NORMS ■

A similar notion that has earned a negative connotation is the adherence to communal norms. The fact that people may see you as strange is not a factor in the decision-making process to the modern American mind. Standing out for being original, creative and unique is seen as a positive goal.

[The reality is, though, that the so-called freedom to act on one's passions is a delusion. Everyone in the secular world follows the crowd and pays enormous attention to the latest styles. People work hard to be "in" and "with it". With what? With whatever everyone else is doing. Thus, they have enslaved themselves to what other people think is cool or popular.]

While the Torah does require us to follow its lifestyle even in the face of spiritually destructive social pressure, yet it lends much value to the preserving of communal standards that binds all its members.

"*Ho'odom hu medinini*," man is a social being, says the Rambam. We humans are very much influenced by the people around us. For this reason, Yidden throughout the generations have whenever possible tried to live in *frum* pockets, knowing that this will facilitate easier *frum* living.

A facet of this community structure was a set of standards and societal expectations that ensured that the community members' behaviors were consistent with Yiddishkeit. The societal expectation and pressure due to the unspoken threat of feeling excluded by being viewed upon with disrespect ensured adherence to Yiddishkeit even when one

was not in the mood and his own *yiras shomayim* would not suffice to hold him back from a given activity.

In Western Society, such a scheme suffers from ill repute and is referred to with the derogatory term "social pressure." To the western mind, being ostracized from a community for not following its religious standards is seen as anti-democratic coercion, reminiscent of Iran.

[It is interesting that while this approach is so loathsome when it comes to religion, nonetheless, avoiding befriending someone because he or she dresses unfashionably or nerdy is just an inevitable part of life...]

We are taught in America to value our personal freedom, the opposite of which are behaviors imposed by the community one is raised in. The American wants to be able to do whatever he pleases without suffering any consequences. Why should an individual have to pay the price of conformity for the sake of the general community?

■ WHAT'S THE POINT? ■

One may wonder about the constructive value of coercion via social pressure to promote and perpetuate Yiddishkeit. Can it breed truly religious individuals, or does it merely produce people who outwardly appear to be religious, solely to satisfy society's expectations while they lack inner conviction?

Of course, ideally our religious motivation should be intrinsic, without need for "coercion." However, we are not machines and we have ups and downs, so we therefore create systems to limit the scope of our fluctuations in *avodas Hashem*.

As the famous aphorism goes, "good is not always ideal." It has therefore been the contention of great *rabbonim* throughout history, that it is worthwhile to set communal standards and punish lack of compliance with exclusion, despite the possibility of breeding a shallow dedication to Yiddishkeit.

History has proven that the overall and long-term benefits of upholding the communal standard, override any resultant lack of quality in *avodas Hashem* that results. This approach held all *frum*

communities together throughout the generations.

■ GENUINE AHAVAS YISROEL ■

I envision some readers protesting vigorously that this approach flies in the face of *ahavas yisroel*, embracing every Jew regardless of their behavior. However, on the contrary, this approach is a direct outgrowth of care and concern for fellow Jews.

The preservation of communal standards ensures the viability of a *frum* community, servicing a much larger number than those who choose to be left out. When one is faced with a choice whether to benefit ten people or one, it's obvious that the many take precedence over the individual, and one should help the ten. That is because doing so is *ahavas yisroel* to ten people, and it does not imply any lack of *ahavas yisroel* to the individual.

The same is true on a communal level. Embracing people, who have snubbed their noses at community standards, spiritually endangers the rest of the community. It might look like *ahavas yisroel*, but it comes at the expense of many more people. Moreover, the majority of the community who upholds the standards are the ones being punished (by having to contend with a more difficult environment for raising children, for example), despite not being the ones who acted wrongly. Why are they not deserving of *ahavas yisroel*?

Torah's mandate to reach out to all Jews with unconditional love regardless of their level of observance, for which the Rebbe spearheaded the effort, is not the equivalent of an 'anything goes' approach, disbanding community standards. A delicate balance is required between respect for the individual and disdain for his behavior. This is truly a difficult *avoda* to despise a person's behavior, but love the person nonetheless.

[This is similar to the dilemma faced by the *hanhala* of a school on the rare occasion that they are left with no choice but to expel a student for negatively influencing other students. It's an unfortunate necessity that is not contradictory to *shlichus* and *hafatza*. The *hanhala* must do what it sees best under the circumstances and do it with utmost *ahavas yisroel* and respect to the student. However, they would be shirking their responsibly

by allowing the student to remain. Hopefully the student will find another program better suited to his individual needs. The same applies to a community.]

■ WHERE ARE WE HEADING? ■

The Lubavitch community, highlighted in its flagship Crown Heights, is in the midst of a trend towards more permissive community standards and expectations, which is being facilitated and abetted by eliminating the protective measure of social pressure.

The following is but one example of a phenomenon many view as benign, yet it reflects the desire to throw off the yoke of *frum* social conventions. Often even the perpetrators themselves are unaware of their subconscious motivation.

Every male who at one point studied in a *yeshiva*, wore a cloth or velvet *yarmulka* during that time. This means that anyone in our community today who wears a knitted or leather *yarmulke*, made a choice at some point to change his *yarmulka* for a reason. It leaves us wondering what was going through their mind when they purchased the new *yarmulka*.

I think the subconscious underlying motivation is to broadcast, "I do what I want and no one can tell me how to dress or behave. I have Shulchan Aruch that I'm forced to keep, but other than that I'm free from all my neighbors' scrutiny".

It's not only *yarmulkas*. The same thing is when the person next to me in *shul* walks around in white slacks. Why didn't his father wear those? It didn't dawn upon his father to wear them because he had an *ol'* – a societal expectation.

This *'ol'* did not cause him to feel stifled. On the contrary, he had an identity that he was proud of and was comfortable having to dress to his community's expectations. He expected it from his friends and they in turn expected it from him. The unified dress served as one of many details that allowed the mosaic of a Yiddishe *kehillah* to flourish as a body comprised of many individuals helping each other.

Today, the son doesn't take orders from society on how to dress, or about anything else for that matter.

■ WHY THE YARMULKA? ■

There's a point to be said about why the *yarmulka* is the article of clothing in which this manifests itself.

There is a prevalent notion – by some it is a considered opinion that they can articulate, while by most people it is a subconscious impression – that people who take religion seriously are so dogmatic, closed minded, sanctimonious, and intensely serious that they cannot take a joke. The best way to broadcast that 'I'm not from that ilk, I don't take my religion all that seriously, I'm open minded, understanding and fun loving,' is to take the religious symbol that Yidden wear and use that to send a message that 'I'm a lighter and easier going type of guy.'

■ MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS! ■

I imagine the kneejerk reaction of many readers will be, "why are sticking your nose in somebody else's business? Why are you being judgmental and scrutinizing other's behavior? Live and let live! There's nothing you can do about it, so why talk about it?"

First of all, the approach of "mind your own business!" regarding matters of another person's Yiddishkeit is not a Jewish approach. It is my business because we have a mitzvah to guide others and point out to them what they need to improve. Indeed "*kol yisrael arievim*" – all Yidden are responsible for each other.

The irony of a Lubavitcher saying "live and let live," when we have over 3000 shluchim mixing into other peoples level of religious observance, cannot be overstated.

Concern over breeches in (or corrosion of) communal standards can be justified not only from a Torah perspective, but from a sociological viewpoint as well. There is a famous parable about a traveler in a ship that was caught drilling a hole in the boat and when confronted he tried claiming that he was merely drilling a hole in his room. The lesson is that the behavior of one individual who is part of a community affects the entire community. One person who breeches an accepted mode of conduct opens the door for others to do the same. We don't live in a vacuum and we have a responsibility to others.

Are you doing your child a favor?

Leibel K.

Every parent wants the best for their child. Sometimes, however, while the parent may think he is doing his child a favor and making his life easier, he is in fact bringing pain upon the child in the long run and making his life more difficult.

One such area, which has become quite prevalent in our community, is the attitude parents have taken of not caring too much about the amount of Torah their child learns, with the intention of lightening their load. Whether he will learn a few *blatt* more or a few *blatt* less, does not make a difference to these parents; the main thing is that the child be *frum*, have good *midos* etc. Though at first glance this attitude may seem to ease the pressure for the child, the truth is that this will cause him undue stress.

The average *yeshiva bochur* spends about 10 hours a day learning Torah, and it is highly inconsiderate to make him feel that what he is busy with is not "the most essential thing in the world" and there are "more important things in life." A *bochur* benefits by growing up in an environment that relays the message of "*V'talmud Torah kineged kulam*," that the learning of Torah is of supreme importance and that mastering another *daf* in Yevamos or a *maamer* in 'Samech Vov' is the greatest accomplishment in the world. He will be enthusiastic about getting up in the morning and spending his day '*hurreving*' in learning. When a child sees the Torah beautifying the lives of the adults around him, and the pleasure they find in discussing and being involved in Torah, the child will not look at his *yeshiva* years as a burden. He will see them as the most exhilarating years of his life!

Agreeing to Disagree To Bring Moshiach

Chaya S.

In my second year of seminary, I faced a dilemma. I shared the year with about two dozen girls with at least thirteen years of education and plenty of Torah knowledge, diverse experiences and personality to each one. When this diversity came to a farbrengen or discussion about indefinite topics in the understanding of Chasidus or approaches to Chasidic lifestyle, I found myself developing my own positions. Hence the dilemma: Could I disagree and respect at the same time?

I subsequently realized that I wasn't alone in this dilemma, and also that the Rebbe already gave us its solution. On Chof Ches Nisan, 5751, the Rebbe urged us to bring Moshiach in a way of "lights of Tohu in vessels of Tikun." The lights of Tohu, the spiritual world of chaos, represent intense diversity, and the vessels of Tikun, the world of rectification, exemplify unity. To combine the spiritual strengths of these two worlds means uniting even as we disagree, and this, the Rebbe told us, is key to bringing Moshiach.

Chasidus associates *achdus* with the world of Tikun, but, adding the world of Tohu to the picture, the Rebbe expands the concept of *achdus* for our generation. The Rebbe's instruction to us hinges on the spiritual geography of both of these worlds, so let us go there.

The transition between Tohu and Tikun highlights their contrasting thrusts. Tohu consists of intense lights that overwhelm their containers, causing "*sheviras hakailim*," a spiritual explosion. Tikun represents a Plan B – a reconstruction with a more practical layout and lower voltage for a sturdier world.

In the *maamar* entitled Haichaltzu, the Rebbe Rashab equates Tikun's success with its *achdus*. The Rebbe Rashab explains that Tikun is able to survive because it introduces unity to the *midos*, allowing them to function harmoniously as the building blocks of existence.

In contrast, the *midos* in Tohu fail at sustained existence because they cannot coexist. In Tohu, each *midah* functions in a state of full self-expression. If

the *midos* were musicians, in Tohu they would each be playing stunning solo performances - simultaneously. The result is cacophony, and then silence, as the musicians, or the *midos*, silence one another with their aggression. So do the *midos* in the world of Tohu strangle each other with their expansiveness.

In Tohu, the *midos* are aware of only their own value. From any one *midah's* point of view, the existence of any other *midah* threatens its own singular value and, as such, cannot be permitted.

Essentially, the *midos* are seven facets of Hashem's expression. Such a consciousness enables the regrouping of the *midos* into a sustainable whole in the world of Tikun. Redefining itself as one of various complementary Divine expressions, each *midah* is able to express itself while allowing the others to do the same.

Thus, Tikun's structure of mutual inclusion characterizes it as a paragon of unity. In contrast to Tohu, the *midos* in Tikun inhibit their individual forces to make room for one another, reflecting their nullification to their mutual Source. The lesson for us, as pointed out by the Rebbe Rashab, is that, in spite of their differences, each member of the Jewish people and *halachically* valid point of view has to be included to complete the symphony of *avodas* Hashem.

Tikun presents an image of *achdus* wherein each element has its place, forming a healthy whole. The Rebbe presented a new image of *achdus* by including the intense diversity represented by the lights of Tohu in that structure. In the context of our mission of bringing Moshiach, the Rebbe gave us the two-fold task of incorporating all of our inner strength, unique qualities and original ideas into the effort, and realizing that we are not competing but complementing each other in that effort.

The Rebbe's message to us, paraphrased, could be: Do those many, original, intense things you need to do to bring Moshiach, and, meanwhile, get along.

Are We Doing it Right?

Esther Rochel Elkaim

Each student is a unique entity unlike any other. There is no one-size-fits-all in the educational system. “Educate a child according to his way, even when he will be old he will not depart from it.” (Mishlei 22:6, Shaar HaYichud VeHaEmuna) However, although the manner of education may vary according to the personality and intellectual abilities of the child, the goal of education should always be the same, which is to bring up a true Chossid who has *yiras Shomayim*, *hiskashrus*, and at least a decent knowledge of Torah (Nigleh and Chassidus).

Yes, the outside world's influence has never been able to infiltrate our world so easily as today. However, the Internet is also an incredibly powerful learning tool. We just have to know how to use it for the goodly purpose for which it was created. The previous generation also had its set of challenges, hippie mentality, atheism, communism, magazines, books, billboards, movies, the radio, etc. The medium may be different today, but negative influences have always existed and we have always known how to keep them at bay thanks to Chinuch al Taharas HaKodesh.

Nevertheless, if *ch"v* we let the *goyishe velt* and its viewpoints infiltrate our very education system, how can we fight it?! Yet, in many ways, this is just what has happened.

In the *goyishe* world, after high school many students go on a gap year to some remote location to volunteer or overseas for an international experience. Also, most go to colleges far from home where they live in dorms or with friends in order to "find themselves," explore life without parental supervision, experiment

all sorts of things, etc. Hasn't that sort of mentality crept into our system, where all that is different is that instead of a gap year, it's a *shlichus* year, and instead of college, it's a Yeshiva or Seminary? How many horror stories happen to young people who on their own just can't handle all what the world seems to offer? Maybe the fact that the *goyishe* mentality of individualism and love has entered our world is preventing many from marrying and causing *r"l* numerous divorces, in addition to the fact that many young people have never really witnessed their parents living and acting as a couple, as after high school they've really only come home for the *Yamim Tovim*...

Finally, the Rebbe has always been against college, both for the *makom tuma* that a university is and for the *goyishe* viewpoints taught on many subjects. Some subjects, such as math, accounting, nutrition, etc. aren't inherently *treif*. Others, such as psychology, are very grey because although many ideas are common sense and in agreement with the Torah, many others aren't. Most are not in direct conflict with any *halacha* in the *Shulchon Aruch* but the underlying principle is. For example, some of the disciplinary methods don't teach a child *busha*, respect for others, *kibbud av va'eim*, following orders without always understanding the reasons right away (*naase venishma*), *teshuva*, etc. as they are viewed by the Torah. Modern psychology is also often at a variance with the Torah's views on individualism, *tznius*, marriage, etc.

It is our obligation to evaluate the situation and find solutions to improve our community and bring it back to where it was only twenty years ago.



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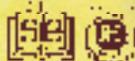
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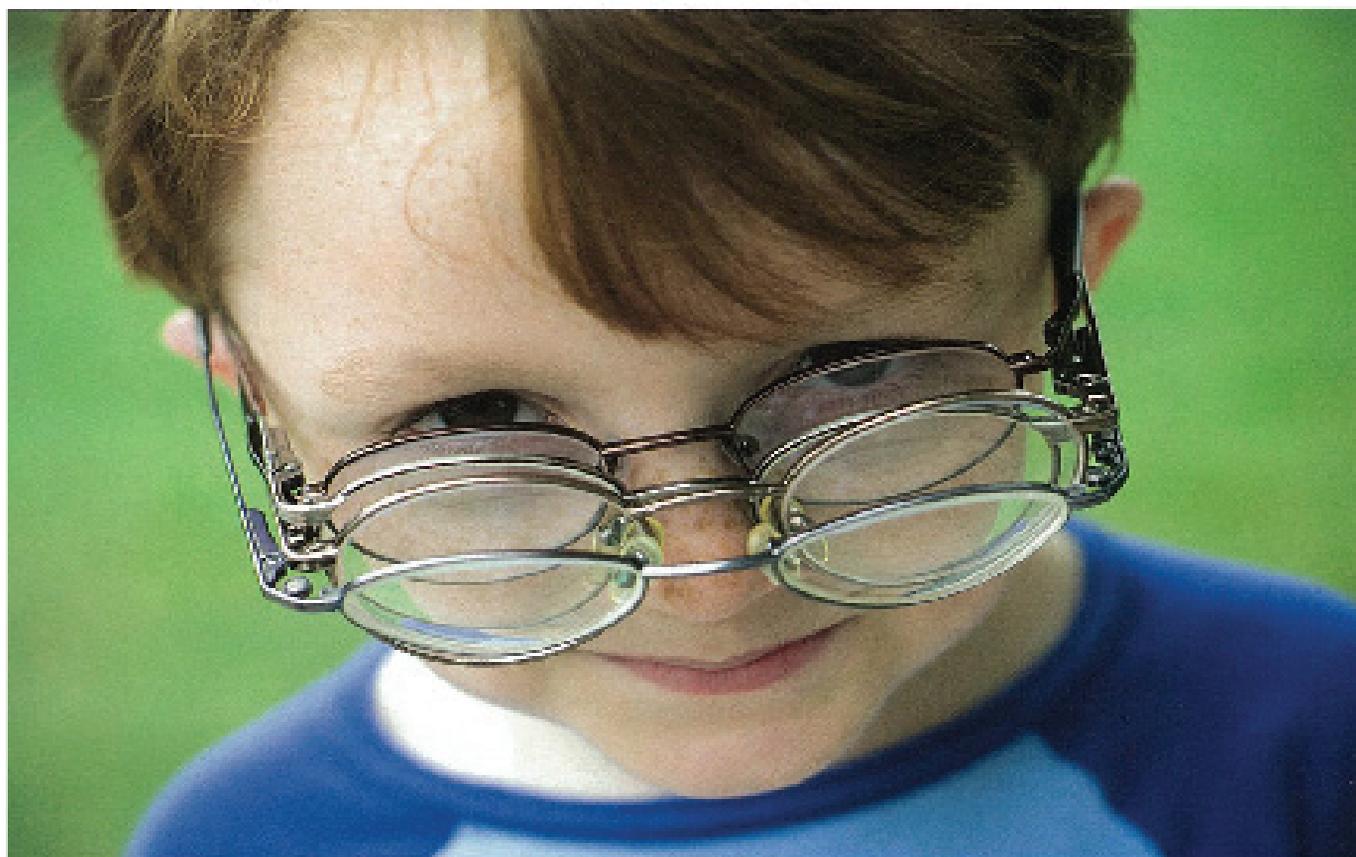
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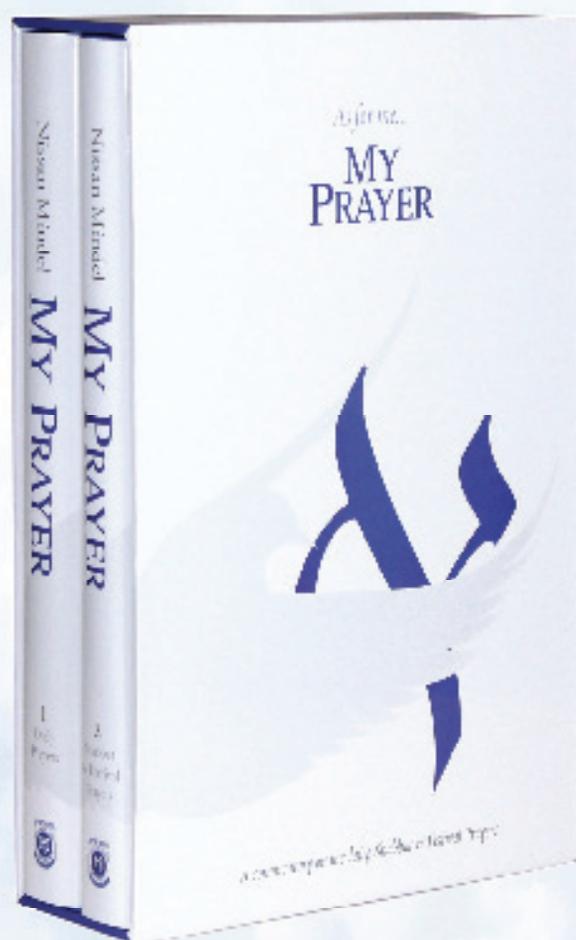


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