

Perspectives

ב"ה

FOURTEEN



A Man of Mind of Action

The Life and Writings of R. Chatche Feigin



Chassidus for the Czar's Soldiers

The Tzemach Tzedek - 150 Years since his Passing



The Chain of Chassidus

Rabbi Chaim A. Chazan



My Heroines

Rachel Altien



Chinuch in Our Time:

Rabbi Nachman Yosef Twersky – Part 1

Truth Breeds Truth

Harav Yitzchok Yehuda Yeruslavsky

My Journey to the Yeshivah in Lubavitch

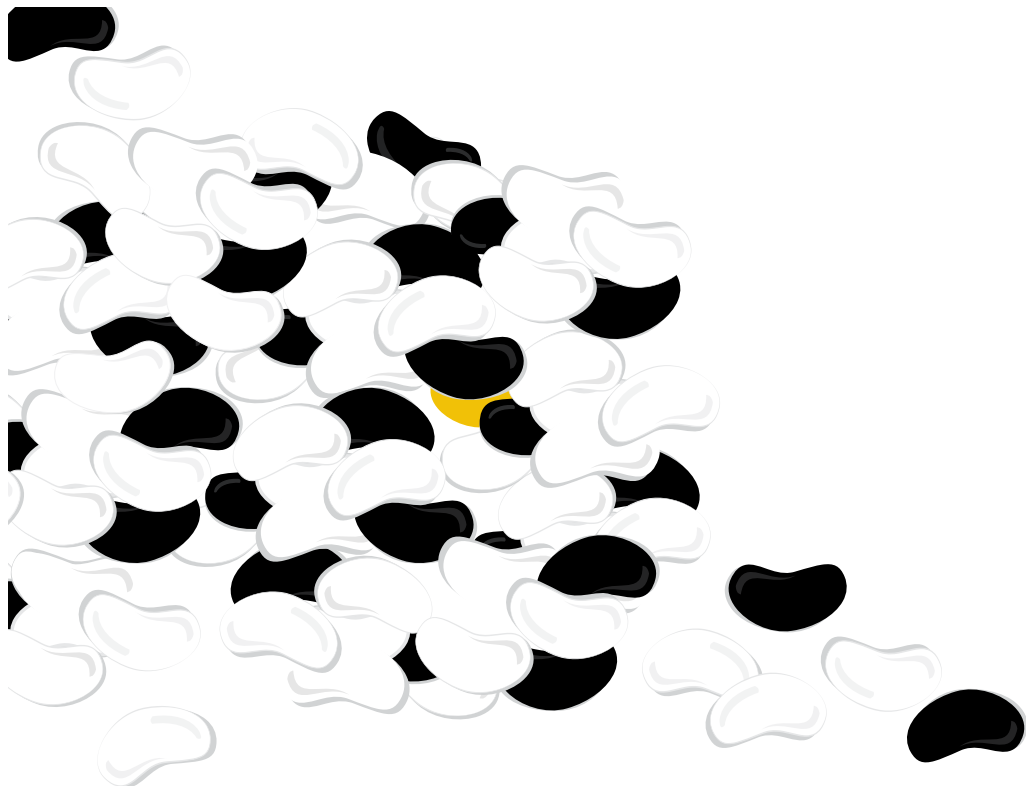
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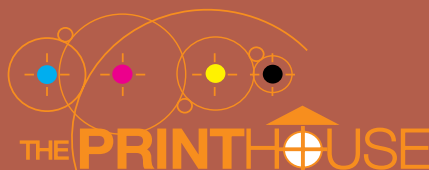
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Getting Through to Children



Harav Shmuel Vosner *a"b* was a foremost halachic *posek* and a well-respected Torah leader. His relationship with Lubavitch began in the 5690's (1930's) when he delivered a *Tanya shiur* in the Pressburg *yeshiva* and corresponded with the Frierdiker Rebbe on what it means to be a *chossid* and *mekushbar*.

In summer of 5736 (1976), Harav Vosner visited the Rebbe and was received with outstanding friendship. He took the opportunity to present the Rebbe with a dilemma he had: Oftentimes, he was called to speak before young children; what should he talk to them about?

The Rebbe advised him to discuss the basic meaning of the *bracha* “*shebakol nihya bidvaro*.” Children recite this *bracha* numerous times each day, and they should understand and consider what they are saying: that everything comes into being from Hashem’s word.



Where is the genius here? Why did Harav Vosner have to turn to the Rebbe with such a basic question?

To speak simply is not easy. Shlomo Hamelech and R. Meir are extolled for being able to draw down profound ideas into ordinary minds through apt parables. As Chassidus puts it: The brighter the flame, the further it can shine.

In our efforts to transmit lofty ideals to young children, we often feel compelled to compromise one of the two ends: the ideal or the child.

Attempting to remain faithful to the ideal, we will tell a child the unabridged truth. For example, when discussing the value of Torah study, we will quote from Chassidus how Torah is “higher than the worlds” and is “Hashem’s essential delight.” Mystified by what is far beyond his understanding, the child will either feel alienated or he will submit to memorizing what to him is practically gibberish.

Seeking to make the ideal more child-friendly, we may water it down or offer cute slogans which match childish thinking. Children are drilled that Torah and schoolwork are “important,” and some are encouraged to learn “to make the Rebbe happy.” Though these are true, they don’t expand the child’s perspective or deepen his understanding. The child does not walk away with any intelligible reasoning into which he can grow.

The Rebbe did not compromise either the child or the ideal. On the one hand, he spoke to children with such simplicity that even a young child could relate to it. He didn’t share abstract ideas or even a basic *vort* – only simple messages and directives that every child could appreciate.

Yet, on the other hand, the Rebbe did not talk down to children or just give them instructions. In his talks at the rallies, the Rebbe enlightened the children and empowered them in their *avodas Hashem*. In those deceptively simple addresses, the Rebbe touched upon such profound chassidic ideas as *emuna* and *hashgacha pratis*, the *neschama* of a Jew, the power of a *mitzva* and making the world a home for Hashem.

In fact, the Rebbe emphasized that the *advantage* of simple terminology is that it goes straight to the point, without getting sidetracked by fanciful ideas and abstractions.

The goal of *chinuch* is, of course, not just to give a child information, but to raise him up and place him on a higher path – “*ad shetehei shalbeves oila mei’eleha*,” – until he can illuminate on his own.

Rabbi Shimon Hellinger

General Editor

REFERENCES:

Sichos Kodesh 5737, Vol. 1, p. 112 – Though Dovid was punished for praising Torah as a precious commodity, children who cannot appreciate its true greatness as “Hashem’s pleasure” should be told just that.

Sichos Kodesh 5739, Vol. 1, p. 609 – Unlike those who mistakenly think that “*al pi darko*” means to give the child a variant interpretation, it is rather the whole truth in a language that he can understand.

Igros Kodesh, Vol. 3, p. 397 – To explain to a child about the Frierdiker Rebbe in age appropriate wording.

Igros Kodesh, Vol. 26, p. 410 – To explain to Pre-1-A children “in a suitable manner” about the *neschama*’s connection to Hashem.

Igros Kodesh, Vol. 15, p. 369 – The *sicha* spoken to the children contained fundamental concepts in Chassidus, it was merely presented in words that children could understand.

A grayscale photograph of a hand holding a baseball. The hand is positioned as if about to throw or catch the ball. The baseball is in the center, with its stitching clearly visible. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light gray.

Ball Practice

THE REBBE'S PERSPECTIVE

Parsbas Shmini 5740 • Sichos Kodesh 5740, Vol. 2, p. 812

Children would much rather play than learn all day long. We sometimes wonder whether or not we should encourage them to use their free time for schoolwork and additional learning. Portraying learning as the only worthwhile activity may repress them, but promoting unlimited play won't make them ambitious to grow. What is the healthy balance?

PURPOSEFUL PLAY

At the seder, in response to the four questions, we teach a child about the significance of Torah and mitzvos. Then, during the month of Iyar we teach a child how to make his everyday life a means to serve Hashem.

In simple words:

When a child concludes his studying and wants to play ball, it would certainly be inappropriate to reprimand him until he doesn't want to play anymore. The correct approach is to "teach the child according to his way," through using an inviting and sympathetic—yet firm—hand. In this way, the Rambam writes to award a child with nuts and monetary rewards to propel him to learn better.

Since a child naturally wishes to play ball, we must [not discourage him from playing ball, but rather] inspire him that his ball playing should be l'sheim Shamayim, for the sake of Heaven. The child should be taught that in order for him to better study Torah later on he needs to engage in physical exercise and run around.

Since a child naturally wishes to play ball, we must [not discourage him from playing ball, but rather] inspire him that his ball playing should be l'sheim Shamayim, for the sake of Heaven.

A PILL FOR THE ILL

The parents however, must realize that playing ball is like taking medicine. When someone needs a prescription, we certainly don't withhold it from him, on the contrary, we make sure that he receives it. At the same time, the treatment is clearly not appropriate for a healthy person.

Similarly, the goal is that the child should study Torah. However, since at his young age he is immature, underdeveloped, and wants to play ball, we must teach him that his play should be for sake of enhancing his Torah study and mitzva performance. The child is incapable of grasping that his play is only a "medication," but that must nevertheless be our attitude to the matter.

Only when a child is allowed to play and is taught to utilize it l'sheim Shamayim, will he continue on that path as he grows up.



Credit: Lubavitch Archives

POWERED BY YIDDISHKEIT

Another way for a child to serve Hashem in playing ball is to want to win so Yiddishkeit will be victorious. He accomplishes this when he wears tzitzis, eats kosher food, and davens beforehand that he should win. When he wins, he proclaims “Boruch Hashem!” As the Rambam writes, a true scholar is noticeable in everything he does.

Such conduct also helps the child play better and even win, since Torah brings success in all of a person’s material matters. The child then comes home and tells his parents that they too should daven to Hashem and conduct themselves as a Jew should, and then they will succeed.

Even if sometimes the child doesn’t win despite his observance of mitzvos, he recognizes that it is because of some deficiency on his part – he had skipped a line of davening or thought about the game while reciting Modeh Ani.

Since the world is dark, everything must be spelled out: I do not intend to encourage people to go and inquire how to play football. Such behavior would be immature and foolish, since one can better use that time to study Torah and fulfil mitzvos. It is only

Such conduct also helps the child play better and even win, since Torah brings success in all of a person's material matters. The child then comes home and tells his parents that they too should daven to Hashem and conduct themselves as a Jew should, and then they will succeed.

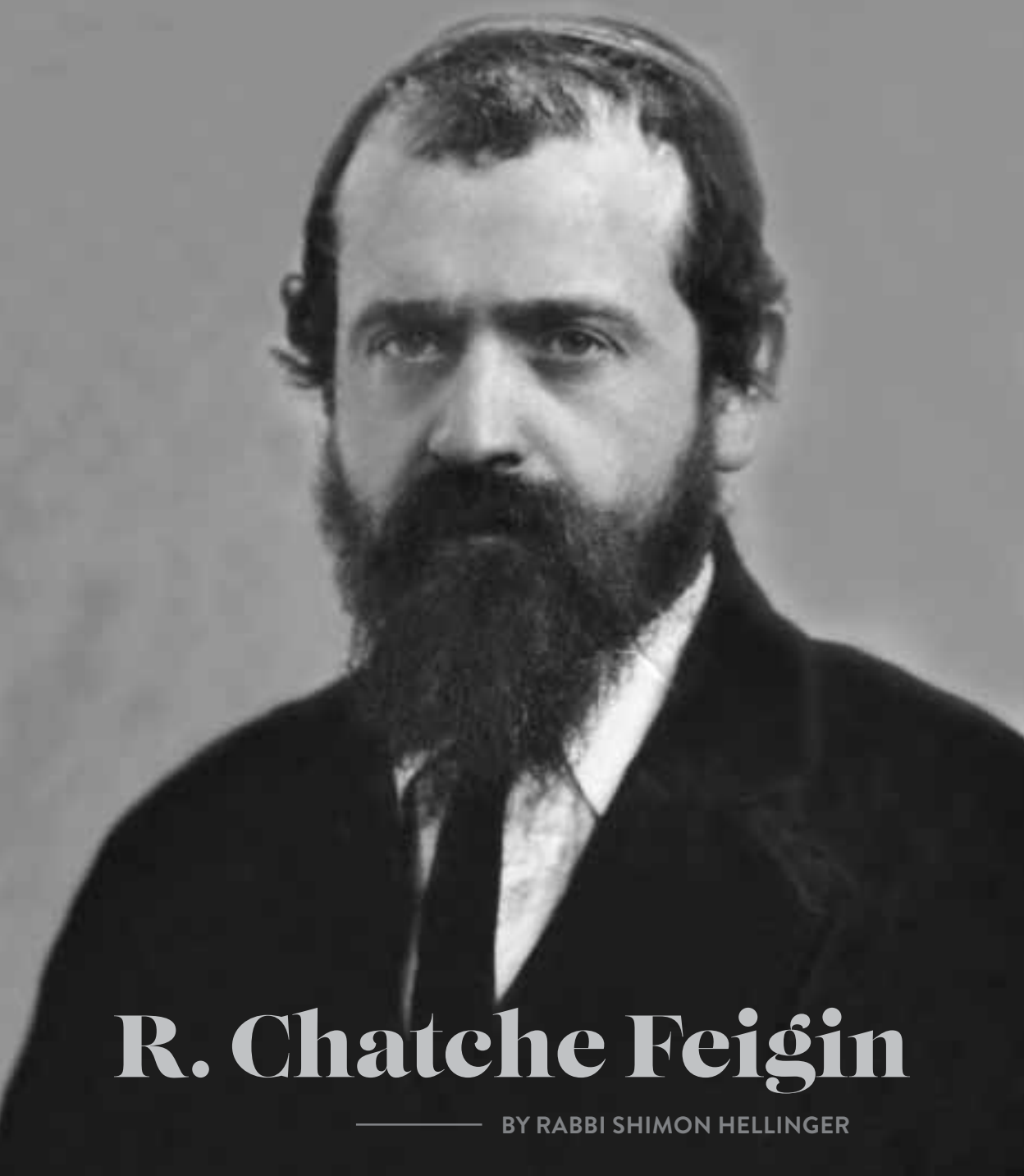
that in the education of children or beginners who don't yet appreciate the value of constant study, we need to draw them close and teach them to utilize their play l'sheim Shamayim.

Chinuch must come in stages: First the child is taught to accomplish good things through his play, later he can be taught a lesson from playing ball, until finally he can appreciate that playing ball and all material pursuits are merely a means for studying Torah and fulfilling mitzvos.

In Summary

- Children have an innate need to play. Discouraging a child from playing won't make him grow. Only by encouraging him to live fully at his current level will he make healthy progress to more advanced ones.
- The educator must keep the ultimate goal mind and know that the "medication" is only a temporary fix. He himself should be solely committed to the goal and "medicate" the child according to his needs.
- Though in the beginning the child is only capable of playing with a fringe benefit of avodas Hashem, he can slowly be raised up until he views it as only a means to an end. **P**

A Man of
Mind & Action



R. Chatche Feigin

BY RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

A Towering Tomim

R. Chatche (Yechezkel) Feigin was born around the year 5655 (1895) to R. Shmuel in Lukima, a small town in White Russia. At the young age of thirteen he was sent off to learn in Lubavitch. He first enrolled in the *chadorim* – the classes for elementary school age boys – and advanced through the divisions of Tomchei Temimim in Lubavitch and Babinovitch until he joined the *groiser zal*.

Young Chatche dedicated himself to the study of Chassidus and contemplated everything he studied until he knew it thoroughly. Wanting to contemplate at length without being limited to the *yeshiva* schedule, he would tell the *mashgiach* that he wasn't well and would retreat to his room to study Chassidus. It was only natural that he took an active role in memorizing and transcribing the Rebbe Rashab's *maamorim*.

The Rebbe Rashab suggested that R. Chatche discuss Chassidus with the Friediker Rebbe, and the two of them could often be seen walking together and discussing concepts in Chassidus. R. Chatche thought he was the teacher, until one time that the Friediker Rebbe spoke such abstract ideas that he realized that the [future] Rebbe was in another league entirely. R. Chatche suggested that the Friediker Rebbe had done this intentionally to remind him that a

Rebbe's perception is beyond a chossid's comprehension.

In 5672 (1912), the Rebbe Rashab founded the *yeshiva* of Toras Emes in Chevron, sending Chatche among the eight other students to establish the *yeshiva*. Unlike the slanted roofs of Europe, the roofs of Eretz Yisroel were flat, and R. Chatche would sit up there with his close friend R. Alter Simchovitch and discuss Chassidic concepts. He would also lay there himself and meditate on Chassidus for hours on end – sometimes up to nine hours straight! He once shared how during his stay in Toras Emes he had reviewed the *hemshech* (series of *maamorim*) from 5664 forty times.



R. CHATCHE FEIGIN

With the outbreak of WWI in 5674 (1914), all Russian citizens were forced to leave the Turkish controlled land, and they returned to Lubavitch.

In the summer of 5680 (1920), he married Sosha, the daughter of R. Yehuda Leib Ceitlin from Zuravitch. Over the years

that followed he served as *mashpia* of the clandestine *yeshivos* in Homil, Poltava, Nevel, Charkov and Rostov. He not only influenced the *bochurim* but the local *anash* as well; for example, in Nevel he had a practice of *farbrenging* once a week with the local *chassidishe melamdim*.



Teacher of Chassidus

APPRECIATION FOR CHASSIDUS

R. Mendel Futerfas learned in the Charkov *yeshiva* under R. Chatche's tutelage, and he related the following episode:

One Friday night, R. Chatche called me to his table and asked me if I was well versed in the *maamar* I had learned that week. I barely knew the *maamar* at all. Turning bright red, I stammered unintelligibly. R. Chatche sternly warned me that if within a week I would not know the *maamar* thoroughly, I would not be able to continue learning in the *yeshiva*. I reviewed the *maamar* all week, but because I didn't appreciate Chassidus, I simply memorized the material.

The following Friday night, R. Chatche called me over and he tested me on the *maamar*. After I finished he looked me

straight in the eye and told me: "I get the impression that you don't particularly enjoy learning Chassidus."

"Perhaps," I mumbled, averting his look.

"Why is that?" he probed.

"In *nigleh*," I replied, "there are *pilpulim*, questions and answers. Every *masechta* and *perek* is comprised of many *sugyos*, each one addressing a different topic. Chassidus on the other hand seems to always discuss the same things."

R. Chatche answered me with a *masbal*: "When a child begins to learn the *Alef-Beis*, he thinks there is just one *Alef* and one *Beis*. Only when he begins reading does he see that there is more than just one of each letter. Although this letter may look exactly the same in any context, its meaning varies. The same is true for Chassidus. At first glance it appears

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repetitive, but upon closer scrutiny one discerns that it is not so. Unique insight appears in each context.”

On another occasion, R. Chatche told the young R. Mendel after testing him, “Now that you are fluent in the *maamar* you are surely proud of yourself. You should know that an old simple Jew can have more pure *emuna* than you do.”

WHO ARE YOU HELPING?

R. Chatche had a deep and extensive knowledge of Chassidus – he was fluent in the entire *Likutei Torah* – yet, he was sensitive to the *bochurim*’s level of understanding. When a *bochur* asked a

question in Chassidus, R. Chatche would take the time to explain what the question was based on and how the *maamar* should be learned so that the question falls away. Similarly, in his *shiurim* he would explain the concepts simply so that every student could understand them.

In one of the copied *maamorim* from 5670 (“*Eter*”) there was an obvious error where instead of *kli* (כלי) it said *kal* (כל), and one *bochur* corrected it in his book. R. Chatche said to the *bochur*, “If the person learning the *sefer* will pay attention to what he is leaning, he will notice the error on his own and there is no need to fix it, and if he isn’t paying attention and flies through it without thinking, there is no difference to him whether it says *kal* or *kli*...”



Insightful *Mashpia*

SENSITIVE REBUKE

R. Chatche was the sort of *mashpia* who instead of delivering *mussar* would merely explain the importance of that particular concept so that whoever was guilty understood the words were directed at him, as illustrated in the following incident:

The trains in his time had stairs that would fold inward as it departed the station, leaving just the handlebar, and when it reached its destination the stairs would unfold and reopen. Some people had the practice that if they arrived as the train was pulling out of the station, they would grab the handlebar and pull themselves in. This was immensely dangerous, since a person’s feet could get caught in the

R. CHATCHE FEIGIN

spinning wheels, and many such attempts resulted in severe leg injuries.

Once R. Chatche noticed a *bochur* coming seconds late to the train, and pulling himself in with the handlebar. At the time R. Chatche said nothing.

At the next *farbrengen*, R. Chatche expounded on the phrase in Gemara, “He for whom a miracle is performed, the Heavenly Court deducts from his *zechusim* (merits),” and asked, “Why were the words *zechusim* chosen here and not more prevalent wording like ‘*mitzvos*’ or ‘Torah?’”

He continued, “The oil used for the *menorah* in the *Bais Hamikdash* had to be pure, ‘*zach*,’ the first drop emitted from the olive. Now, what could be wrong with the second drop? The olive is comprised of small particles which blend with the oil as it comes out. However, the first drop is pure, with no olive particles mixed in. The second drop, though also very pure, has bits of the olive itself.

“Now, in all that one does to serve Hashem – in learning Torah, *davening* or kindness for another – there are always elements of a person’s own self and personal interest. Only on rare occasions, perhaps even only once in an entire lifetime, do

we do something which is purely for Hashem and free of selfish motivation. Those Torah and *mitzvos* are called ‘*zach*,’ pure, and those are the ones deducted on expense of a miracle.

“Being so, is it not worth it to wait a half-hour for the next train?”



**“WE ARE
THE REAL
MECHALELEI
SHABBOS!”**

In the city of Poltava there lived a Jewish shoemaker who, due to communist pressure, began to open his shop on Shabbos. At that time such a practice was still rare. While in earlier times his friends would have tried to talk him out of it, under communist rule such “religious activity” could send them to Siberia for years.

Every Shabbos morning R. Chatche, who was the *mashpia* in the local Tomchei Temimim, would pass by the store on his way to *mikva*. During one *farbrengen*, R. Chatche mentioned how every Shabbos when he passes the open shop he is pained. The *bochurim* assumed that he was referring to the fact that a Jewish store is opened on Shabbos, but he immediately clarified: “We consider this shoemaker to be a *mechalel Shabbos* and

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At the Sheva Brachos of R. Mordechai and Gittel Mentlik

halachically that is indeed true. But then I began to think: Does he really understand what Shabbos is about and what it means to desecrate the Shabbos? It doesn't seem like he ever learned the laws of Shabbos and surely not its inner meaning. But we know what Shabbos is about, and have learned in Chassidus about the great holiness of its every moment. If a few minutes pass without us using it to the fullest for serving Hashem, then it is we who are the real *mechalelei shabbos*!"

TAKE ACTION!

Once, R. Chatche was *farbrenging* in a cellar while one *bochur* stood outside to watch for the Soviet authorities. Inside R. Chatche was demanding of the *bochurim* to improve in their *avodas Hashem*, and many of them internalized his words, even crying, realizing how far they were from where they should be. Suddenly, the door burst open and the *bochur* ran in, notifying them that someone was approaching the house, and everyone quickly ran to hide. Soon it became apparent that it was a false alarm, and

R. CHATCHE FEIGIN

with sighs of relief they returned to the table to continue the *farbrengen*.

R. Chatche then asked them, “Why is it that when you thought that you were in imminent danger you didn’t weep?”

“What would our tears accomplish?” the stupefied *bochurim* wondered.

“If so,” continued R. Chatche, “why did you shed tears during the *farbrengen* without wondering what *they* would accomplish? Tears alone do not suffice. We need to look for ways to get out of the spiritual quagmire that we are in.”

PERSONAL GUIDANCE

R. Chatche was a broad-minded person and wanted to learn everything, also perusing through *seforim* of *mussar* and *chakira* (Jewish philosophy).

He learned from every type of person and tried to convey this acute appreciation to his students. In Nevel there was a *mashpia* whose conduct was colorful, not at all similar to R. Chatche and to what he preached; still R. Chatche advised the *bochurim* to listen to him. He wanted them to be discerning themselves.

Students of R. Chatche were intellectually inclined like their teacher, and the heartfelt *avoda* of R. Itche der *Masmid* seemed to them simplistic. Once, R. Mendel Futerfas saw R. Itche express excitement during *davening* and was

turned off by his *chitzoniyyus* (external display of inner emotion). R. Chatche noticed his student’s impression and rebuked him, “You’re not more contained, you’re just emotionless. If you would feel just a hundredth of what he is feeling, you would be dancing on the table!”

Before his first *yechidus*, R. Mendel asked R. Chatche what he should ask the Rebbe, but R. Chatche told him off, “Why do you want *me* to go into *yechidus*? To a Rebbe you say what is in your heart.”

JUST LIKE EVERYONE ELSE

During one *farbrengen*, a *bochur* complained to R. Chatche, “If only you knew what type of issues I have...”

R. Chatche told him, “You’re mistaken. You’re simply arrogant and want to feel special. You’re not so foolish to think that you have outstanding talents, so you imagine that you have unique problems. But your motive is the same: to feel different. You need to come to terms with the fact that you have neither outstanding talents nor outstanding issues – you’re just like everyone else...”¹

DON’T LOOK FOR NEW IDEAS

When the Tomchei Temimim *yeshiva* in Warsaw first opened, most of the

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bochurim came from other chassidic groups and sported long *peyos*. Some of the Lubavitcher *bochurim* thought to improve their conduct by growing long *peyos* too.

R. Chatche was not pleased with their sanctimonious *hidurim*. He called them in and told them, “The Rebbe was *moser nefesh* for every aspect of *Yiddishkeit*, even the smallest detail. If growing long *peyos* is a *bidur* for us, the Rebbe would surely have told us about it. Of course, one who has this family tradition should continue to do so, but there’s no point in growing your *peyos* long just because you observed other people doing so.”²

DO YOU DEMAND IT OF YOURSELF?

R. Chatche once told the Frierdiker Rebbe that he was uncomfortable demanding of the *bochurim* practices which he had not mastered himself. The Rebbe replied, “As long as you earnestly demand it of yourself, it’s okay.”

(Another *mashpia* presented the same dilemma but was told, “Why should the *bochurim* suffer? Work on yourself!” Apparently, the answer depends on the nature of the one who asks.)



Director of Yeshivos

Besides presiding over his own *yeshiva*, R. Chatche also served as director of the *yeshivos* in the cities of Rahmen, Kremenchug, Ostoshkov, Polotzk and Vitebsk. He would travel to each one and write the Frierdiker Rebbe a detailed report, who would then instruct him on how to proceed.

R. Chatche would tell the *mashgichim* of *nigleh* and Chassidus that he did not want

them to “get along well with each other.” Instead, each one should passionately fight for his cause and try to draw the *bochurim* in his direction. This would contribute to a harmonious balance and develop the *bochurim* in a well-rounded manner.

NOT OUR CONCERN

At one point, the *yeshiva* was in such dire straits that R. Chatche, who was very organized and responsible, had to avoid

1. R. Yoel Kahn (*Darkei Hachassidim* p. 308).

2. R. Meir Avtzon – heard from Rabbi Shalom Ber Avtzon.

R. CHATCHE FEIGIN



people who had lent the *yeshiva* funds. On one occasion, he had to jump out of the *shul* window to avoid meeting the *shamesh*, who had lent the *yeshiva* money. Yet, he was not fazed. When the *bochurim* would question him about the future, he

would reply, “Why should you worry? It is clear that in the end everything will be as Hashem has ordained. It is not our issue; we must do what is required of *us*, and Hashem will do as He desires.”



The Rebbe's Secretary

In 5687 (1927) the Frieddiker Rebbe's secretary and *gabai* R. Chonye Marozov was arrested, and R. Chatche was appointed in his stead. In a letter, the Frieddiker Rebbe writes how he had chosen R. Chatche to work with him on an inner spiritual endeavor (*avoda hapnimis*): to communicate to *anash* the need to study Chassidus and follow its ways.

R. Chatche was known for his exceptional reliability, order and integrity – whatever he said was straight.

In a letter to a friend, R. Chatche writes, “My primary work for which [the Rebbe] wants me is the management of all branches of Tomchei Temimim, coordination of Agudas Hachassidim, public teaching of Chassidus and collection of *maamad* (funds for the Rebbe's personal needs and his discretionary fund). In the meantime, since R. Chonye and R. Chaim Liberman aren't here, I am preoccupied with answering the mail and I am overwhelmed with work day and night.”



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In another letter he described his exhausting load: "Since arriving to [the Rebbe] in Riga, I have only gone to eat lunch several times. All other days I only snack on something during the day, and arrive home at 11 or 12 at night. You can imagine that my work is not remunerated with normal pay and comfortable living."

What concerned R. Chatche most of all was, not the hard work or lack of *parnasa*, but the lack of time to study Chassidus.

WHY R. CHATCHE CRIED

R. Mendel Futerfas recalled:

My *mashpia* R. Chatche had a heart made of steel and he never let a tear fall from his eyes. He was filled with mighty determination and the confidence that he

was doing the right thing. But there were three times that I saw him lose that steely strength and break down crying.

The first time was after the *bistalkus* of the Rebbe Rashab on 2 Nissan 5680 (1920).

The second time was a few months later, during Elul, when the Frieddiker Rebbe took over the *nesius* and began to repair matters that had become devitalized due to his father's *bistalkus*. The new Rebbe's first efforts were aimed at strengthening Tomchei Temimim, and he requested of R. Chatche and that he become *mashpia*. Recognizing the immense responsibility of a *mashpia* to instill *emunah* and *bitachon* during those trying times, R. Chatche replied, "I'm not fit for the job. I can't take upon myself such a heavy responsibility."



At the Sheva Brachos of R. Moshe Pinchas and Mindel Katz

R. CHATCHE FEIGIN



Tzeischem L'Shalom for R. Moshe Pinchas Katz

“Stay here for the month of Tishrei,” replied the Frieddiker Rebbe, “and then we’ll see.”

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur brought a large crowd to the Rebbe. It was the first year of the Frieddiker Rebbe’s *nesius*, and many wanted to observe everything the new Rebbe did and said, thereby gaining a solid course for their lives.

It was time for *mincha* on Yom Kippur and the Rebbe was called up for *Maftir Yonah*. R. Chatche found himself directly across from the Rebbe as he began to *lein* the *haftorah*. The Rebbe read how Yonah was told by Hashem to go to the city of Ninveh and rejuvenate it spiritually, and how Yonah was hesitant to accept the

assignment and tried to run away. R. Chatche felt his insides churning; he felt as if the Rebbe’s words were directed at him.

The Rebbe read Yonah’s story slowly and with great feeling. As he recited the final words of Yonah’s regret, “*Ki milifnei Hashem hu borei’ach*—For he is fleeing from before Hashem,” the Frieddiker Rebbe began crying, and R. Chatche broke into terrible sobs. At that point he was ready to take on the Rebbe’s assignment.

And now for the third time R. Chatche cried:

It was 5687 (1927).

Under communism, chassidim were “disappearing.” They were being arrested,

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tortured, and executed without trial. The Rebbe's soldiers were foremost among these "enemies of the state." R. Chatche saw that the Rebbe needed more help, so he offered his services as *mazkir*, in addition to his role as *mashpia*. The Friediker Rebbe accepted his offer with gratitude.

Instantly, R. Chatche's workload quadrupled. Now he had to establish *chadarim*, *yeshivos*, *mikvaos*, and *shiurei* Torah in such a way that the communists wouldn't discover them. Everything had to be set up in hiding places, which needed to be changed very often. R. Chatche did the work with loyalty, self-sacrifice and a burning faith that there could be no other way. His nights were like days as he strained himself to help the Rebbe bring his holy plans to life. This awesome burden had to be carried in a very secretive way or lives would be lost in the most cruel and fearsome manner.

R. Chatche worked far beyond the limits of his strength. He hardly ate or drank or slept. His entire being was devoted to the Rebbe's work, and he put his own life in danger on a daily basis. He did all this without any complaints or thoughts of his personal needs. There was just one unmet need that truly disturbed him. He did not have the time to learn Chassidus, nor did he have time to *daven ba'arichus*. He felt his very soul was drying up; how could one be a chossid without learning Chassidus?!

This burden, too, he carried without complaint for as long as he could. But finally, one day, filled with the bitter taste of this loss, he entered *yechidus*. In *yechidus*, as one doesn't lie about one's condition, R. Chatche shared with the Rebbe what was pressing on his heart. He begged for half-an-hour per day to learn Chassidus because, he said, "Without that, my life is not a life."

The Rebbe listened intently to his chossid and considered his request. Then he replied, "In [one place], there is no *yeshiva*. In [a second place], there is no *mikva*. In [a third place], there are no *shiurim* at all." As R. Chatche allowed the Rebbe's words to sink in, he understood that his hopes for half-an-hour per day to learn Chassidus were not going to be realized. Long minutes followed where the chossid and his Rebbe both wept copious tears over R. Chatche's predicament. At last the Rebbe lifted his face to his chossid and said, "If we do only what we desire, what will become of all those vital things that need to be done? If we do what we want, will we be doing what Hashem wants?"

CURRENT CONNECTION

Though he continued to carry out his mission faithfully, R. Chatche didn't forget what living with Chassidus required, as depicted in the following story:

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The Frieddiker Rebbe once sent R. Chatche to *farbreng* with the *bochurim* in the Warsaw *yeshiva*. Since the *farbrengen* was called by the Rebbe, it was attended by the *yeshiva* staff, R. Yuda Ebber, the *rosh yeshiva*, and R. Boruch Friedman, the *mashpia*.

The assembled said *l'chaim* and sang a *nigun*, but R. Chatche sat in silence. They sang another *nigun* and then another, but not a word from R. Chatche. The *yeshiva* staff didn't speak up either, since it was R. Chatche who was sent by the Rebbe to *farbreng*. After about half-an-hour R. Chatche told the *bochurim*, "You probably heard that in Lubavitch there was a *bochur* by the name of Chatche Feigin, who was said to have reviewed a certain *hemshech* twenty times. He used to learn Chassidus and he had a lot to offer. However, these days he no longer learns Chassidus properly, and he is therefore an empty vessel with nothing to offer..." That was the entire *farbrengen*.

What he wished to convey to his listeners was that the impact of Chassidus doesn't last forever. If a person is actively involved in Chassidus, he will be connected. If not,

Chassidus won't be alive for him and he won't be able to transmit its message. Perhaps this was exactly the message

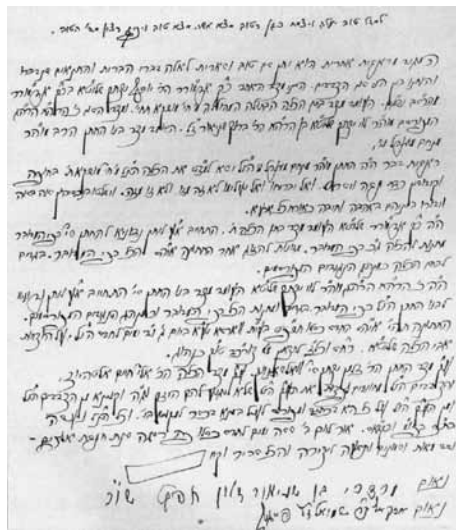
that the Frieddiker Rebbe wanted the students to hear.³

DEDICATED SOLDIER

Despite his fantastic mind and rich personality, R. Chatche dedicated himself to the tedious work that the Rebbe placed upon him, casting his own aspirations and

preferences aside.

R. Nissan Nemenov's style and disposition was the total opposite of R. Chatche's. R. Chatche was a thoughtful *maskil* who taught eloquent elucidations of Chassidus, with a comfortable personality, who could sometimes share a witty *vort*. By contrast, R. Nissan didn't lend priority to the philosophy of Chassidus, and focused on *kabala* *ol* and *avoda*, always intensely serious. Yet, R. Nissan considered R. Chatche his



Signed as a witness on the Rebbe's Tna'im

3. R. Yoel Kahn (*Darkei Hachassidim* p. 305) who added: Such an appreciation could only result from intense study of Chassidus for many years.

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At the head table at the Bar Mitzva of the Frierdiker Rebbe's grandson (on the far right)



mashpia, and would mention his name with outstanding respect. Perhaps it was R. Chatche's selfless dedication to the Rebbe's work that made an impression on the developing soldier.

R. Chatche's depth was noticeable even in his capacity as secretary. His letters to *anash* regarding *maamad* flowed with *chassidische bergeshim* and Chabad exposition on the nature and value of providing for the Rebbe.

In one letter, he explained why students aren't quite as committed to supporting their *rosh yeshiva* as chassidim are to supporting their Rebbe:

"Though it may seem like a superficial difference, it is an indication of something deeper. We have all heard of how chassidim of old also valued the Rebbe's family. The reason is that with an ordinary Torah teacher, the student receives Torah scholarship, and he is therefore connected only to his teacher's intellect. A Rebbe,

however, is of an essential nature and his impact is on the chassidim's essence. For this reason, chassidim felt an essential connection to the Rebbe, which expressed itself in cherishing the Rebbe's every needs – external and especially essential ones – but never limited to his teachings."

In another letter he explains why the Rebbe doesn't simply receive his needs from Above, and why the chassidim must provide for him:

"Although the sustenance of Jewish leaders is 'bread from Heaven,' it is nevertheless necessary to do some sort of natural act and 'go out and collect' as was done for the *mon*. (I realize that the term used there is *ba'am* (the nation) which has certain connotation [unscrupulous Jews], however, this can be caused by the *galus*. For just as it is a merit for the one who gives, it is also dependent on his merit as to how the Rebbe will receive his sustenance.)"

In a third letter he elaborates upon the prime importance of supporting the wellbeing of the Rebbe and the *yeshiva bochurim* even over more critical projects to save Yiddishkeit. He quotes the Alter Rebbe's explanation on why the first Beis HaMikdash would have been spared had they learned Torah properly, though they transgressed the worst *aveiros*: as long

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as the head is healthy, the body can be saved. So too, as long as some Jews serve Hashem and study Torah in its pristine form, *klal Yisroel* can be healed. [See Writings for the complete letter.]

MUSICAL TALENT

R. Chatche once bemoaned to the Frierdiker Rebbe about his inability to sing. Since R. Hillel Paritcher said that an aptitude for melody is connected to an aptitude for Chassidus, this would indicate that he is lacking in Chassidus.

The Rebbe explained to him that the capacity to sing and an aptitude and appreciation for music are two unrelated skills. It is the second skill which is intrinsic to a wholehearted appreciation of Chassidus.⁴

TRUE EXISTENCE

One Simchas Torah *farbrengen* went very late, and the Frierdiker Rebbe, who was very particular to *daven mincha* at the exact time, kept on asking for the time. R. Chatche didn't want the *farbrengen* to end, and saw to it that the Rebbe be told an incorrect time.

After a while, the Frierdiker Rebbe sensed that something was amiss and said to R. Chatche, "*Ohr Ein Sof* (Hashem's infinite light) is not a true existence; the expression of the G-dly Essence (*gilui ha'etzem*) is also not a true existence. Mincha at the exact time – *that* is a true existence!"



FINAL YEARS



In Kislev of 5688 (1928) R. Chatche and his family left Russia and joined the Frierdiker Rebbe in Riga, where R. Chatche continued his work as secretary. At the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's *tena'im* on 6 Kislev 5689 (1929), he was called upon to be one of the witnesses.

In the summer of 5689 (1929), he travelled to America days ahead of the Frierdiker Rebbe to prepare for the visit and accompanied him throughout his stay there.

In 5693 (1933) he moved along with the Frierdiker Rebbe to Warsaw and in 5695 (1935) to Otvozk. At that time the *Hatomim* journal began to be published, and R. Chatche was appointed to oversee and edit the section of questions and discussions in Chassidus.

4. R. Yoel Kahn (*Darkei Hachassidim* p. 310).

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With the outbreak of WWII, R. Chatche and his family fled to Warsaw, and on 5 Teves 5700 (1940) they escaped to Riga together with the Frierdiker Rebbe. Many efforts were made to arrange for R. Chatche's escape to America, all of which were unsuccessful.

On 9-10 Tammuz 5701 (1941),⁵ the Nazis made an *aktion* in Riga and herded thousands of Jews into the *shul*, while others were made to stand and watch. R. Itche *der Masmid* opened the *aron kodesh*, removed a *sefer Torah* and exclaimed, "We have the great merit of fulfilling the *mitzva* of *mesirus nefesh al kidush Hashem*. Let us rejoice!" He laid his hand on the shoulder of R. Elya Chaim Althois

and R. Chatche, and they broke out in a joyful dance to the tune of the *bakafos nigun*. The Nazis doused the building in gasoline and set fire to the *shul*, and everyone inside perished. R. Chatche's wife, his son Shmuel Leib and four daughters were murdered by the Nazis at a later date. *Hy"d*.

The Frierdiker Rebbe took the news very hard. One day in 5705 (1945) the Rebbe was urgently called to the Frierdiker Rebbe's apartment where he found the Frierdiker Rebbe unconscious on the floor, surrounded by doctors trying to revive him. On the table was a letter with an account of how R. Chatche, R. Itche and other chassidim perished.



R. Chatche's life and teachings portray the ideal synthesis of profound Chassidic life with pressing action. May his memory be for us a guiding light. **P**

Thanks to *A Chassidisher Derber* magazine,
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Special thanks to Rabbis Heshel and Zalman Ceitlin
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זכות הרבים יעמוד להם לכל טוב גשמי ורוחני

5. See Otzar HaChassidim – Russia and Poland, p. 551, §46, that this is the correct date and not 10 Kislev 5702 as previously thought.



THE VIRTUES OF Discussing Chassidus

R. Chatche served as the editor of the "*Shaarei Chassidus*" column in the famed Lubavitcher periodical of pre-war Europe, *HaTamim*. This column served as a site where chassidim and *temimim* could raise questions and offer explanations in the topics of Chassidus they were learning.

PREPARED BY RABBI YEHUDA LEIB ALTEIN

Discussing Chassidus

The following is a letter sent to R. Chatche by an anonymous writer, who took the periodical to task for including such a column, followed by R. Chatche's response (printed in the third issue of *HaTamim*, pp. 303–304).

Question

As I read the *HaTamim* periodical and reached the column titled “*Shaarei Chassidus*,” I was shocked. The unique advantage of us chassidim is the fact that we have an authority—the [Frierdiker] Rebbe—who resolves any difficulty we might have in general, and especially in Chassidus. What room is there to discuss and debate concepts in *Toras HaChassidus*?!

I was even more taken aback when I saw that the writers discuss the Chassidus said by the Rebbe himself. Why don't we just ask him to explain any difficulty we may have in understanding his words?!

I am not trying to provoke you, *chas veshalom*, rather to bring the truth to light. If my advice will be accepted, I suggest that this column be terminated.

A Deep-Rooted Approach

You bring up an important point that needs to be clarified. In fact, this is one of the reasons we printed (in the previous issue) a letter of one of the Mittlerer Rebbe's chassidim to a colleague, raising a question

in *Torah Obr*. He did not ask the question to the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe at that time; rather he addressed it to a fellow chossid. By printing this letter, we wanted to demonstrate that the approach



By printing this letter, we wanted to demonstrate that the approach of chassidim to discuss concepts of Chassidus amongst themselves has always been the attitude in generations past.

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of chassidim to discuss concepts of Chassidus amongst themselves has always been the attitude in generations past.

PILPUL HATALMIDIM

Why indeed is this the case? There appear to be a number of explanations:

MULTI-FACETED LETTERS

It is known that the letters of Torah are *osiyos atzmiyim*, quintessential letters that contain within them a tremendous amount of intellectual “light.” When learning Torah, each person grasps and

questions in Chassidus fall under this category as well; they are expressed with *osiyos atzmiyim* that can be studied and understood in various ways. It thus follows that even after a Rebbe supplies an answer to a question, the student must apply effort to uncover the meaning of his words to the best of his understanding.


It is in this area where there is room to discuss topics of Chassidus. Each person can reveal and present what he has merited to grasp from the holy words of our Rebbeim, and we can thus receive new ideas and appreciation from each other.

FUSING OUR MINDS WITH CHASSIDUS

When grasping an intellectual subject, the concept should fuse with the student’s intellect until it becomes part of his way of understanding, just like an idea he has conceived on his own. It is true that for genuine study to take place a student must

submit himself to understanding the words of his teacher. However, it is also important to ask questions and discuss the subject matter he has learned with his colleagues, as this will help the ideas become engrained in his thought process.

An added advantage to asking questions is the fact that they elicit a deeper



From the fact that they are called “students,” we can infer that they have a teacher. But if so, let them ask their teacher to resolve their doubts!

receives from these letters according to his intellectual capacities and according to his deeds.¹

When a true teacher reveals and speaks words of Torah, he uses the *osiyos atzmiyim* of Torah that contain within them numerous facets of intellectual “light.” According to my opinion, the answers given by the Rebbeim on

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dimension of the intellect, helping the student understand the concept in a more profound way.

This can help us understand a *mishna* in *Avos*. The *mishna* (6:6) lists forty-eight ways through which the Torah is acquired, and one of them is *pilpul batalmidim*—discussion among students.

From the fact that they are called “students,” we can infer that they have a teacher. But if so, why should they discuss the subjects between themselves? Let them ask their teacher to resolve their doubts!

However, as explained above, for the subject to truly unite with their minds (or to use the wording of the *mishna*, to truly *acquire* the subject), they must question it and discuss it between themselves.

STIMULATING THE INTELLECT

There is a well-known saying, “A person would rather have his own foot than another’s head.” This adage applies to intellect as well; a person has more *chayus* in his own innovation than in an idea he has received from another.

Unfortunately, due to the hardships of the present times, even those who were once passionate about studying Chassidus have lost their *chayus*. One of the ways to rectify this is by giving them

the opportunity to come up with original explanations in Chassidus. When a person will think deeply into a subject to try to answer a question raised by a colleague,



Truth to be told, this is not the proper way to learn Chassidus. A person should be inspired to learn Chassidus because it is a G-dly intellect, not because he is able to innovate new ideas.

he will have the chance to devise an original thought and to uncover a new depth that will resolve the difficulty. This will stimulate him to continue studying Chassidus in depth.

Truth to be told, this is not the proper way to learn Chassidus. A person should be inspired to learn Chassidus because it is a G-dly intellect, not because he is able to innovate new ideas. However, this type of *shelo lishmah*, to inspire a person to study Chassidus by stimulating his intellect, need not be avoided. Regarding such phenomenon *Chazal* have said² that Hashem is *matir assurim*, that there

are certain “prohibitions” that Hashem permits. Eventually, with Hashem’s help, such a *shelo lishmah* will lead us to study Chassidus *lishmah*.

This is why we have included the “*Shaarei Chassidus*” column in the *HaTamim* publication, where *temimim* and chassidim in general can present their questions, answers to previously published questions, and novel explanations in Chassidus-related topics.

WHAT (NOT) TO DISCUSS

However, there is a point that should be addressed:

In general, it appears that Chassidus is divided into three categories:

1. Acquiring knowledge of *Elokus*, namely, to study about *seder hishtalshelus*, the creation of the world *yesh mei'ayin*, and so on.
2. Concepts in *avodah*. This means to take what is understood intellectually and bring it into the feelings of the mind³ and heart, and to translate all

that into actuality by improving our character and conduct.

3. The explanations of our Rebbeim in their *maamorim* on various *pesukim* and statements of *Chazal*. These explanations are what constitute the category of *sod* (the final section of the four categories of *pshat*, *remez*, *derush*, and *sod*).

Now, discussing Chassidus should be restricted to the first two categories listed above, i.e., to try to better understand concepts in Chassidus and to discuss ideas of *avodah* with each other. Both of these pursuits are Torah obligations incumbent upon each one of us: the Torah commands us (Devarim 4:39) “וידעת היום והשבות אל לבבך” – you must understand *Elokus*, and you must draw it down into your heart.

However, in my opinion the third category is limited to our Rebbeim alone. They are the ones who have the ability to reveal new explanations in *pesukim*, *maamorei Chazal*, and the *nusach* of *davening*, and our job is to learn and understand their words to the best of our ability, not to come up with novel interpretations.



Discussing Chassidus

Apparently, there were those who were still uncomfortable with the style of the "Shaarei Chassidus" column. In his introduction to the column in the fifth issue of *HaTamim* (pp. 490–491), R. Chatche addresses these concerns:

Some of our readers have asked:

It's one thing to print questions merely asking for an explanation in a *maamar* from one of our Rebbeim. This will not hold anyone accountable, and to the contrary, it will be beneficial, as explained above.

However, the "Shaarei Chassidus" column also includes questions on various concepts in Chassidus, some of which relate to the foundations of our *emunah*. If the answer is not provided in the same issue as the question, the loss can offset the gain, because the reader must wait for the next issue to find out the answer to the question!


GOING TO SLEEP WITH A QUESTION

Indeed, this claim is essentially correct. I am reminded of the story told about one of the great chassidim who explained why it is forbidden to peruse *sifrei chakirah* before one has entered the *pardes* of Torah, [i.e., when he is not yet at the level of delving into the hidden secrets of the Torah]. He said figuratively: "When one will learn these philosophical works, he might study the

questions until a late hour in the night and delay studying the answer until the next morning. Meanwhile, however, he is going to sleep with a flawed *emunah*!"

However, the truth is that this is one of the differences between the intellectual arguments of *Toras HaChassidus* and the intellectual arguments presented in *sifrei chakirah*, even those authored by the great Torah philosophers of our nation.

The philosophers based the discussions in their *sefarim* on human intellect. Using in-depth logical reasoning and discussions, they demonstrate the validity of the foundations of our *emunah*. However, there is a double disadvantage



This is one of the differences between the intellectual arguments of *Toras HaChassidus* and the intellectual arguments presented in *sifrei chakirah*

to this approach.

First of all, even after the student has grasped the principal foundation the *sefer*

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is trying to validate, he perceives it in a coarse manner, as it is viewed through the veil of human intellect. The reason for this is because the arguments used to prove the concept are taken from worldly ideas. Therefore, in a very subtle way, the person views the manner of Hashem's existence in a similar way as the existence of creations.⁴

Furthermore, it's possible that until the student reaches the truth, he will entertain a doubt in his *emunah*, *chas veshalom*. Any doubt in *emunah*, however small and subtle it may be, has a damaging effect on the soul. (This is the inner meaning of the *halacha* that even the smallest amount of *chametz* is forbidden. *Matza* is called *meichla de'mebeimnusa*, bread of faith, and when it comes to *emunah*, even the smallest flaw is detrimental.)

A G-DLY SEQUENCE

Toras HaChassidus, however, is different. Chassidus is primarily built on arousing the core of *emunah* inherently found within every Jew, revealing it, and expanding it. The intellectual element of Chassidus is merely there to provide a tangible framework for this pure *emunah*. Since the goal of *avodah* is to affect and transform one's natural characteristics, the concepts of Chassidus are also expressed using logical proofs that can be understood by the human intellect. However, they are arranged in such a way that an initial study of the concept will

arouse one's *emunah* and be understood by the *nefesh ba'Elohis*, and only then is it also grasped by the human intellect.

It goes without saying that the order in which the *maamorim* of our Rebbeim are built follow not only a logical system but a G-dly one. Indeed, when studying a *maamar*, it will sometimes seem as if it would have made more sense if the subject of the *maamar* would have been arranged differently from the way it was actually arranged. The truth, however, is that the system it is following is G-dly in nature, a way that will arouse the *emunah* of the student.

For this reason, chassidim have always avoided studying chassidic essays written by chassidim, even by those of great stature, except if they are coming to explain the words of our Rebbeim, or after extensive study in the *maamorim* of our Rebbeim.

THE POINT BEFORE THE CIRCLE

To summarize the difference between *Toras HaChassidus* and *sifrei chakirah*: *Toras HaChassidus* begins with the core of *emunah* and expands it until it reaches the human intellect. The student will therefore not deviate from the truth, because the core protects what expands from it. *Sifrei chakirah*, by contrast, are built on human intellect and make their way from there to the core. Hence, it is

Discussing Chassidus



When one learns Chassidus properly, the correct foundations are integrated into his mindset from the outset.

possible for the student to deviate from the truth, *chas veshalom*.

We can offer a physical analogy for this idea. If a person first draws a circle and then attempts to determine the central point, it will be difficult for him to identify it, and his conclusion will likely be inaccurate. By contrast, if he first marks the point, it will be easier for him to draw an accurate circle around it, and even if he fails, at least he knows where the point is.

Now we can return to the question raised above, regarding the publishing of questions on various concepts and explanations in Chassidus, some of which relate to the foundations of our *emunah*. Even if the answers are not published in the same issue, we will not be held accountable, because when one learns Chassidus properly, the correct foundations are integrated into his mindset from the outset.

Let's take, for example, the concept of creation *yesb mei'ayin*. The Baal Shem Tov explains that since the creation of the world is a *chidush*, the *dvar Hashem* must constantly be present in each creation and continue creating it, because if it would stop doing so even for a single instant, the creation would revert to nothingness.⁵ Chassidus brings a logical proof to this from the act of throwing a stone. Since flying upwards is against the nature of the stone, when the person's force wanes and ceases to lift it higher, it immediately falls to the ground.⁶

Now, when a student studies this concept in Chassidus, it becomes part of his mindset and the way his soul "thinks." Even if one were to question the comparison between throwing a stone and the creation of the world, no damage will result, even if the answer is not provided immediately.⁷ The only reason this proof is given is to bring the idea closer to the realm of human intellect; the core point, however, is not affected.

This all explains why nothing detrimental will occur as a result of publishing these types of questions. On the other hand, much can be gained from it, as this will stimulate others to come up with answers, thus broadening the Torah and glorifying it.



Developing a Love for *Hashem*

In response to a question someone submitted to *HaTamim* regarding the position of Chassidus on whether *davening* is a *Torah* obligation or *midrabanan*, R. Chatche penned a lengthy essay on the nature of *davening* and personal requests according to Chassidus (printed in Issue 7, pp. 719-721, and Issue 8, pp. 818-822). The following is one section from that essay.

In a letter to R. Chatche from 19 Iyar 5699 (1939), the Rebbe commented on the essay in great detail and argued with some of its other points (printed in *Reshimos* #158).

A DIFFERENT TYPE OF FEELING

Many *maamarei* Chassidus discuss the concept of developing *ahavas Hashem* during *davening*: arousing a love for Hashem in our hearts by reflecting on His greatness.

A superficial study of these *maamorim* may lead a person to believe that a love for *Elokus* can be aroused in much the same way as a love or desire to a physical entity. When a person learns about the existence of a certain desirable object or idea, he will automatically be aroused with a desire and passion for it. Similarly, it would seem, when a person will understand that *Elokus* is good, he

will automatically be inspired with a love for *Elokus*.

However, there is actually a major difference between love for a worldly pleasure and love for *Elokus*.

When it comes to worldly pleasures, even if one's heart is full of numerous passions towards a variety of things, he can still be aroused with a passion for something else. Loving Hashem, however, is different. Even if one understands and reflects on the appeal of *Elokus*, he will not become inspired with a love for *Elokus* if his heart is filled with physical desires. As the *Chovos Halevavos* writes,⁸ "Love for the Creator cannot reside in our hearts as long as love of the world resides within us."



**There is actually a major difference between
love for a worldly pleasure and love for *Elokus*.**

INTERFERENCES WITH AHAVAS HASHEM

The reason for this difference is as follows:

Even though the physical pleasures of this world are diverse and distinct, the allure each one possesses can be felt in the same way—with one's inborn, natural senses. Therefore, even if one's heart is already filled with passions, there is always room for more, as the Gemara says,⁹ "There is always room for something sweet." By contrast, the good of *Elokus* is refined and spiritual, and therefore it cannot be sensed as long as the heart is filled with coarse *taavos*.

Moreover, we find that a person who indulges in physical pleasures, loses his ability and desire to pursue intellectual study. In particular, he cannot feel *geshmak* and pleasure in these studies. Such a person is certainly unable to sense the *geshmak* of *Elokus*, which is immensely higher than the spirituality of intellectual study.

If so, what does Chassidus mean when it says that reflection on the greatness of Hashem will ultimately result in a feeling of love for Him? It is only true when analyzing the faculties of the soul as they stand alone. Chassidus explains that intellect and emotions follow the system of *ilab* and *olul*,¹⁰ which means that stimulating the intellect will

automatically lead to the corresponding emotion. However, when the soul descends into a physical body and the *nefesh hababamis*, this system is impeded. In such a state, contemplation alone will not result in *ahavas Hashem*.

AN EMPTY HEART

This, then, is the foundation of *avodas hatefilah*. The word *avodah* can mean to fix and rectify. In our context, this means that one must rectify the heart and empty it from undesirable passions. In addition

A person who indulges in physical pleasures, loses his ability and desire to pursue intellectual study

to contemplating on Hashem's greatness, one of the foundations of *davening* is to be aware of one's personal deficiency and insignificance.

In fact, it is this awareness that initiates the *avodah* of the entire day. When a person wakes up in the morning, he says "*Modeh ani lefanecha*." In other words, he thinks into how lowly the "*ani*" really is, and that this *ani* is standing in front

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Why does Chassidus bring a proof from a *mishna* dealing with earthenware vessels? Perhaps this alludes to the idea explained above

of a *Melech chai vekayam*, a living and everlasting King.

In order to reach this recognition during *davening*, we must begin beforehand, with the preparations which come before *davening*. This is why *Chazal* tell us that “one should not stand up to *daven* unless it is done with *koved rosh*,” meaning submissiveness and lowliness.¹¹ We must recognize how low we are, both in a general manner—from the mere fact that we have a *nefesh habahamis*, and in a more specific fashion—when each individual thinks about his negative character traits and especially his *aveiros*.

When we will reflect on this, we will realize how far we are from the truth and how all our waking hours are shrouded in darkness. We will sense how any feeling of achievement we might have is inherently false, and that in truth we are lacking in everything good.

This awareness alone will enable a person to be receptive to *abavas Hashem*, even if he has yet to remove all the *taavos* from his heart. He feels that whatever he has until

now is not truly good, and he recognizes how distant he is from what is truly good and that he is lacking something higher. (This feeling, which is closer to *yirah* than to *ahavah*, is easier to

arouse, because it is easier to be inspired with *yirah* than with *ahavah*.) Now that he feels that he is missing what is truly good, his heart is an “empty vessel,” and when he will reflect upon the good of *Elokus*, he will be inspired to desire this good.

When all this is accompanied by a request from Hashem to have mercy on his soul because of how distant he is from Him, and together with the fact that the time of *davening* is an auspicious time Above, a person can attain a love of Hashem during *davening*.

KORBANOS AND POTTERY

This concept is reflected in the *korbanos* brought in the *Beis Hamikdash*, for which *tefilah* substitutes today. When a *korban* was sacrificed on the fire of the *mizbeiach* that descended from Above, the divine energy found within the animal was elevated and incorporated into this heavenly fire. However, before accomplishing this sublime service, it was first necessary to slaughter the animal,

The Health of the Head

burn it, and remove the ashes, and a *viduy* was said as well. When it comes to *avodas batefilab*, these elements represent the preparations before *davening* described above and the recognition of one's deficiency and insignificance.

Perhaps we can tie this in to the Chassidic explanation that the word *tefilab* means to connect. Chassidus brings two proofs to this interpretation. The first proof is from the name Naftali, which is similar to the word *tefilab* and means to connect.¹² The second proof is from an expression found

in the Mishna,¹³ "*batofel kli cheres*"—to hold together an earthenware vessel (by smearing it with a coating).

Why does Chassidus bring a proof from a *mishna* dealing with earthenware vessels? Perhaps this alludes to the idea explained above. The connection to Hashem is the love of Hashem felt during *davening*. However, this connection can only be attained if it is prefaced with the awareness of one's lowliness, how he is but a mere broken piece of pottery.



The Health of the Head

In this letter to R. Yisroel Jacobson, who was active in amassing financial support in the U.S. for the Frierdiker Rebbe, R. Chatche provides an explanation to convey to American philanthropists the importance of supporting the Rebbe and the *yeshiva* at a time when many Jewish causes needed their support.

While on the subject [of collecting money to support the Rebbe and the *yeshiva* Tomchei Temimim], I will quote a *maamar* of the Alter Rebbe which in general is worthwhile for you to know, and it will also enable you to explain to outsiders the importance of supporting Torah institutions and Jewish leaders.

It is known what our sages have said regarding the destruction of the first *Beis*

HaMikdash: "Hashem has waived the sins of idolatry, immorality and murder, but he did not waive the sin of *bitul Torah*, lack of Torah study."

Now, the Alter Rebbe asks: How can it be that Hashem waives such severe sins as long as one studies Torah? This is the simple reading of the statement that even if one transgresses these three sins, he is forgiven if he studies Torah.

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Hashem forgives the Jewish nation even if there are transgressors of such severe sins as idolatry, immorality and murder, as long as there were also people who studied Torah and were true *talmidei chachomim*.

But doesn't the *posuk* clearly say, "And to the *rasha* Hashem says, 'Why do you speak my statutes?'" One who transgresses these sins is surely a *rasha* – in fact these transgressions are the basis of the Torah in both areas of "between man and Hashem" and "between man and his fellow"!

The Alter Rebbe therefore offers a different explanation. Our sages are speaking of the Jewish nation as a whole, for many sinners among the nation can bring about destruction upon the entire nation, for we are all as one body. Now, in a human body, if *R"L* one has a problem with his external organs – such as his arms or legs, even his eyes, or even if his entire body is ill – so long as his head and mind are healthy, he is alive and can be healed. Of course, the fellow needs treatment, but he can be treated. Whereas if the head is affected, he is lost *R"L*.

So too regarding the Jewish nation as a whole:

Even if there are such people who commit severe sins as the sages specify, and are truly evil and distant from Torah and G-dliness, so long as the "head," the Jewish leaders and all those who study Torah are complete – meaning that they study the Torah and are also in line with its teachings and are vessels for it – this gives our nation the power to sustain those who are distant from Torah, and they do not bring destruction upon our nation. But if, *chas v'shalom*, the spiritual destruction has reached the "head" and the Torah institutions, the nation is doomed.

Based on that (this is of course not the exact words of the Alter Rebbe just the content with some added explanation), the Alter Rebbe elaborates: Hashem forgives the Jewish nation even if there are transgressors of such severe sins as idolatry, immorality and murder, as long as there were also people who studied Torah and were true *talmidei chachomim*. Since the "head" was healthy, the *Beis HaMikdash* wasn't destroyed and the

The Health of the Head

Jews weren't sent into *galus*. Once Torah study ceased, the Jews were destroyed as a result of the *earlier* sins.

What is understood from all of the above is that supporting the *tzadik* of the generation and Torah institutions where Torah is studied according to its true

intent with *yiras Shomayim* — especially in the *yeshiva* of Lubavitch where the Torah study is blended with the “spice” of Chassidus — is truly crucial for the existence of the Jewish nation in *galus*; we need to be able to bear the yoke of *galus* until the coming of our righteous one speedily in our days. **P**

NOTES

1. Since Torah is divine wisdom, understanding it is not measured by one's intellectual abilities alone, but is also based on one's conduct. (Along a similar vein, see *Tanya*, Chapter 4: “One understands Torah based on his intellectual abilities and based on the source of his *neshamah* Above.”)
2. Midrash Raba, Vayikra 22:10. In Chassidus this is applied to temporary allowance for some forms of *yeshus* for the sake of reaching higher – see *Sefer HaMaamorim* 5769, p. 120, *Hemshech Ayin Beis*, p. 1057.
3. Chassidus explains that there is a certain level of feeling in the mind as well, expressed in the form of excitement from understanding the subject matter.
4. See the second issue of *HaTamim*, p. 185, for an elaboration of this idea (from the author).
5. *Shaar Hayichud Veba'emunah*, Chapter 1.
6. See, for example, the *maamar* “*Tanu Rabanan* 5643” (printed in the third issue of *HaTamim*, p. 281. *Sefer Hamaamorim* 5643, p. 40).
7. Questions on this topic were indeed presented in the “*Shaarei Chassidus*” column of the third issue of *HaTamim* (pp. 301–302), and answers were provided in the subsequent issues (pp. 390–391—from the author, 499–500, 598–600).
8. Introduction to *Shaar Abavas Hashem*.
9. *Eiruvim* 82b.
10. Loosely translated as cause and effect.
11. *Berachos* 30b and *Rashi* ad loc.
12. *Bereishis* 30:8 and *Rashi* ad loc.
13. *Keilim* 3:5.

Feature



Chassidus for the Czar's Soldiers

150 years since the Tzemach Tzedek's passing

Not Ignoring Their Plight

In 5587/1827, Czar Nicholas I passed the Cantonists decree that Jewish children would be forcefully conscripted into the Russian army. The main goal behind the compulsory military service was the integration of Jews into Russian society. As Nicholas purportedly wrote in a confidential memorandum, “The chief benefit to be derived from the drafting of the Jews is the certainty that it will move them most effectively to change their religion.”

The Czar was following the trend of European enlightened monarchies, which sought to integrate their Jews into the general society. Being a big believer in the education of the military, Nicholas attempted to modernize them primarily through conscription.

For this reason, the law called for Jewish conscripts to be taken from age 12 (instead of the standard draft age of 18), and in practice, children as young as eight or nine were snatched. The children were sent to schools or farms distant from home and any Jewish community, where they were educated and pressured to convert until they were old enough to serve in the army. Then they had to serve for a twenty-five year period. (It is estimated that during the 29 years that this decree lasted, close to 70,000 Jewish children were conscripted.)

When the decree went into effect, the Tzemach Tzedek immediately established three committees to combat it: (1) To travel to communities and assist them with lowering their quota. (2) To free abducted children. (3) To visit the various stations where the Cantonists were being held and to encourage them to remain faithful to *Yiddishkeit*. The Tzemach Tzedek also sent a messenger throughout all the chassidic regions instructing them to ban the “*chappers*” (Jewish men who abducted the children) from their communities and excommunicate them.

In 5603 (1843) word of this call to action reached the government, and they sought out ways to sentence the Rebbe for rebelling against the Czar. Not wanting to disclose their true intention, they invited him to a rabbinical conference in Petersburg together with other leading rabbis, government officials and *Maskilim* (leaders of the “enlightenment”) from Vilna and Riga. The topic of the conference set forth by the *Maskilim* was to organize reforms in the Jewish education and make it more efficient and progressive.

The Tzemach Tzedek treated the matter very seriously, and he opposed even the slightest change in the way of study. He wrote a detailed report for the government of why it was important for Jewish children to learn *Chumash* and *Mishnayos* exactly as they are printed in

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the original books, and did even not even allow for chosen sections to be selected or reorganized for clarity.

During the two-and-a-half months that the Tzemach Tzedek was in Petersburg he was arrested 22 times. Once, the Minister of the Interior told the Tzemach Tzedek, “You are rebelling against the Czar.” The Tzemach Tzedek replied that if a person rebels against the king he deserves the death penalty on his body, but if he rebels against Hashem, he deserves the death penalty on his soul. Which is a greater offense?

R. Yitzchok of Volozhin, who participated as representative of the *misnagdim*, warned the Tzemach Tzedek that he would lose his *Olam Haba* for risking his life. The Tzemach Tzedek responded that without Jewish life in This World, of what use is *Olam Haba*?¹

When the Cantonists stationed in nearby Kronstadt heard that the Tzemach Tzedek was in the region, they requested of their superiors that he come and address them. The request was passed on to the general who acquiesced, hoping that the honor

accorded to the Tzemach Tzedek would sway him to agree to their wishes.² (The formal request and the permission from July 1843 apparently exist today.)



Cantonist Herzl Yankl Tsam – resisted conversion for over 40 years in service

In the beginning of Av, all the Jewish infantry men, foot soldiers and sailors gathered in a grand parade to greet the Rebbe, who was accompanied by fifty chassidim. The soldiers spoke up, “Rebbe, we worked hard to polish the buttons of our uniforms for you. Now, please polish our *neshamos*, which have become besmirched.” And they burst into tears.

The Tzemach Tzedek said before them the *maamar* “*Machisi K’av Pesha’echa*” on a Jew’s connection to Hashem through *mitzvos* and the damage to that connection through sin, basic *teshuva* and a deeper *teshuva* of reconnecting to Hashem, and how suffering cleanses a person from sin. That last point was particularly relevant to the Cantonists who were subject to much suffering throughout their years of service, enabling them to see purpose and hope in their hardships.

1. *Sefer HaSichos* 5701, p. 57.

2. Though this was the simple reason for their agreeing, the Rebbe attributes this to the special greatness of the Tzemach Tzedek.

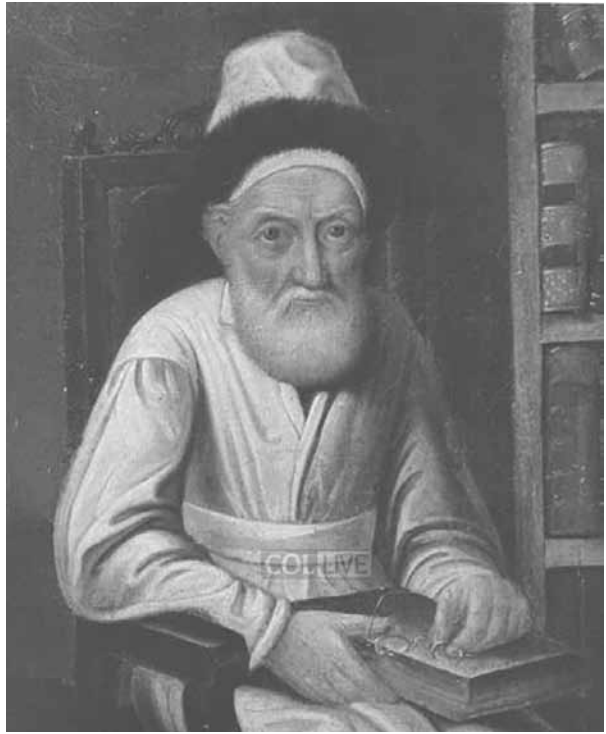
Not Ignoring Their Plight

After the *maamar*, the Tzemach Tzedek quoted and explained teachings from *Midrash Eicha* about *mesiras nefesh* for *Yiddishkeit* in colloquial language, and shared encouraging words on keeping *mitzvos*.

A day before the Tzemach Tzedek was to return to Lubavitch, he was notified that on the following day a group of three battalions – about 600 men in total – would visit him to thank him for his visit and his words. However, the officials warned the Rebbe that his previous talk had caused an uproar among the Jewish soldiers and he should watch what he said.

The soldiers gathered in the square outside of the Peter and Paul Fortress and the Rebbe recited the *maamar* “*Shema Yisroel*” in which he explained the meaning of a *neschama* and its connection to Hashem through Torah and *mitzvos*.

At the end the Tzemach Tzedek told them, “When a question arises of converting, G-d forbid, a Jew is obligated to literally sacrifice his life, even if the king himself commands him otherwise.” He urged the soldiers to spread this message among all



The officials warned the Rebbe that his previous talk had caused an uproar among the Jewish soldiers and he should watch what he said.

their fellow soldiers. As a result of these words, the Rebbe was condemned to six months of government surveillance.

Indeed, about five years later, Czar Nikolai came to inspect military maneuvers and asked the general who the soldiers were. When the general began naming Jewish

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names, “Yankel, Berel...” the Czar became angry and decreed that they convert immediately. The Jewish soldiers told him, “Your excellency, five years ago the Rebbe of Lubavitch visited us and told us it’s forbidden to convert, even if the Czar himself demands it. We would rather give our lives.” At that, they jumped into the lake and drowned.

(When the Frierdiker Rebbe related this story he commented there are two wonders in this story: Firstly, that the Jewish soldiers immediately recalled

what the Tzemach Tzedek had told them five years earlier, and secondly, the power the Tzemach Tzedek instilled in them to sacrifice their lives.)³

The Tzemach Tzedek left Petersburg on the 26th of Av and arrived in Lubavitch on the 5th of Elul, to the great rejoicing of the chassidim. Although the government had originally planned to keep the Tzemach Tzedek in Petersburg under their watchful eye, something which concerned the Rebbe very much, when they saw the strong influence he had on the Jewish soldiers, they decided to send him back to Lubavitch.

That Erev Rosh Hashanah the Tzemach Tzedek related how the soldiers in Kronstadt knew Tehillim by heart, and while polishing their buttons they would recite it. He had then said to them, “You polish buttons with sand and with water. Sand is Tehillim, and together with the tears they wash away the spots.” To which the soldiers replied, “To capture a city we don’t use tears, we sing a march.”

“Today is Erev Rosh Hashanah,” the Tzemach Tzedek concluded to his chassidim. “We must polish ourselves by saying Tehillim with tears from the depths of our hearts, but with a joyful soul.”⁴



3. *Sefer HaSichos* Summer 5700, p. 134.

4. *Sefer HaSichos* 5705, p. 3.



Inspiring them to Connect

THE MAAMORIM THE TZEMACH TZEDEK DELIVRED TO THE SOLDIERS

The Rebbe notes how in these *maamorim* the Tzemach Tzedek explains the deepest levels of connection to Hashem to individuals who were on the lowest rung of Jewish observance, and it contains deep lessons that can contribute depth and intensity to Torah study.⁵

These talks are a valuable resource of content and language to convey basic concepts of Chassidus to children and beginners. Fundamental topics such as a *neshama*, *mitzvos*, *aveiros*, Torah and *teshuvah*, are explained, not as abstract ideas, but as real and tangible everyday experiences.

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———— One with Hashem ————

In this *maamar*, beginning “*Shema Yisrael*,” the Tzemach Tzedek explains the meaning of a *neshama* and its connection to Hashem through Torah and *mitzvos*.

Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad - Hear O Israel, Hashem is our G-d, Hashem is one.

We must understand: Whom are we addressing when we say, “Hear O Israel”? Moshe, of course, was telling the Jewish

5. Sicha of Yud-Gimmel Nissan, 5739 (1979).

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people to “hear” that “Hashem, our G-d, is one.” But to whom are *we* speaking?

To understand this, we must first understand what a Jew is, what the meaning of Torah study and of *mitzvos* is, what is sin, and what is the meaning of *teshuva*.

**The Jew addresses
his *neshama* when
saying *Shema*:
“Listen, my *neshama*,
and understand that
He is our Hashem.”**

The first question: What is a Jew?

He has a *neshama* within him that Hashem breathed into him. We say [in the morning *brachos*], “You breathed it into me.” We mean exactly what we say, that “You, Hashem, breathed my soul into me.” When a person breathes, his breath is one with him until he exhales; there is no separation between the person and the breath within him. So, too, as it were, with Hashem and the *neshama*. Before Hashem “breathed” the *neshama* into man, the *neshama* was completely and perfectly united with Him. Hashem’s thoughts were the *neshama*’s thoughts.

HASHEM’S THOUGHT AND SPEECH

What is Hashem’s “thought” and Hashem’s “speech”? Torah. Therefore, we constantly find in the Torah that “Hashem spoke” and “Hashem said.” Even when Talmudic Sages disagree about a specific law, one having one opinion and the other the opposite, “These and these are the *words* of the living G-d.”

This, then, is the meaning of the *mitzva* of studying Torah: When one studies and *davens* and gives thought to what he is saying, he binds his thought to Hashem’s thought.

This also explains the meaning of “*Hakadosh Boruch Hu* becoming united with the *Shechina*” (*yichud kudsha brich hu ushechintei*). *Shechina* refers to the *neshama*, as we find *v’shachanti b’socham*, “I will dwell in them.” Elsewhere, we find *hashochen itam*, meaning also “Who dwells in them.” This *Shechina*, the *neshama* that dwells in them, becomes one with *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* when the person thinks and speaks Torah, which is the thought and speech of Hashem.

MAINTAINING OUR CONNECTION

This is also the meaning of *mitzvos*. *Mitzva* is the same word as *tzavsa*, attachment. Whenever one performs a

Inspiring them to Connect

mitzva, he binds the spark of life that is in the organ which is performing the *mitzva*, to the source of the *mitzva* on High.

This applies to every individual *mitzva* as well as to the “general” *mitzva* of *tzedaka*. When one earns a livelihood, he is involved in his labor with every one of his bodily organs. When he takes those earnings and uses them to revive the shattered spirits of the poor, then he binds the soul energy within all his organs with their source on High.

The opposite is the effect of sin. There are some sins for which the punishment is *kares*, i.e., the *nesbama* is *cut off* from the person, and he remains the same as an animal—only the animal soul remains within him. There are other, less severe sins, for which there is no *kares*, such as anger or frivolity, may Hashem save us from them. But when one commits these time and again they are even worse in their effect than the grave *kares* sins, because his *nesbama* becomes dulled, insensitive.

That is the meaning of *teshuva*. *Teshuva* means *tashuv bey*, return the *bey*, the last letter of Hashem’s Name, the symbol of the *Shechina*, and—as we have explained—this

is the *nesbama*. *Teshuva* then would mean “returning the soul to thoughts of Hashem.” *Teshuva* is more than mere regret. The Talmud says, “The wicked are full of regrets.” True *teshuva* means to *return* to Hashem, to be close to Him through reciting *Shema*, *davening*, Torah, and *mitzvos*. Thus the *Shechina*, the *nesbama*, is bound up with Hashem and the Torah.

“LISTEN NESHAMA!”

Our first question was the meaning of *Shema Yisrael*.

Shema means “understand.” *Yisrael* refers to the *nesbama*. The Jew addresses his *nesbama* when saying *Shema*: “Listen, my *nesbama*, and understand that He is our Hashem.” How will the *nesbama* understand this? By recognizing these very facts that He has breathed the *nesbama* into us, and that He “is one”—everything is united with Him.

We then continue, *ve’ahavta*, “You shall love Hashem.” How?

We can understand this from other things people cherish. For example, if someone is fond of money or some delicacy, he

Hashem sends hardships to cleanse us of our sins. It is appropriate for us to receive these hardships with true affection, because their purpose is our benefit.

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thinks of it with affection, keeping it close to himself. The same applies to love of Hashem; we endeavor to approach Him and bring Him close to us.

How do we bring Hashem close to us?

For this, we continue in the *Shema*: “You shall speak of them,” the words of Torah. “You shall bind them as a sign,” referring to *tefillin* and all the other *mitzvos*, since *tefillin* are compared to all the *mitzvos*. “You shall write them on the doorposts.” The possessions of men are kept within their doors. On the doorposts, in the *mezuzah*, we have the words, “Hashem

is one.” We declare in this way that the “One” is the master of everything within these doors. This is carried out through performing *tzedaka*.

Our Sages teach us that suffering purifies and cleanses. Erasing a single sin requires more fasting than we can endure. Therefore, Hashem sends hardships to cleanse us of our sins. It is appropriate for us to receive these hardships with true affection, because their purpose is our benefit.

The wise will understand.



— Correcting and Connecting —

In this *maamar*, beginning “*Machisi K'av Pesh'a'echa*,” the Tzemach Tzedek speaks of a Jew's connection to Hashem through *mitzvos* and the damage to that

connection through sin, basic *teshuva* and a deeper *teshuva* of reconnecting to Hashem, and how suffering cleanses a person from sin.



Inspiring them to Connect

One must accustom himself to bring it close to his heart that the world is like a body, and therein rests the *Shechina* like the soul in the body.

1. REMORSE AND RETURN

“I have erased as a thick cloud your transgressions and as a cloud your sins; return to me, for I have redeemed you” (*Yesbaya* 44:22). We must understand this call to return, for “I have (already) erased your sins,” so what is the meaning of return, or repent?

The matter is such: *Teshuva* has two degrees – *teshuva tataah*, a lower state of *teshuva*, and *teshuva ilaah*, a higher form of *teshuva*. The ordinary, simple *teshuva* is regret for past deeds, remorse so deep and intense that it embitters life itself, all because of sins one has committed. The superior *teshuva* is a return to Hashem, to be close to Him, as through *Shema* and *davening*.

2. SEE IT WITH YOUR EYES

But first, we need more understanding of the meaning of sins and faith and *mitzvos*.

Faith cannot properly be applied to Hashem. We cannot correctly say that A believes in Hashem and B does not. First, all Jewish people are called *maaminim bnei maaminim*, “believers and sons of believers.” They have a natural faith, as it were, and are the descendants of the Patriarchs, the original believers in Hashem (as we find in *Midrash Rabbah*, *Beshalach* 23, on *tashuri merosh amana*).

Furthermore, faith is meant for something that does not now exist, but one believes that it will in the future. Examples are the resurrection of the dead and the coming of Moshiach.

With regard to Hashem, however, it is written, “From my flesh I see G-d”: From my own person, I can learn the meaning of G-dliness. Just as I see an object with my eyes, since everyone can see that Hashem fills all Creation, constantly giving life to all. How do we see this? The verse answers, “From my flesh,” from my body. The soul within the body penetrates throughout the body, giving life to every single organ. Yet we do not see or understand the soul. We do see that a living person has a soul that gives him life, and when that soul

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departs from the body, all that remains is a lifeless corpse. Similarly, the world is a tremendous body, so to speak, receiving its life from His holy Name. Therefore, “From my flesh I see Hashem.” Whatever lives, lives by the power of life that He has granted it.

3. AWARENESS OF HIS PRESENCE

When a person reminds himself of this, he will certainly be afraid and ashamed to do wrong. As we see that people are ashamed to commit wrong in another’s presence, when someone is watching. Why is that? Because of that person’s soul, which is obvious from the fact that when that person is asleep, they are not ashamed. However, one who does not pay attention to [the presence of Hashem], nor takes it to heart to think about it, is described as “The fool [who] goes in darkness,” for he does not dedicate himself to think about it.

What can one do then? One must accustom himself to meditate on this frequently and to bring it close to his heart that the

world is like a body, and therein rests the *Shechina* like the soul in the body.

4. TO MAKE HIM A HOME

Our Sages have stated that since the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*, there is no dwelling place for Hashem in this world except in the four cubits of *halachah*, meaning in a place where Torah is studied. What does this mean?

The soul extends throughout the whole body, but its main place is in the brain, and from there, it spreads with its life-force throughout the body into every individual organ. Similarly, though “Hashem’s glory fills the world,” His main “dwelling place” is the place of Torah study, for Torah and Hashem are actually one. The power of the maker is found in his work. The Torah is Hashem’s “work,” and it contains within itself Hashem’s power.

Humans possess the powers of thought, speech and deed. In terms of the soul, these may be called *nefesh*, *ruach*, and *neshamah*, and the powers exist in a similar manner in terms of Hashem. Therefore, when one studies Torah, which

The *neshamah* is a part of Hashem, but when one commits an *aveira*, he “moves away” the *neshamah* and brings it under the power of impurity.



is Hashem's thought, or discusses Torah or *davens* with devotion (using speech), or performs some *mitzva* in actual deed, then through each of these activities, he becomes one with Hashem, since these are Hashem's thought, speech, and deed. Through Torah, *tefila*, and *mitzvos*, he brings Hashem into this world. Now we can understand the expression, "the place of *halachah*." *Halachah* means "going," for man "leads" Hashem into his world.

5. DISTRESS AND DEVOTION

Mitzva means attachment, becoming one with Hashem. For the *neschama* is part of G-dliness from above, and a *mitzva* is

the power to bring Hashem down into this world through doing what Hashem commands us to do. In this way, man becomes one with the One, with Hashem who is One, and besides whom there is nothing else. Man becomes a vehicle for the holiness of Hashem.

What is sin, *aveira*? *Aveira* means bypassing, going past, i.e., through a sin, he "moves away" from the side of holiness to something different, he becomes a vehicle for the opposite of holiness, the defiled, and the unholy.

Now, there is no blade of grass here on earth that does not have a source above that gives it life, and certainly *mitzvos* and *aveiros* have their source on High.

CHASSIDUS FOR THE CZAR'S SOLDIERS

“Hashem has made one thing opposite the other.” There are two opposing “chambers” above. One is the impure and unholy chamber, the source of life of the wicked, of adulterers, and of murderers. There are the chambers of holiness, the source of life of the saintly. The *neshama* is a part of Hashem, but when one commits an *aveira*, he “moves away” the *neshama* and brings it under the power of impurity.

It is true that the impure chambers themselves derive their life and existence from Hashem, as it is written, “You give them all life,” meaning *You* create and give vitality to everything. But it is also written, “When the wicked are destroyed, there is joy.” We can understand this with a parallel. People have fingernails and hair that live from the same life-force as the rest of the body. However, when they are cut, the body is not affected, and there is no pain in the cutting, not like the rest of the body.

There are four of these chambers of impurity, and they are called *choshech* (darkness), *anan* (cloud), *arafel* (pitch-blackness), and *nogah* (shining). These are the source for all the evil thoughts that plague man, for they are the source of the *yetzer hara*, the desire for evil. The chamber of *nogah* is the origin of melancholy and despondency. But why then is it called *nogah*, shining? Because there is a desirable sort of sadness that every *baal teshuva* (penitent) must first reach, an unhappiness, an agony for his

sins. “In every distress, there shall be a profit.” This is known as *teshuva tataah*, the inferior, lower form of *teshuva*.

Then can he attain *teshuva ilaah*, the higher form of *teshuva*, worshipping with devotion and sincerity and performing a *mitzva* with enthusiasm. He cannot reach the higher *teshuva* without experiencing the lower form first.

This means that one must first arouse himself to feel distress and anguish for his sins; they must trouble him and sadden him to the point that his very life is embittered. Then without question, Hashem the merciful will forgive him. “With great mercies, I will gather you.” I will bring you together, Hashem promises, wherever you are scattered with your wandering thoughts, and bring you close to Me. Hashem helps the penitent and takes him out of the chambers of impurity, as it is written, “I am Hashem your G-d who took you out of the land of Egypt.” As a result of the first stage of *teshuva*, his embittered feelings, Hashem has mercy on him and forgives all his sins. Of this, there is no doubt at all, for Hashem is truly merciful.

6. HAPPILY CLEANSED

But this is not yet all. He must still “scour” himself through self-affliction and fasting, according to the sins he had committed. Although he had already been forgiven, the body needs purification. *Teshuva*

Inspiring them to Connect

atonement, while suffering purifies and cleanses completely. We are told that all those who were condemned to execution during the days of the *Beis Hamikdash* were urged, before the sentence was carried out, to say the confession, admit the sin, and repent, even though the punishment was meted out according to the law.

But since the generation is too weak to fast very much, therefore, we are advised that every person must have a special time to consider all his actions (in seclusion). Besides this, he should fast according to his strength, for example, on Erev Rosh Chodesh, and he should accept the suffering sent to him from on High with joy and love. The Torah speaks of the “Happy in afflictions,” those who are happy that suffering comes upon them. The person will be joyous when he reminds himself that Hashem has sent these tribulations to purify him of his sins, as it is written, “Whom Hashem loves, he chastises.”

We can now understand the meaning of the *possuk*, “My sin is before me always,” and the later *possuk*, “You let me hear joy and happiness.” The meaning is: my sins are before me always, and I constantly remember my sins—this thought naturally awakens a feeling of melancholy and bitterness. But Hashem, Who is full of mercies, forgives him his sins, as we have mentioned, “With great mercies, I

will gather you.” Nevertheless, the person knows very well that his sins have not yet been purged through suffering, and therefore, when he does experience some pain—may Hashem protect us—he should accept it with happiness. For he realizes that he whom Hashem loves, He afflicts.

The *possuk* then continues, “You let me hear joy and happiness”—so that I should be able to attain the higher form of *teshuva*. For he accepts his troubles with love, and he serves Hashem with love and with the intention of attaching himself to Hashem—this is called *teshuva ilaah*, the higher *teshuva*.

We can now understand the *possuk* “return to Me,” which follows our opening words, “I have erased.” “Return to Me” means the higher *teshuva*; performing a *mitzva* with delight is called “coming back to Me.” Attach yourselves to Me through Torah and *mitzvos* with joy, for I have already redeemed every last one of you from his Egypt, his sins and evil thoughts. I have redeemed you through the lower form of *teshuva*, because we cannot attain the higher *teshuva* without first experiencing the lower *teshuva*. First we must awaken ourselves here below, and since our blessed Hashem is merciful, there will then follow an awakening on High to help man to achieve the higher *teshuva*.

The wise will understand. **P**

Chassidus

THE CHAIN — OF — Chassidus

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THE CHALLENGE

As a young *bochur*, I remember standing in front of a bookshelf containing the hundreds of volumes of *maamorim* of the Rebbeim and feeling lost and dispirited. *There is so much to learn, and I will most likely never learn all those seforim. Where would I even begin?* Although instinctively it felt wrong, I couldn't help wondering for whom these *seforim* were printed. How many people actually learn most of them?

As I grew older and learned more Chassidus, including several *hemsbeichim*, part of that bookshelf opened up for me. I knew I could and should learn the *maamorim* of the Rebbe, the Rebbe Rayatz, the Rebbe Rashab, *Torah Ohr* and *Likutei Torah*, but I never opened the sets of *maamorim* of the Alter Rebbe, Mittlerer Rebbe, Rebbe Maharash and *Ohr Hatorah* of the Tzemach Tzedek. I felt like a boy at the beginning of his foray into *Gemara* learning, standing in front of a bookshelf of *rishonim* and *achronim* and not knowing how to use them.

To understand how far these thoughts are from the truth, let's take a historical journey how and why all these *seforim* were printed. We will become aware of the vital importance that the Rebbe attributed to the publishing of Chassidus, the immense effort he invested towards that goal, and how can we make use of all those ostensibly mysterious *seforim*.



TRACKING DOWN THE MANUSCRIPTS

Shortly after arriving on the blessed shores of the United States, the Rebbe was appointed by his father-in-law the Rebbe Rayatz to direct Lubavitch's newly founded publishing house - Kehos. The stated goal was to publish *nusach Ari sidurim* and the *Torah* of the Rebbeim.¹

Prior to the establishment of Kehos, all the printed *seforim* of Chassidus Chabad could perhaps fill one shelf,² and virtually all of them were out of print. In retrospect, one might wonder how much of the Rebbeim's literary output the Rebbe Rayatz envisioned to publish.

Aside from the challenge to prepare such a vast amount of text for publication with limited resources and a dearth of qualified staff, there was a greater obstacle. Most of

the manuscripts had been left behind in Poland when the Rebbe Rayatz fled war-torn Europe. Although the vast majority of the Rebbe Rayatz's library was rescued and shipped to the United States, arriving long after the Rebbe Rayatz and his family,³ the three crates of manuscripts, (which were the Rebbeim's private collection dating back to the Alter Rebbe), were placed for safekeeping in Warsaw's American Embassy. German U-boats were notoriously torpedoing Allied ships, deeming it unsafe to send such precious cargo by boat.

When the United States entered the war, the Germans confiscated all the material housed in Warsaw's American Embassy. At the end of the war, when the Red Army ousted the Germans from Warsaw, the collection disappeared and remained lost, despite decades of search efforts. Aside from several volumes belonging to the



Warsaw under attack

collection that were discovered in Israel's National Library, Kehos was forced to publish *seforim* from handwritten copies, painstakingly hunted down by the Rebbe from private individuals and libraries around the world.⁴

One significant trove of more than sixty volumes of original manuscripts of the Tzemach Tzedek and the earlier Rebbeim was presented by the grandchildren of the Babroisker Rebbe, a grandson of the Tzemach Tzedek, who himself had received them as an inheritance. In return, Chabad published the *maamorim* of the Babroisker Rebbe.⁵

Another important collection that was given to the Rebbe was that of the celebrated chossid R. Dovid Tzvi Chein of Tchernigov, known as the Radatz.⁶

The breakthrough occurred in the late 5730's (1970's) when a large part of the lost treasure was discovered in Warsaw's Yiddish Historical Institute.⁷ After hefty negotiations with the Polish government, Chabad managed to secure the release of the invaluable manuscripts. In a clear manifestation of *hashgacha pratis*, the handwritten *seforim* finally arrived in New York days after the Rebbe suffered a massive heart attack on Shemini Atzeres 5738 (1977). The first time the Rebbe left his study where he recuperated after the heart

attack was to visit the library next-door where the newly arrived manuscripts were held. It's not hard to imagine that the joy and excitement that the Rebbe felt had a positive impact on his health.

PUBLISHING CHASSIDUS

Shortly following the arrival of the priceless archive, the Rebbe restructured the management of Kehos to facilitate and expedite its publication. Until that point, Kehos was not such a large operation and it was managed

The breakthrough occurred in the late 5730's (1970's) when a large part of the lost treasure was discovered in Warsaw's Yiddish Historical Institute.

collectively by R. Chodakov, R. Leibel Groner and R. Aharon Chitrik, who all had many other duties.

On Chanukah 5739 (1979), the Rebbe arranged that the members of *Vaad Lehafotzas Sichos* – the team that transcribed and prepared the Rebbe's *sichos* for publication before being edited by the Rebbe – should take over the practical aspects of running Kehos. Six months later at the Shavuot *farbrengen*,

the Rebbe launched a research team for Kehos,⁸ and demanded continuous detailed reports on the progress of all the *seforim* on which they worked.⁹ There was a period of time in 5742 (1982) when the Rebbe required a *daily* update on every project in progress.

During one *yechidus* around 5736-7 (1976-7), the Rebbe told R. Zalman Gurary, "If I would have the means, I would publish all of the Rebbeim's Torah."¹⁰ Hearing of the Rebbe's immense desire, R. Zalman accepted the financial responsibility for all the necessary editorial work and printing. From then onwards, with the costs covered, a steady stream of *seforim* began to appear in rapid succession.



The American Embassy in Warsaw

During the following years hundreds (!) of volumes were prepared for publication from the newly discovered manuscripts. To get an appreciation of the numbers, I glanced at a bookshelf of Kehos *seforim* and jotted down a rough overview of what took place from the year 5738 (1978) until *Gimmel Tammuz* 5754 (1994):

- The set of Alter Rebbe's *maamorim* jumped from approximately 6 volumes to nearly 30.
- A set of 20 volumes of the Mittlerer Rebbe's *maamorim* were published.
- Scores of volumes were added to the set of the Tzemach Tzedek's *maamorim* entitled *Ohr HaTorah*, which now comprises more than 40 volumes! Plus a set of over 20 volumes organizing topics from the Tzemach Tzedek's *maamorim* in alphabetical order was published.
- Approximately 10 volumes of the *maamorim* of the Rebbe Maharash were published, (an additional 14 have been published since *Gimmel Tammuz*).
- The set of the Rebbe Rashab's *maamorim* contains around 30 volumes and the bulk was published in those years.
- The Rebbe Rayatz's *seforim* were reprinted and many were added to comprise nearly 20 volumes, plus an additional 6 volumes of *sichos*.

■ A series of the *igros* of all the Rebbeim was published at that time, and by *Gimmel Tammuz* it contained 43 volumes (it has since expanded to 59 volumes).

■ Besides the Rebbeim's Chassidus, tens of other *seforim* were published and reprinted.

In total, nearly 250 *seforim* were newly published and many more were reprinted. (This list also doesn't include *seforim* published by other Lubavitch publishers, who during this period printed around 140 volumes of the Rebbe's teachings alone. Additionally, tens of English translations were published during those years.)

By *Gimmel Tammuz* the Rebbe's vision of printing the Rebbeim's *Torah* was essentially accomplished. In the last quarter of a century, Kehos has continued the Rebbe's project by publishing the few remaining volumes and producing new and improved editions of previously published works.

[About a decade after the fall of the Iron Curtain, a Stoliner chossid came across a treasure of Chabad manuscripts in the KGB archives. Copies were obtained and it turned out that they were part of the manuscripts left behind in the Warsaw

American Embassy that had never been recovered. Since then several *seforim* have been published from those manuscripts.]



A FUNDAMENTAL TASK

A sense of the fundamental importance that the Rebbe attributed to this accomplishment can be seen from the *sicha* delivered on *Yud Shvat* 5750 (1990), the 40th anniversary of the Rebbe's *nesius*, in which he discussed the achievements of

The Rebbe mentioned that there had been a major advancement in revealing Chassidus by printing the Torah of the Rebbeim that was locked away for generations, until that point unseen except by a select few.

those forty years.¹¹ The Rebbe mentioned that there had been a major advancement in revealing Chassidus by printing the Torah of the Rebbeim that was locked away for generations, until that point unseen except by a select few.

One of the first *seforim* that the Rebbe prepared and released for publication

was a *sefer* of *maamorim* of the Rebbe Maharash. Although more *seforim* of the Rebbe Maharash were printed in the following years, for whatever reason the completion of the rest of the series took longer than the *seforim* of all the other Rebbeim. Only two years ago, seventy years after the Rebbe published the first volume, the set was completed with the publication of *Sefer Hamaamorim* 5637; thereby the Rebbe's objective was successfully reached and virtually all the Torah of the Rebbeim has been printed. For a chossid with a *bergesh* and sensitivity towards the Rebbe's *inyonim*, the completion of such a monumental project is a cause of great joy and celebration.¹²

The Rebbe invested an immeasurable amount of time and effort in this goal of seeing that Chassidus be printed, both in a practical sense, and also in a spiritual sense (to "earn permission" for such an unprecedented revelation of *Elokus*).¹³ At a *farbrengen* in 5714

(1954),¹⁴ the Rebbe recounted that he was originally reluctant to publish Chassidus from manuscripts that the Rebbe Rayatz hadn't instructed him explicitly to print until he experienced a unique incident of *hashgacha protis*. An unobservant individual approached the Rebbe on his own accord and offered to obtain funds to publish the *maamorim* of the Alter Rebbe he heard existed in manuscript form. The foundation which he approached turned down the request, but they later came back and agreed to sponsor two-and-a-half times more than what they had been asked for.

On another occasion,¹⁵ when the Rebbe announced his intention to publish the famous *hemshech* "*Ayin Beis*," he addressed the responsibility and possible danger involved in making the deepest parts of Chassidus readily available to all. The solution that the Rebbe proposed was that the entire community should share the responsibility by donating one dollar towards the costs.

Recently, a 750-page historical work entitled *Hotzo'as Seforim Kehos* was published, outlining much of the Rebbe's involvement in Kehos. The author, Rabbi Zusha Wolf, traces the humble beginning of Kehos, when the Rebbe was involved in every detail from proofreading to distribution, and demonstrates his thorough involvement even during the ensuing years when the actual work was done by others.

The Rebbe's sense of urgency towards printing Chassidus motivated him to rush books to print, despite his affinity for the highest quality of production.

Another glimpse into the priority the Rebbe saw in printing Chassidus can be attained by perusing the Rebbe's correspondence with those who worked for Kehos, such as the late Rabbis Aharon Chitrik and Yehoshua Mundshine, and (יבֿלוֹחֵט"א) Rabbis Shalom Ber Levin, Zalman Chanin, and Gavriel Schapiro, among others, which have been published in various forums in recent years.¹⁶ Among the reoccurring features is the Rebbe's relentless prodding for the work to be done faster so the *seforim* can be learned sooner. When a work was published in a timely manner, the Rebbe expressed great satisfaction and pleasure.

The Rebbe's sense of urgency towards printing Chassidus motivated him to rush books to print, despite his affinity for the highest quality of production. One example is seen in the Rebbe's printing mere copies of the handwriting of Reb Shmuel Sofer, the chief *ma'atik* (copier) in the town of Lubavitch, even without resorting to type it. This type of book was never made before or afterwards by any other Jewish publisher.

R. Zalman Gurary was one of the extremely rare individuals to whom the Rebbe occasionally expressed his frustration and displeasure from the lack of enthusiastic response of chassidim to his initiatives. During one *yechidus*, the Rebbe complained that he had “not accomplished anything with *anash*.” The Rebbe then pointed at the set of *Ohr*

[illegible]

*Handwritten maamar of the Rebbe
Maharash by Reb Shmuel Sofer*

Hatorah of the Tzemach Tzedek and said, “But this no one can take from me.”¹⁷ The Rebbe deemed printing *Chassidus* so important that it consoled him for what in his humility he saw as his lack of success in other areas.

All of the above has allowed us to appreciate the central role and tremendous effort the Rebbe placed on printing all of the Rebbeim's Torah. Obviously the Rebbe's motivating factor was his desire to facilitate *bafatzas hamayanos* in the broadest manner possible. If the revelation of Chassidus – so that the mind and heart of *Yidden* should be permeated with

For whom did the Rebbe print all this Chassidus? Were they intended merely for a select few individual saintly Chassidim?

achdus Hashem – is the ultimate purpose for which the world was created,¹⁸ the primary method to achieve this objective is to make the information available to the masses.

Alongside the campaign to publish Chassidus, the Rebbe repeatedly encouraged studying the newly published *seforim*, and reiterated that the *seforim* were printed to be learned, not to collect dust on the shelves.¹⁹

The questions still remain: For whom did the Rebbe print all this Chassidus? Were they intended merely for a select few individual saintly Chassidim? Did he expect us to learn every one of the *seforim* cover to cover?

I am forever indebted to one of my *mashpi'im* in *yeshiva*, R. Yonason Reinitz from New Haven, who gave me the following direction in this regard, and taught me to appreciate the importance of studying the Torah of all of the Rebbeim: Being cognizant that *hafatzas hamayonos* is the catalyst for *geulah* heightens the vital importance of this subject and the imperative for the following methodology to reach as wide an audience as possible.



THE LAYERS OF CHASSIDUS

From the beginning of the Rebbe's *nesius*, it was clear that the *maamorim* he was saying were not original ideas, but were based on *maamorim* of the preceding Rebbeim; the Rebbe would elaborate on a *maamar* of his predecessors and add explanations. This was no secret as the Rebbe would either mention the source *maamar* in the *maamar* itself or in a *sicha* afterwards. On some occasions, the Rebbe elaborated on a *maamar* that had been recently published. In some years, the Rebbe would recite the *maamar* that was said a hundred years earlier by an earlier Rebbe at the same time of year.

This concept is more obvious in the *maamorim* of the Mittlerer Rebbe and Tzemach Tzedek, which are based on the Alter Rebbe's *maamorim* with additional commentary. However, a careful reading of earlier sources shows that the same is true for all the Rebbeim; their *maamorim* were repetitions of *maamorim* from previous Rebbeim with commentary.²⁰



The Rebbe's annotations on a Kebos publication

With the Rebbeim's Torah in print it has become possible to trace this phenomenon.

What does this mean practically?

Say for example I am learning a *maamar* of the Rebbe based on a *maamar* of the Rebbe Rayatz. That *maamar* is based on an earlier *maamar*, which is based on an even earlier one, until the Alter Rebbe.

In other words, Chassidus is built in layers, with the innermost layer being the Alter Rebbe's *maamorim*. The next layer is the Chassidus of the Mittlerer Rebbe and the Tzemach Tzedek, who base themselves on the Alter Rebbe; the Rebbe Maharash is based mostly on his father's *maamorim*, but also on the Alter Rebbe and Mittlerer Rebbe; the Rebbe Rashab is based on all of his predecessors; the Rebbe Rayatz is based mostly on his father's *maamorim*;

the Rebbe's *maamorim* are based on the *maamorim* of all the previous *Rebbeim*.

With this knowledge we don't view each *maamar* as a single entity, but as part of a tall edifice. And just as each layer of bricks is vital to support the upper ones, so too the earlier *maamorim* are essential to the more recent ones.

THE ADVANTAGES OF THIS METHOD

What relevance does this have for us?

It is clear from the Rebbe that this chain is not just a historical piece of information, but it is relevant to every person who studies Chassidus.

In 5713 (1953),²¹ the Rebbe explained that the reason why he doesn't always relay

exactly which *maamar* each one of his *maamorim* is based on is because those manuscripts are not yet published and it would therefore not help anyone in any way.

On many occasions the Rebbe mentioned a *maamar* of one of the Rebbeim and identified which *maamar* it was based on. On one occasion the Rebbe discussed at length the delight of studying the same *maamar* in the style of each of the Rebbeim.²²

The foremost advantage of learning a series of the same *maamar* as it was said by all the Rebbeim is that it contributes to in-depth study.

In the introduction to a booklet of the first *maamar* said by the Rebbe Rayatz there are paragraphs that were reportedly written by our Rebbe.²³ The introduction informs the reader that the *maamar* is based on a certain *maamar* of the Rebbe Rashab, albeit with many additions and linguistic changes, “and much is possible to be learned from these changes.” He adds in a footnote: “It is a unique and deep [method of study] to delve into explaining an idea in the first *maamar* by the addition in the second *maamar*.”

The foremost advantage of learning a series of the same *maamar* as it was said

by all the Rebbeim is that it contributes to in-depth study. By knowing what is written in the earlier *maamar*, we can appreciate what is being added or clarified by the later Rebbe, understanding what he wants to say with more clarity.

Another advantage of learning a *maamar* in series is to explain anomalies in the text of the later *maamar*. To offer just one common example: In the *maamar* “*Umikne Rav*” 5666, the Rebbe Rashab writes a parable to describe the various services

provided by a servant for his master, such as cleaning his clothes and pouring him wine.²⁴ After each example the Rebbe Rashab writes in parentheses “perhaps this refers to” and goes on to explain what each service refers to in *kabalah*. It seems peculiar

that the Rebbe Rashab lends kabalistic significance to a simple example, and moreover, begins the explanation using a suggestive term “*v’yeshev lomar*.” What is the purpose of elaborating on the parable and why the ambivalence? The new edition of *hemshech Samech Vov* tells us that the *maamar* is based on a *maamar* of the Mitteler Rebbe, where that parable is presented. Hence the Rebbe Rashab is simply suggesting the deeper meaning of the Mitteler Rebbe’s *moshol*. This is just one small example of how knowing the root *maamar* helps us understand the *maamar* we are learning.

"It is a unique and deep [method of study] to delve into explaining an idea in the first maamar by the addition in the second maamar."

THE FLOW OF THE MAAMAR

More importantly, recognizing the source of a *maamar* allows one to circumvent some of the challenges that crop up.

One of the difficulties in learning Chassidus, especially for one who hasn't studied a vast amount of it, is deciphering unfamiliar concepts. Particularly difficult are side points which aren't vital to the main flow of the text. With experience one learns how to focus on the main concept and is not confused by these secondary points.

One who learned the *maamar* of the Alter Rebbe at the top of the chain can more easily learn the subsequent *maamorim* of that chain which are like a review. Since he knows the outline of the *maamar*, (i.e. the point the Alter Rebbe is seeking to convey), he is not thrown off by difficult points in the subsequent *maamorim*. Knowing the direction of the *maamar*, he can delay fully understanding some details.

On the other hand, one who learns a *maamar* from the Mittlerer Rebbe, for example, without learning the Alter Rebbe's *maamar* first, is likely to be thrown off by secondary details. Learning the source *maamar* first, grounds a person and



The Frierdiker Rebbe in Poland

makes it easier to differentiate between that which is primary and that which is secondary.

A similar advantage of learning the chain is having a bird's eye view of the *maamar* before starting, since the Alter Rebbe's *maamar* contains a concise outline of what becomes a long discussion in later *maamorim*.

In order to learn in this manner and trace a *maamar* backwards, one needs to know the "chain of *maamorim*," the development of the later *maamorim* from the earlier ones. Many Kehos *seforim* published in the last twenty-five years contain such a list at the beginning of each *maamar*.

One can also follow the chain forward and see which later *maamorim* are based on a *maamar* that one has learned. In those later *maamorim* one can find insight and clarification to some difficulties in the earlier *maamar*.

If, for example, you turn to a *maamar* in *Sefer Hamaamorim* 5633 of the Rebbe Maharash, the first footnote will tell you what *maamar* it is based on and on what *maamar* that *maamar* is based, until the Alter Rebbe. It will also tell you what other *maamorim* are based on that *maamar* (or those source *maamorim*) from later Rebbeim. The new edition of *Samach Vov* similarly contains such lists.

There is an oft used expression in the Rebbe's *maamorim*, "כדיקי רבותינו נשיאנו" בזה – as our Rebbeim have noted." This

means that the question that the Rebbe is addressing is mentioned in the various *maamorim* of that chain.



PARALLEL MAAMORIM

It is known that the Alter Rebbe didn't write down his *maamorim*, and they were transcribed by various listeners. Chiefly among them was the Alter Rebbe's brother the Maharil, who the Alter Rebbe officially appointed to the task and paid him for it. Other transcribers included the Mitteler Rebbe, the Alter Rebbe's son Reb Moshe, and in the later years the Tzemach Tzedek. Reb Pinchas Reizes also wrote *hanochos*, and there were other chassidim who also transcribed.

Being so, it is quite common for there to be numerous *hanochos* of one *maamar*. Each transcriber wrote in his own style, and recorded details which another left out.

Torah Ohr and *Likutei Torah*, which include *maamorim* chosen by the Tzemach Tzedek from two-thousand *hanachos* that he had, are mostly from his uncle the Maharil. When learning a *maamar* in those *seforim*, many details (including clarity regarding the flow of the *maamar*) can be gleaned by reading a different *hanacho*. These are generally referenced in the notes by the Rebbe and by R. Aharon Chitrik printed at the back of *Torah Ohr* and *Likutei Torah*.²⁵

The benefit of clarity that can be gained from several *hanochos* of the same *maamar* is alluded to in a letter from the Rebbe to Israel's President Zalman Shazar, who apparently was involved in arranging sponsorship for the printing of the Alter Rebbe's *maamorim*. The Rebbe writes that the *hanochos* in the *sefer Maamorei Admur Hazoken* 5562 are superior to those printed in *Torah Ohr* and *Likutei Torah*. The Rebbe suggests the Tzemach Tzedek didn't choose those *maamorim* for *Torah Ohr* and *Likutei Torah* simply because he didn't have the manuscript in his possession.²⁶



A good list of the “chain of *maamorim*,” will reference not only the *hanochos* in *Torah Ohr* and *Likutei Torah*, but also the parallel *hanochos* printed in other *seforim*.

In other words: There is a vertical chain of *maamorim* from Rebbe to Rebbe, and there is a horizontal family of *maamorim* which includes the various *hanochos* of each *maamar*.

The possibility of learning the same *maamar* in the style of each of the Rebbeim is only possible due to the Rebbe's *mesirus nefesh* for *bafatzas hamayonos* to facilitate having virtually all the Rebbeim's Torah

in print. In the past, even if one would desire to learn in this way, it was simply impossible because the *maamorim* were not available. The Rebbe provided our generation with the *zechus* of being able to obtain the complete picture of a *maamar*. This end is also facilitated by the footnotes of the scholarly staff of the research team at Kehos called *Maareches Otzar Hachassidim*, and the generous sponsors that cover the enormous costs.



Being so, it is quite common for there to be numerous *hanochos* of one *maamar*. Each transcriber wrote in his own style, and recorded details which another left out.

The only challenge to this is that it can take some research to find a chain. Ideally, there would be a maftaiach noting to which chain every maamar belongs.



A PROPER STRUCTURE

We can now understand the significance of all of Chassidus for the average chossid with just a basic knowledge of Chassidus.

Although scrupulous comparing of one *maamor* to another and deciphering the new points in each one requires advanced skills, in-depth study, and much time, one doesn't need the skills in order to

NOTES

1. See the letter of the Rebbe Rayatz to the directors Agudas Chasidei Chabad in his *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 13 p. 325.
2. See a complete bibliographical list in the appendix to *B'eir Hachasidus – Mishnas Chabad* (Eliezer Shteinman), vol. 2, p. 374.
3. For a detailed account of the rescue of the library, see *Sifriyas Lubavitch*, p. 112-124.
4. See for example *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 24, p. 207; *Hisvaduyos* 5746, vol. 2, p. 130.
5. See *Sefer Zikoron* by R. Binyomin Gorodetzky, who arranged the deal, p. 338. The two volumes of *Shemen Lamo'or* were printed in Kfar Chabad in 1964 and 1967 respectively.
6. *Sifriyas Lubavitch*, p. 142.
7. For a detailed account of the rescue of the manuscript collection see *Sifriyas Lubavitch*, p.150-156.
8. *Sichos Kodesh* 5738, vol. 2, p. 466.
9. See introduction to *Teshura Misimchas Nisuin Sbtern-Chanin*, Adar 5765. *Hotzo'as Seforim Kebos*, p. 314.
10. See his biography *B'chol Beisi Ne'emon Hu*, p. 258-264.
11. *Hisvaduyos* 5750, vol. 2, p. 233.
12. See for example *Hisvaduyos* 5743, vol. 2, p. 1094; 5745, vol. 2, p. 1163, where the Rebbe addressed the joy that could be expected after the publication of new *seforim* of Chassidus.
13. See for example *Hisvaduyos* 5746, vol. 2, p. 152.

benefit from studying the entire chain. As explained, valuable clarity can be gained from merely learning each *maamar* without delving deeply.

The only challenge to this is that it can take some research to find a chain. Ideally, there would be a *mafteach* noting to which chain every *maamar* belongs. Unfortunately such a list does not yet exist, and creating one is a large project. However, as noted, certain recent *seforim* have included such a list for the specific *maamorim* in the *sefer*.²⁷

Someone recently prepared such a list for all the *maamorim* of the Rebbeim on *Shavuot*

and *Sukkos*, and published several booklets containing actual *maamorim* from the various Rebbeim in a “chain.” More recently, someone else printed a list of the *maamorim* in one *sefer* of the Tzemach Tzedek (*Ohr Hatorah* on *Megillas Esther*) and noted what each *maamar* is based on, any parallel *maamorim* and all the *maamorim* based on them.²⁸

There are enough lists of “chains” available to study in this manner for some time. One merely needs try it out and experience it. **P**

טעמו וראו כי טוב הוי'!

14. *Toras Menachem*, vol. 12, p. 42.

15. The *farbrengen* of Yud Tes Kislev 5737, printed in appendix to vol. 3 of *hemshech “Ayin Beis,”* p. 11.

16. *Teshuros* from family *simchos*, *Avodas Hakodesh*, and elsewhere. Much of the material has been collected in the above mentioned *sefer Hotzo'as Seforim Kebos*.

17. *B'chol Beisi Neemon Hu*, p. 259.

18. Tanya, ch. 33; the letter of the Rebbe Rashab in honor of Yud Tes Kislev printed at the beginning of *Hayom Yom*.

19. See for example *Hisvadyos* 5746, Vol. 2, p. 152.

20. *Kuntres Limud HaChassidus*, ch. 3 (*Igros Kodesh* of the Rebbe Rayatz, vol. 3, p. 335).

21. *Sichas Parshas Shemos*, par. 27 and note 83.

22. *Toras Menachem*, vol. 11, p. 253.

23. Reprinted in *Sefer Hamaamorim* 5680, p. V.

24. P. 410 in the new edition.

25. See *Mamorei Admur Hazoken Hanochas Harap*, p.197, where this point is made in the introduction to an index of the parallel *maamorim* for that *sefer*.

26. *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 23, p. 281.

27. To my limited knowledge some of the best lists are located in the *seforim* of the Rebbe Maharash 5627, 5629, 5631, 5632, 5633 and 5639.

28. In the *kovetz* Haoros Ubiurim of Oholei Torah, Yud Alef Nissan 5775.



Truth Breeds Truth

WHY WERE TOWERING CHASSIDIM NEEDED
TO TEACH LITTLE CHILDREN ALEF-BEIS?

HOW CAN WE SECURE OUR CHILDREN'S
LONG-TERM YIDDISHKEIT?

HARAV YITZCHOK YEHUDA YERUSLAVSKY

Rov of Nachalas Har Chabad and member of Beis Din Rabbonei Chabad in Eretz Yisroel

Translated by Mrs. Basya Yahel

What we mean here is that we need to safeguard the *emeskeit* of Chassidus – “the spirit of Chassidus” which is also the foundation of children's education, especially nowadays.

The question of how to give our children a *chinuch* that will be truly fixed in them, and will strengthen them amidst the temptations of the world in our times, flusters many parents and *mechanchim*. The Rebbe guides us in this dilemma.

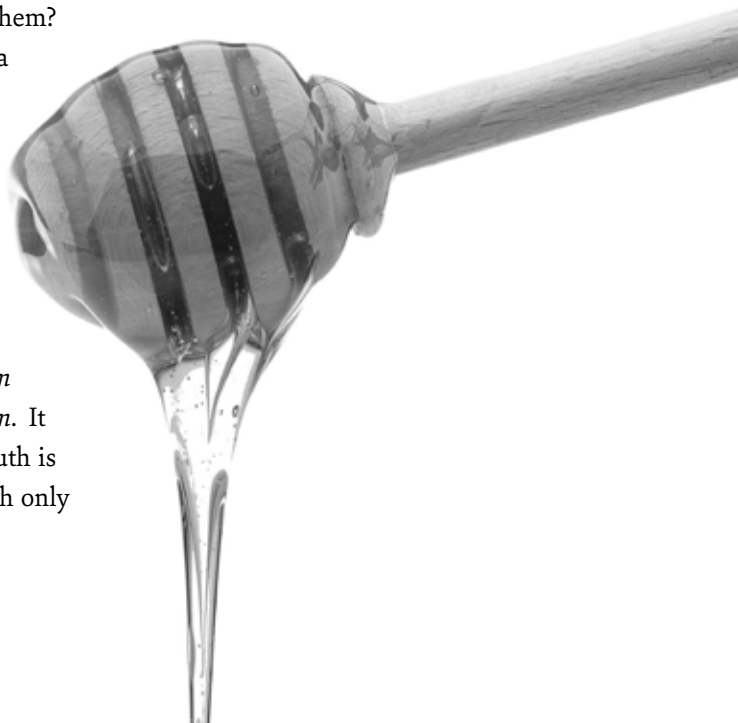
There is a known custom that at the *areinfrenish* to *cheder* (when a three-year-old boy is brought there for the first time), we throw candy at him and tell him that the *Malach* Michael throws them. In a *farbrengen* of 15 Shevat 5739 (1979) the Rebbe questioned it:

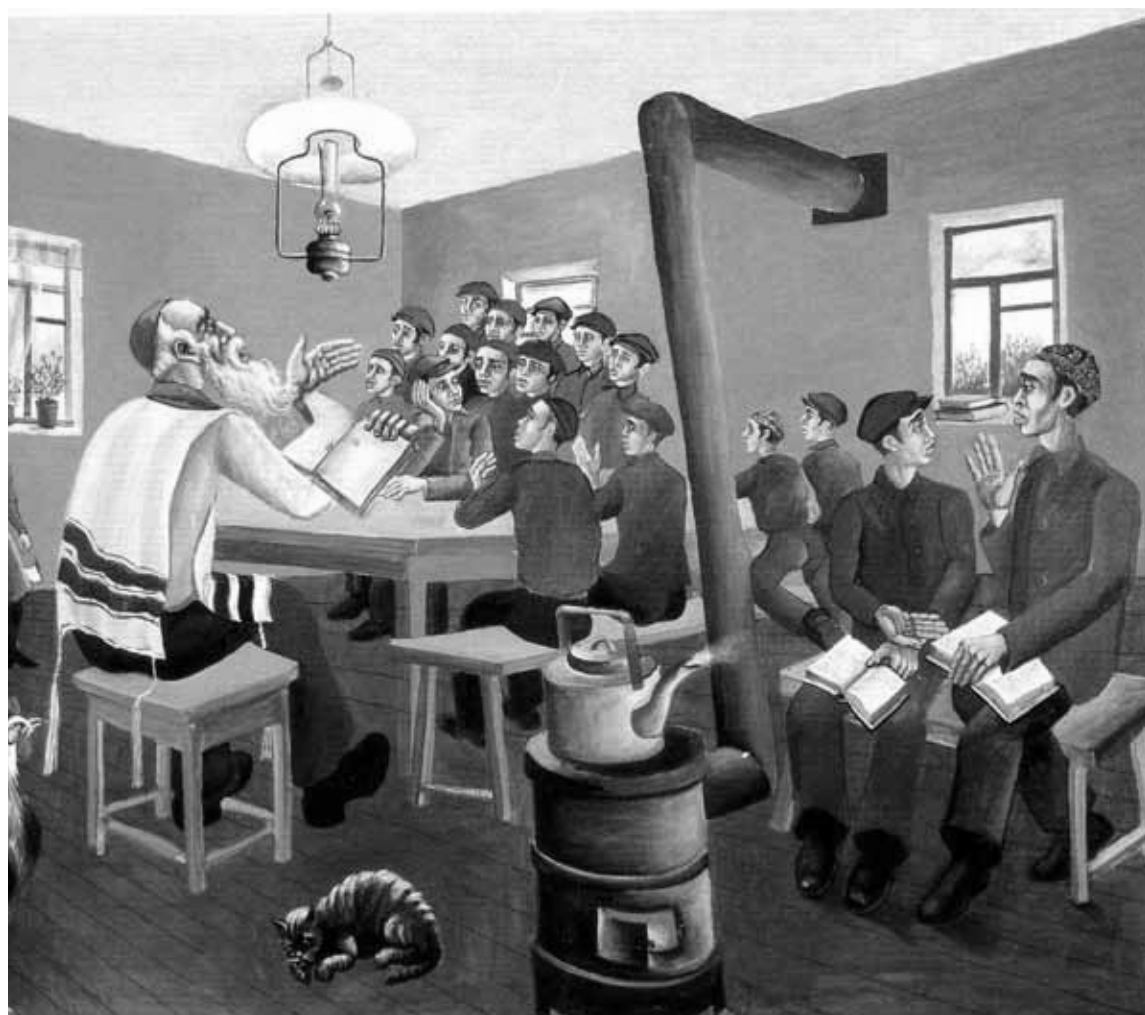
“How can we tell a child that *Malach* Michael throws sweets when it's his father, mother, and older siblings who throw them? Some answer that since he is just a small child, it is permissible. But this is incorrect, since ‘*minbag Yisroel Torah hi* — a *minbag* is Torah’ and Torah is truth. How then is it possible that a *minbag* mandates saying something to a child that isn't true? In fact, we see that specifically through *minbagim* children grow to be *yerei Shomayim*. It can't be that when the opposite of truth is sown, truth will grow as a result: truth only grows from truth.

“However, the explanation is that *Malach* Michael is called ‘our minister.’ So, when the boy's parents and siblings throw candies at the child they are carrying out the *shlichus* of ‘Michael their minister’ who is also the ministering angel of the child.”

From here we learn the importance of giving a child a true education from the onset. Educating with *emes*, truth, and specifically *chassidishe emeskeit*, will cause our teachings to be engraved in their heart and will guide them through life. “Truth breeds truth” and truth endures forever.

We need not say that one must avoid outright falsehood, for





example, to teach a child that what should be done is different than what we actually do. Doing so destroys the basis of any education they are getting. What we mean here is that we need to safeguard the *emeskeit* of Chassidus – “the spirit of Chassidus” which is also the foundation of children’s education, especially nowadays.



The above is illustrated in the following story which I heard:

One of the children of the wealthy chassidic family Monezsohn was sitting in *shul* and learning as someone nearby told miracles of the Baal Shem Tov. When the boy heard one of the stories he chuckled to himself. A *chassidishe yungerman* standing nearby saw the boy’s reaction and smacked the child on

the cheek. The shocked boy ran to tell his father that so-and-so hit him.

When the father arrived, the chossid apologized and related what had happened. The father was shaken by his son's conduct and immediately traveled to the Tzemach Tzedek, requesting of the Rebbe that his son not live out the year... Hearing the strange entreaty, the Tzemach Tzedek asked what prompted him to say such words. The father replied that the spirit of *kefira* had entered his son, and he was better off not to continue in this world!

The Tzemach Tzedek smiled, and asked which *melamed* the child learned with – a chossid or a *misnaged*? The father replied that since his son was very advanced, and he could not find a *chassidishe melamed* of that caliber, and so he learned with a *misnaged*. The Tzemach Tzedek then instructed him to enroll his son with a *chassidishe melamed*, and there would be no need for concern. The *emunah*, *bitul* and *chassidishe* warmth – the *chassidishe emes*, cultivate true *chinuch*.



For this reason, chassidim in previous generations were particular to hire the greatest chassidim as *melamdim* for their

children, since they could infuse them with the *chassidishe* spirit.

R. Yekusiel Dokshitzer was a chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek and one of the *yoshevim* of Lubavitch (men who studied full time in the Rebbe's *beis medrash*). When he was young, he had a *shidduch* set with the daughter from a wealthy family. When he went into the Rebbe for *yechidus* before his wedding, he gathered that the purpose of his *neschama's* descent into this world was to educate children in Torah and *yiras Shomayim*, with warmth, light, and *chassidishe chayus*.

After R. Yekusiel married he intended on carrying out the Rebbe's instruction, but the idea didn't sit very well with his father-in-law. He was of the opinion that his gifted son-in-law R. Yekusiel should be a *rov*, a *mashpia*, or even a successful and wealthy businessman who busied himself with Torah, *tefilah*, and *tzedaka*—Torah and abundance. But to be just a *melamed* seemed to him like a waste of good talent.

The Tzemach Tzedek then instructed him to enroll his son with a *chassidishe melamed*, and there would be no need for concern.

The father-in-law traveled to the Tzemach Tzedek and asserted that being a *melamed* did not suit his son-in-law, who was capable of much more. Hearing his words, the Tzemach Tzedek answered that he only gave his son-in-law “good advice,” and if he wished to pursue other matters he could. He would still be regarded as one of the important chassidim. The father-in-law joyfully returned with the Rebbe’s response, and shortly afterwards, he sent off R’ Yekusiel with a large sum of money to the fair in Leipzig.

R. Yekusiel was on the way back from the fair with a wagon full of merchandise, when the horse started dancing wildly, causing the wagon to overturn with all of its contents. R’ Yekusiel was thrown on the ground, and the sacks of merchandise were strewn on top of him, causing pain to his whole body and preventing him from getting up.

At that moment he remembered the Rebbe’s words. He realized that although he may not be outright disobeying the Rebbe’s instructions, he was certainly not

fulfilling the Rebbe’s wishes. He cried out, “Rebbe, I will obey! Rebbe, save me!” He managed to free himself and get back on the road, broken-hearted but physically healthy. He returned home and became a *melamed* and raised many generations of *chassidishe* students. The Friediker Rebbe was among his students, and he describes the great effect that R. Yekusiel’s personality and *chassidishe* conduct had on him.

(One of the Alter Rebbe’s prominent chassidim insisted that people should call him R’ Yaakov Azriel der *Melamed*, as he saw it as a highly honorable title.)



One of the most important tools that a *chassidishe melamed* has is *chassidishe maises* (stories). I remember that when we learned in Tel Aviv, R’ Foleh Kahn would always take leave of us with a *chassidishe*

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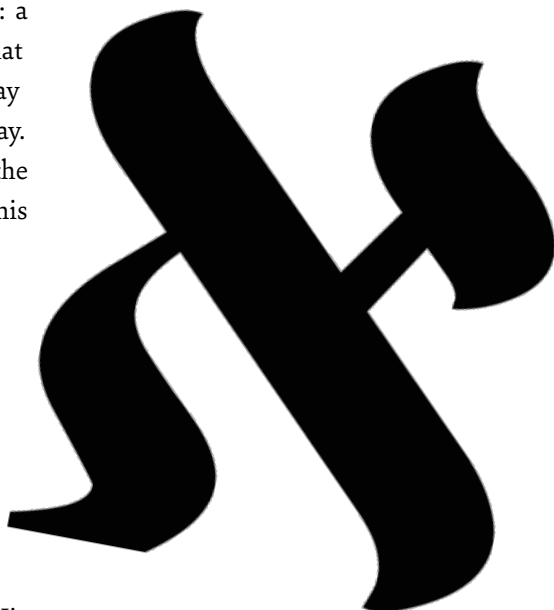


The Frierdiker Rebbe says: a *chassidishe maiseh* is like the coals that are left in the oven at the end of the day so the oven may be relit the next day. So too, the *chassidishe maiseh* guards the *chassidishe* warmth of a child during his “free time.”

maiseh. As The Frierdiker Rebbe says: a *chassidishe maiseh* is like the coals that are left in the oven at the end of the day so the oven may be relit the next day. So too, the *chassidishe maiseh* guards the *chassidishe* warmth of a child during his “free time.”

The power of *chassidishe* warmth and the damage that can befall a person when it is lacking I saw in an old *Yid* from my neighborhood in Tel Aviv.

As a young *bochur* he was very talented, and he desired to learn in a renowned *yeshiva* in Lithuania. His father, a Sadigura chossid, travelled to his Rebbe to ask about it, but the Rebbe replied in the negative. The boy had a hard time accepting the ruling, and he personally travelled to the Rebbe to try and change his opinion. The Rebbe responded that indeed, the *roshei yeshiva* in that *yeshiva* are great in Torah and *yiras Shomayim*, but their style of *chinuch* and the prevailing atmosphere is cold, and “someone who is cold for *mitzvos* becomes warm for *aveiros*.” The boy didn’t take the Rebbe’s advice. He attended that *yeshiva* and, eventually, left the path of Torah and



mitzvos.

After the Second World

War, he relocated to Eretz Yisroel, and settled in Tel Aviv near the next Sadigura Rebbe, the “Abir Yaakov,” who brought him back to *Yiddishkeit*.



We must give our children – both at home and in school – a *chinuch* which is permeated with *chassidishe* warmth, which will give them the strength to overcome their challenges with success. **P**



My Heroines —

BY RACHEL ALTEIN

This article appeared in *Di Yiddishe Heim*, Summer 5727 (1967)

This is a public love letter to certain women I have long admired in secret. Some are close friends or acquaintances — I hope they recognize themselves — who would be terribly embarrassed if I told them in detail of my esteem and the reasons for it. Others I know casually, or have only heard about. All of them make me feel glad to live in a world that has people like them in it.

Somehow my respect for their deeds and personalities is more intense than what I can muster for the great women whose biographies fill our history books. I really don't quite identify with the latter. Not that I nurture much hope of being like my heroines — but their example is so refreshing.

All my heroines have a full measure of the basic ingredient of heroics — courage, courage to stick to your principles when it means being markedly different not only from most people, but even from many of your religious friends.

There are many otherwise observant couples who choose to ignore the explicit letter and spirit of Torah law, and limit the size of their families for the same social, career, economic, or convenience reasons as the Torah-less world does.

There are others, with a stronger sense of true Torah values, and a greater fear of, and aversion for, wrong-doing, who follow a more proper course, but oh, with what vehement martyrdom! Those women make it clear that each child is another bar of a terrible prison that shuts out the fascinating world and interesting accomplishments; they live for the day they will be free — a lady! The marvelous day when there will be no more babies, everyone at school, and then freedom — freedom to get a job, make some money, keep up with the Joneses. And if she is Mrs. Jones already, then freedom to indulge in the compulsive shopping and fun and pleasure-seeking that represents the good life in our society, and which pregnancies and infants do complicate, even when you have servants.

My heroines have quite a different attitude about motherhood — specifically Jewish motherhood. They consider it

And if she is Mrs. Jones already, then freedom to indulge in the compulsive shopping and fun and pleasure-seeking that represents the good life in our society.

a distinctive privilege and a serious but flattering responsibility that G-d has bestowed on Jewish womanhood. That being so, not only do they bear the children He sees fit to give them — they do so happily.

All right, the reader is thinking at this point, so she admires brainless cows who enjoy diaper-changing and bottle-washing; it's a free country. Nonsense. I do know some brainless bovines, but I hardly admire them, although in a weak moment I may envy them in their uncomplicated lives.

My heroines are capable, intelligent women, who would have been successful in any career they chose. But they have freely and deliberately chosen to expend their considerable intellect and talents on motherhood, on nurturing the holy Jewish souls that have been entrusted



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to them, considering it as challenging and honorable an occupation as, say, being a secretary or a nurse, a teacher or a physicist.

Maybe my heroine would enjoy such a position, and be successful at it too. But she rejects the idea of denying Jewish souls the right to be born, she knows she can't manage a career on top of the responsibilities of a large family, so she chooses what, by any real measure of Torah values, is right. What's more, she bears no resentments or regrets for her choice. Never does she think that her husband, her children, and the Al-mighty Himself owe her something for the rewarding career she might have had.

Her choice is not all negative — to avoid sin in martyred resignation, and in spite of the endless dirty dishes and runny noses. The opportunity to bring up Jewish children to devout service of their Creator represents to her the privilege par excellence, and her own humble way of best serving Him. She has no illusions about the essential difficulty, the thanklessness, and the chancy end results of the job she has chosen. Still, belief in its transcendent importance gives my heroines that aura of inner serenity and harmony, of quiet pride and satisfaction for which we all strive, and find so elusive.



I admire women who dedicate their lives to being Jewish mothers, but I hardly have the stereotyped “Jewish mother” in mind. That over-protective and over-possessive creature fills me with horror, not admiration, when I have the misfortune to meet her type, which is often enough. Oh, I could write a book about responsible motherhood, after some of the hair-raising deeds I’ve seen perpetrated in the name of maternal (or paternal) love.

Wise is the woman whose actions are based on a healthy and realistic concern for her child’s true welfare; his spiritual health — not his physical health, which is only the means to the proper end: his involvement with Torah and *mitzvos*. Nor is my ideal mother preoccupied with her own satisfactions gained from her child’s accomplishments, and his attachment to her, for she never forgets that her child and his deeds ultimately belong to G-d, not her. But the good Jewish parent is really another article, if not a book.



I have another kind of heroine, but it’s hard to give her a one-word, or even one-phrase, description. Basically, I admire the woman who sets her own standards, who has enough inner security and common sense to be the sole judge of the criteria by which she chooses to live. Her ideas, her values and aims in life,

I admire the woman who sets her own standards, who has enough inner security and common sense to be the sole judge of the criteria by which she chooses to live.

everything — down to her clothes and home-furnishings, reflect her unique personality, and hers alone. She doesn’t have to see the current magazines, and then discuss them with her friends, to learn what she is supposed to think, and to like. She has no compulsion to do what’s *in* because conformity and fashion are the breath of life to her, or for that matter, what’s *out* in order to be different for the sake of being different.

My best example is the neighbor I once had who was crazy about tennis. Every day, during the season, she would pack a picnic lunch early in the morning, take her two young children, and it was off to the tennis courts until dinner, which came from cans. She was too tired from playing for any housework; that waited for a rainy day. One memorable summer her apartment was painted, and she used her kitchen equipment from the cartons for weeks afterward; a waste of tennis



Almost all. Only one thing can stop my heroine from choosing that which pleases her, (not counting displeasing her husband; for to a happily married woman, pleasing her husband is essentially pleasing herself) and that is a conflict with the words of the Torah. Therefore, in this year of the mini skirt, my heroine's dresses cover her knees completely, not even raised a half-inch as a concession to fashion. Torah forbids it, and that's that, for my heroine.

If you don't think that requires a high degree of courage, I invite you to take a stroll in the streets of the most religious neighborhoods in Brooklyn, and count just how many women from

time to put
things back
in place. Oh, the
clucking and head-
shaking and gossiping
in the whole apartment
house! I myself am a drearily
conventional housekeeper, the
kind who dusts and cleans and
tidies closets conscientiously, but did I
give her credit for suiting herself, and not
the neighbors. That's my kind of girl!

My kind of girl knows exactly what
fits into her way of life, what suits her
personality, her family's needs, and that's
all that's important to her.

The many wonderful
people who have, by their
very own efforts, found
the way to a life of Torah
and mitzvos, kindle in me
the profoundest humility.
How bitter, how stormy,
how strewn with struggle
has been their path. Of
all my heroines, these are
the most inspiring by far.

the most observant homes, graduates of our best Jewish Girls' schools, have this courage. Few indeed. So the woman who has the supreme self-confidence to do what she knows is right, never mind fashion, never mind her friends who dismiss her as a dowdy drip, never mind even her own natural interest in style and appearance — that's the woman to whom I tip my hat.



My last category of heroines really includes heroes as well, but I shall discuss the feminine only. The many wonderful people it has been my privilege to meet and know, who have, by their very own efforts, in the manner of our forefather Avraham, found the way to a life of Torah and mitzvos, kindle in me the profoundest humility. How bitter, how stormy, how strewn with struggle has been their path. To complicate their problems in learning a whole new way of life, they meet at best with indifference from their nearest and dearest; more often with vicious hostility.

And we, we who were lucky enough to have been born into observant families, for whom the best *yeshivos* expended their most intensive efforts, for whom the biggest problem *yiddishkeit* presents are: it's terrible how much *glatt kosher*

meat costs, or: it's impossible, the bus connections to the *mikvah*, or: you just can't find a decent dress with sleeves for a summer wedding! — how consciously we wear our self-righteous haloes, how constantly are we reassured of our own superiority. And how contemptuously we sneer, when confronted by an especially heart breaking sacrifice, or an extremely zealous gesture of devotion to Torah: Oh, you know to what lengths those fanatic *baal-tshuvos* go!

When I consider the lives of these young women — Jewish education and background — nil — and the price they are so happy to pay for the Torah life they have chosen — estrangement from family and friends, complete reorientation of ideas and values, adjustments to new rules and mores, the search for guidance and help and acceptance, so grudgingly offered at times, even the search for new means of livelihood, I wonder: Would we feel as privileged, as fortunate, as blessed as they so rightly do? In similar circumstances, could we measure up to them?

Of all my heroines, these are the most inspiring by far.

Oh, if just a little bit of the qualities that make all my heroines what they are would rub off on me. Till then, I just want them to know how much I love and admire them all. **P**



Chinuch *in our* Time

PART 1

FROM THE LECTURES OF
RABBI NACHMAN YOSEF TWERSKY

—The Primacy of Chinuch—

A MODERN CHALLENGE

In recent years, *chinuch* has become a popular topic, and there are many professionals in the field, far more than in previous generations. What's changed?

In earlier generations people were more amenable. They followed their parents and grandparents with sincerity, and it didn't occur to them to do otherwise. Many of them were ignorant – some of them couldn't even read – but they had simple faith and *bitachon*. They accepted the authority of the *rov*, *mashpia*, *chossid* or *talmid chacham*, and these figures were at the center of their life.

In the Torah model, parents and elders were the respected authorities. But then the *Haskala* (the Enlightenment movement) introduced secularism and democracy, and preached that the younger generation is progressive and advanced. Everyone was entitled to an opinion and the words of parents and teachers were no longer sacred. Technological advances of all kinds further reinforced this mentality.

If we want our children to be receptive, we must cast their mindset and teach them accordingly. We must invest thought and look for opportunities to influence them.

GUIDANCE IN EDUCATION

In his young twenties, a *bochur* leaves *yeshiva* to marry and raise a family, without any lessons on how to raise children. How does that work? Could you imagine getting on the highway without first going through driving lessons?!

There are certain things in life that are naturally ingrained in us and don't need to be formally learned. Raban Yochanan ben Zakai told his students that a person doesn't sin while he is being watched since he intuitively senses that what he is doing is wrong. The talent of raising children is likewise something that Hashem instilled each of us with.

Nevertheless, there is a need to develop and improve this talent. The Alter Rebbe explains in *Tanya* that although a Jew is inherently pure and doesn't desire forbidden things, he can become confused by worldly distractions and therefore needs direction. So too, our natural intuition in *chinuch* has been distorted by the media and today's surroundings



A direct descendent of the Rebbes of Chernobyl and son of the late Rachmastrivka Rebbe of Yerushalayim, as a bochur, Rabbi Twersky joined the yeshivah in Kfar Chabad and in 770.

Today, Rabbi Twersky serves as a rov of the Beis Menachem Mendel shul in Crown Heights and a Maggid Shiur in Mesivta Oholei Torah. He is a leading community mashpia and counsels dozens of families on a regular basis, particularly regarding topics of chinuch.

If we want our children to be receptive, we must cast their mindset and teach them accordingly. We must invest thought and look for opportunities to influence them.

Every time we miss a half-hour, it is charged to our account and we owe that time. When problems arise years later, we repay those half-hours with lost sleep...

in general. Consequently, despite all of our goodwill, we can no longer rely on intuition alone in raising our children, and we must learn to hone our *chinuch* skillset.

CAREFUL CONSIDERATION

The Rebbe Rashab said that just as one must don *tefillin* each day, so too one must think about the Torah education of his children for half-an-hour each day.

Of course, *chinuch* is not a specific task that is executed at certain times; our conduct and speech at home is always a form of *chinuch*. In this case, the Rebbe Rashab speaks of a dedicated and reserved half-an-hour to think about our children.

The Rebbe once explained the comparison to *tefillin*: Just as one cannot skip a day of *tefillin* and put it on twice the following day, so too we can't push off a day of thinking about our children.

I once heard someone explain that every time we miss a half-hour, it is charged to

our account and we owe that time. When problems arise years later, we repay those half-hours with lost sleep... If we pay our debt on time, we won't lose sleep later.

Some people argue, "What is there for me to think about for half-an-hour? I know my children perfectly!"

When a jeweler sets a gem, he doesn't just grab it and push it in place. He carefully deliberates and considers all the options and possible pitfalls before beginning. When we appreciate the value of our children, we realize that each child must be carefully considered – something that can't be accomplished in just a few minutes.

WILL AND EFFORT

Every parent and teacher wants to instill a *chassidishe chayus* into their children, but the critical question is how much are we willing to pay for it?

The Zohar writes that everything in this world only depends on *ratzon* (will), or as cited elsewhere, "nothing stands in the face of the will." What does that mean? People want many things – money, pleasure, prestige – which don't necessarily materialize.

One explanation is this: "Nothing stands in the face of the will" – when it is your *only* desire and you're committed to it with all your might, nothing will stand in your way. But if you want to have leisure

and luxury, you won't succeed. Many people want the results, but few people are willing to put in the effort.

We sometimes encounter such well-bred children and we wish our children were like that. We can have such children. Well behaved *chassidishe* children are the product of hard work and sacrifice.

THE PARENT'S CARE

After the birth of Shmuel *HaNavi*, his mother Chana refused to travel to the *Mishkan* until Shmuel would be old enough to make the trip. The Rebbe points out that Chana could have easily hired a nanny to look after Shmuel while she made the holy trip herself. But she knew that no one would look after her child as she would, and that meant more to her than visiting the *Mishkan* in Shiloh.

When something is precious we care for it by ourselves and don't rely on others. We wouldn't leave a million-dollars cash

with a babysitter, and our children are surely worth more! As parents we extend ourselves tremendously for our children, providing every material need for their wellbeing. Why then should we abandon them without proper spiritual care?

The Rebbe was particular about the spiritual wellbeing of a child even before birth – cautioning expectant women not to view unholy images – thus how much more so must we safeguard it *after* the child is born!

NACHAS IN THIS WORLD

The Kotzker Rebbe would comment on the words of the Mishna, "*Kol Yisroel*": Every Jew has a share in *Olam HaBa*, but only *ehrlliche* (virtuous) *Yidden* have *Olam Hazeib*. In the case of *chinuch*, parents who invest thought and energy into raising their children will not only merit *Olam HaBa*, but will enjoy *nachas* and pleasure from their family in This World as well.

We wouldn't leave a million-dollars cash with a babysitter, and our children are surely worth more! Why then should we abandon them without proper spiritual care?



What does it take to have a happy Jewish home?

In a letter to one mother, the Frierdiker Rebbe points out the beauty and joy in a Torah oriented family life, but emphasizes the great effort and thought that it demands: “The genuine Torah family life requires understanding, energy, devotion, patience, goodness of heart, cleanliness, calm, orderly dress, joyous temperament with a positive face and a friendly approach.” (*Igros Kodesh*, Vol. 5, #1180)

In my experience as a teacher I have noticed that the ease of a class doesn’t necessarily depend as much on the type or number students, as on the teacher’s demeanor. If the teacher is calm and puts his heart into his lessons, his students will want to listen and the classroom will be calm. But if the teacher has unresolved issues of his own and he shouts at his students, they will shout back and chaos will reign.

The same is true at home. When a parent invests energy into being positive, patient and understanding, the home will be stable and calm.

SHULCHAN ARUCH FOR CHINUCH

The *Shulchan Aruch* and *poskim* address all areas of life. Yet, there is one significant area which preoccupies parents for most of their lives, which doesn’t have a place in *Shulchan Aruch*: how to educate one’s children. There are *Hilchos Melamdim* for

teachers and detailed laws about one’s obligation to teach his son Torah, but there are no organized *halachos* on how parents should raise their children.

A story is told of a father who raised a nice family, though one child who went off the *derech*. Deeply perturbed, the father consulted with his *rov* and explained, “I can’t understand what happened. I raised all of my children in the same way and with the same measure of care. Why did this child turn out differently?” The *rov* replied, “You just answered your own question when you said that you raised them all the same. Each child is unique, and not all children benefit from the same type of education.”

Whoever has any experience in *chinuch* knows that each generation and each individual child is different. There is no way to set out one set of laws for all children forever. Instead, we were given **principles** of *chinuch*. In every era there are *mechanchim* who know how to apply these timeless principles to current challenges.

A *melamed* once told me that he taught the children of a well-known *chinuch* expert. At the beginning of one school year, the father told the teacher, “This child of mine needs rules to succeed. If you act too friendly with him, he will act up and you will lose him.” Another year the father told the same teacher, “This child is the complete opposite of his brother. He can’t stand rules. Talk to him softly and he will respond well.” The father understood each of his children and could advise the teacher on what worked best for them.



Parents who invest thought and energy into raising their children will not only merit Olam HaBa, but will enjoy nachas and pleasure from their family in This World as well.

———— A Content Childhood ————

PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

Our generation is complex. On the one hand, there is the unprecedented number of *baalei-teshuva* who are inspired by *Yiddishkeit*, yet at the same time, we witness a significant percentage of our own children who are dropping out. If *Yiddishkeit* is so attractive, why are these youths turning away?

From my observation, of one of the biggest causes of turning away stems from their relationship with their parents. In the old days, even when parents hit their children for bad behavior, the children nonetheless respected their parents. Nowadays, the smallest thing causes a rift between parents and children, to the extent that some parents are afraid to tell them off at all.

As a rule, a child who is happy at home and school doesn't go off the *derech*. He may become somewhat more lax, but overall he will continue going on the path he was taught.

A HAPPY CHILD

As a rule, a child who is happy at home and school doesn't go off the *derech*. He may become somewhat more lax, but overall he will continue going on the path he was taught. All the problems begin when for whatever reason he is unhappy, and he feels bitter. When he reaches adolescence, that bitterness takes on greater significance and becomes dangerous.

To prevent this, we must have a warm relationship with our children, and we must see to it that our children are content both materially and spiritually. It's not enough that we tell our child how much we care about him, but he must actually feel that way.

For example, some people have plenty of time for strangers, but when their child wants to speak to them they push him off. When we view our children's *chinuch* as the

most important thing in life, we will focus on our child and make the stranger wait!

A father of fifteen children once told me that several times a year he takes each child out by themselves, and gives them quality time and personal attention. This system is especially important when we know that the child is bothered by something and needs a listening ear. When the child feels close, he won't fall even when he encounters a challenge.

ADOLESCENT YEARS

Tehillim (127:4) compares the years of youth to say arrows positioned for battle. During the early teenage years, a child's personality is being shaped and he feels unsettled. Particularly at this age, we must work with sensitivity.

We don't usually find twenty-year-olds abandoning *Yiddishkeit*. Most significant changes take place at the transition to adulthood, between the ages of 13 and 19. An adolescent may not want to listen to others since he wants to attain knowledge himself. This is the time to help him build himself up.

A FIRM BINDING

One of the most important conditions for a stable childhood is for the parents to get along. When the parents are on good terms, the children naturally flourish.

My mother, Rebbetzin Sarah Twersky of Rachmistrivka Yerushalayim, was given a *shlichus* by the Rebbe in *yechidus* (Winter 5737) to be active in teaching *Taharas HaMishpacha*. One of the lessons she teaches *kallos* is the following:

“Parents and children are like the binding of a book and its pages. When both sides of the binding are aligned, the pages stay in place. Even if a page gets crumpled or slightly torn, the binding holds them together. If the binding is crooked or falls apart, then even if the pages are in perfect condition, it all falls apart and ends up in *sbeimos*.

“Unfortunately, there are tragedies where the binding is torn away beyond our control. But it’s in the hands of the couple to respect each other and become aligned, for the good of their children.”

ILLUMINATING CHILDREN

Chazal teach that the Torah cautions (*lehazhir*) adults regarding the children. A *chassidishe* interpretation is that *lehazhir*

means “to shine,” that parents should reveal the light of *Yiddishkeit* in their children. In our generation, this task has become more trying.

In previous generations, a mother seamlessly imbued her children with the warmth of *Yiddishkeit* that she absorbed from her parents. A mother would spend countless undisturbed hours together with her children, and she communicated her values and sensitivity to them in a relaxed manner. Today, parents spend limited time at home, and even then they are anxious from the stresses of life. They come home exhausted and shout out a bunch of orders, and a child may feel that instead of a loving parent, he has another *mashgiach*. Today, illuminating a child requires time and conscious effort.

In previous generations, a mother seamlessly imbued her children with the warmth of *Yiddishkeit* that she absorbed from her parents. Today, illuminating a child requires time and conscious effort.

We must build a mutual understanding with our children. Although parents must lead their home with authority, it is equally essential for them to express love, care and sensitivity.

NOT FOR ANGELS

We may think, “These *chinuch* theories are nice, but we’re only human.”

You don’t need to be an angel to have good children. Everyone has faults, and sometimes the stress is overwhelming and we explode. It’s unreasonable to expect that we should be completely calm all day, every day. We’re not robots.

Our children understand that, and as long as he sees that his parents are generally easy-going, dependable, and striving to improve, he feels safe, even if they lose it sometimes. If his parents are respectful of one another and genuinely concerned about him, he feels secure. If this is the prevailing atmosphere at home, most problems fall by the wayside.

STOP AND PAY ATTENTION

Thinking about *chinuch* means to think about what is going on in the mind of each child. It takes concentration and effort, like unraveling a deep *sugya*.

“My father hates me!” the boy answered. I was very taken aback. I knew his father to be a good person, but the boy insisted that his father hated him.

I once had a student who would sometimes lay down on the floor and scream. I felt very bad for him. Once, before a test I saw he was very nervous, and I suggested that he review the material with his father. “My father hates me!” the boy answered. I was very taken aback. I knew his father to be a good person, but the boy insisted that his father hated him. I asked the boy how he knew this, and he said that his father didn’t talk to him. It all sounded very strange to me.

I called the father and told him what his son had told me. The father was shocked and assured me that he does speak to his son. I asked him if he speaks to the boy at the at the Shabbos table. The father thought for a moment, and admitted that he didn’t. The boy had older and younger siblings who stole the show – the older ones had thoughts and exciting updates from *yeshiva*, and the younger ones had *parsha* sheets. This fourteen-year-old boy had neither and was overlooked. As a result,



he came to think
that his father
hated him, causing him
to act crazy.

father walk in
with a furious
look. He felt ashamed
by his son's conduct.

The father committed to developing his relationship with his son. Though he worked long hours and came home at 8 PM, he set aside time four nights a week to learn with his son. Today, that boy is a fine young married man. If the father wouldn't have done anything, who knows how that boy would have turned out?

TIMELY INTERVENTION

I once had student who was a good learner but a troublemaker, and he was suspended from *yeshiva* for some suspected offense. I was sitting in *shul* that night and that boy was there learning, when I noticed the

I stopped the father and told him that I wanted to tell him something before he speaks to his son. I said: "Don't forget he's your son, regardless of what he did. There's no making up for an unwarranted slap, but an extra kiss never hurts."

Boruch Hashem, I succeeded in calming the father down. He went over to his son and calmly asked him to come home and talk about what happened. The boy argued that he wasn't guilty and someone else had done what he had been accused of, and the father didn't put up a fight. The next day, the issue was investigated, and it turned out that another boy was at fault. Had the

father expressed his anger, how would he ever forgive himself?

That's an extreme example that shows the importance of listening to a child. Even if our child embarrasses us, it is not our standing that is so important, but the child's future. We must always listen to what the child has to say and respond calmly. If the child feels that we are on his side, he will feel secure, confident and stable.

CONVERSATION, NOT INTERROGATION

When a child comes home, we must welcome him with open arms, in action, words and even thought. Children can sense whether we think well or poorly of them.

We begin by asking our child how he is and how school was, and sometimes detailed questions like, "Who did you play with?" "Was it interesting?" We need to ask about those things that interest the child, not what interests us. We are trying to make the child feel welcome, not to

interrogate him. We must talk to the child with decency and not boss him around.

A middle-aged man told me how as a child he was terrified of Shabbos. His father was a tough disciplinarian and his tests were a nightmare. Even before he would start reading the Gemara, his father would slap him saying, "I know that you won't know it, so here is a slap on credit."

UNDERSTANDING THE CHILD

I knew of an excellent boy who suddenly stopped behaving well. His parents tried to uncover what happened, but the boy wouldn't say and his teacher couldn't offer any insight. The father consulted an expert *mechanech* who suggested that the father open up to his son and share his own hardships as a child. This may make the boy comfortable to share what's on his heart.

The father went with his son for a nature walk and told him of the academic and social challenges he had as a young boy. The boy then began to cry, and he told his

We need to ask about those things that interest the child, not what interests us. We are trying to make the child feel welcome, not to interrogate him.

A child who misbehaves and quarrels with his siblings is admonished. What happens when that child improves and behaves well?

father about boys in his class who teased him for being short. He was afraid that he wouldn't grow anymore. The parents later took the boy to a doctor who dispelled the child's worries, and assured the child that he would still grow. Soon, the boy reverted back to his original self.

Children often think that their father is all powerful and can't relate to challenges. When a father opens up to his child and shows how he deals with hardships, the child doesn't feel alone and feels that his father can relate to him. This helps the child deal with his own challenges.

PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

A child who misbehaves and quarrels with his siblings is admonished. What happens when that child improves and behaves well? He isn't complemented and rewarded, he's viewed as just acting normal. Only a child with a good report card or a high test grade is viewed as outstanding.

The *avoda* of *Sefiras HaOmer* is to rectify and refine our *middos*, one *mida* per day. At the end of the daily count we say that in the merit of counting and rectifying that day's *mida*, "May I be purified and

sanctified with supernal holiness, and through this may abundant bounty flow through all the worlds..." In a *maamar* from *sefira* time the Rebbe points out that this exceptional blessing is uniquely given for correcting character traits.

A child too deserves to be recognized and rewarded for a positive trait or *abavas Yisroel*. Acknowledgement may seem trivial to us, but for the child it is tremendous.

PARENTAL CARE

A non-religious young woman took an interest in *Yiddishkeit* and enrolled in Beis Chana in Minnesota, but sadly, a short while later she started using drugs. The school's staff succeeded in getting her to stop, but soon she relapsed and her condition deteriorated to the point that she was hospitalized.

The administration immediately wrote to the Rebbe and asked for a *bracha*, but instead of giving a *bracha* or advice, the Rebbe wrote that the matter pertains to her parents. Puzzled, the administration followed the Rebbe's instruction and called the woman's parents in California and asked them to come.

The Rebbe's answer became clear. Her parents' special visit and their sympathy proved to her that they cared, and she was able to overcome her addiction.

After a few days of caring for their daughter the full story came out.

When she was fifteen-years-old and at a party with friends she experimented with drugs for the first time. At 2 AM, after the party finished, she returned home. She felt so guilty by what she had done, and she wanted her parents to know that she needed help. She started making a commotion in hope that her parents would come downstairs and ask her what was wrong. When her parents heard the noise, they thought a thief had broken in, and they rushed downstairs. Seeing it was only their daughter, they turned around and headed back to bed. The distraught girl translated their reaction as indifference, and it propelled her to further into drug use. Even after she was shown warmth and care by the *shluchim* who brought her to *Yiddishkeit*, she shouldn't shake off her bad feeling from her parents' apathy.

The Rebbe's answer became clear. Her parents' special visit and their sympathy proved to her that they cared, and she was able to overcome her addiction.

If we show genuine care to begin with, we can save ourselves much heartache.

It is common for a child to encounter peers who can exert a negative influence on him. But if he comes from warm and supportive home, he will remain faithful to the spirit of his upbringing. Even if he trips up here and there, he won't collapse entirely. When a child has a healthy, open relationship with his parents, he is "connected above and won't fall below."

FAITHFUL DROPOUTS

There are two types of youths who stop observing *mitzvos*, and they should not be confused.

One type is disenchanted with *Yiddishkeit* and he doesn't believe in Hashem, in Torah and *mitzvos*. He doesn't get inspired and he even discourages others from practicing *mitzvos*.

The second type believes in Hashem and in Torah, but wants to have a good time. Every now and then he is inspired to do a *mitzva* and he is happy about others who are faithful.

In children who received a *chassidische* education, we see mostly the second type. Those stray youth have a strong *emuna* and a warm heart for all good things, and many of them eventually return.

An educator who works with dropouts from all different communities highlighted the difference for me. In his

work of bringing youth back, he attempts to find their breaking point, the weakness which caused them to fall, and from there he rectifies their problem. To uncover what that problem is, he must speak to the boy's friends. He told me that boys from our community, though they are dropouts themselves, are generally cooperative and want their friend back in *yeshiva*, whereas, other dropouts have lost basic *emuna* and think that everyone should drop out.

FOREVER HOPEFUL

R. Pinchas, the grandfather of R. Pinchas of Koritz, had a group of apostates in his town. He would visit them each day and recite *Shema* with them, and he would promise them that they would merit the World to Come. Eventually, they returned and became good Jews.

The biggest obstacle for an apostate to return is his feeling of disconnect and his belief that he is not a Jew anymore. When R. Pinchas promised them *Olam Haba* just for saying *Shema*, they were happy to comply.

The Rebbe teaches us to act with brotherly love and friendship to everyone. Parents

must show unconditional love to their children no matter what condition they are in. We need to show them that they are precious and whatever they do is valuable. This will motivate them to do more.

“SUCCESS IN HAKHEL”

There was once a boy from a *frum* family in Eretz Yisroel who left *Yiddishkeit* and did not want to have any relationship with his parents. Naturally, the parents were devastated. In 5748 (1988), the father visited the US and he took the opportunity to ask the Rebbe for advice and a *bracha*. He began telling the Rebbe the sad story and the Rebbe handed him an additional dollar and said, “Success in *Hakbel*.”

The man did not understand what this meant, but soon he found a chossid who explained to him what *Hakbel* is, and how he could practice it by gathering his family and inspiring them to fear Hashem. The chossid said, “If you do *Hakbel*, it will surely bring you the appropriate blessing.”

When the man returned to Eretz Yisroel, he immediately invited his entire extended

The biggest obstacle for an apostate to return is his feeling of disconnect and his belief that he is not a Jew anymore.

family for a “*Hakbel*” evening. He decided to reach out to his runaway son as well, and told him he wasn’t asking anything of him, just to attend as a member of the family. The son liked the idea and he joined.

The warm atmosphere at the gathering had such a strong impact on the boy that he decided to return home. That was his first step in returning to religious observance.

Shabbos Meal

THE REBBE’S SOLUTION

There was once a boy who abandoned the path of *Yiddishkeit* and left his home. His mother desperately wanted him to return, regardless of his spiritual state, but wasn’t successful. She visited the Rebbe and asked what she could do to get her son to come back.

The Rebbe told her in Yiddish, “*Ir zolt ba’sheinin ayer Shabbos tzimmer,*” – you

should beautify your Shabbos room – and did not elaborate.

The woman went home and took a look at her dining room. Straight away she noticed that the curtains were worn out and torn, and she ordered beautiful new curtains. Next, she bought new tableware for Shabbos. Throughout the week she thought about which delicious dishes she would prepare, and which *nosb* each child liked best. She shopped, cooked, and prepared the Shabbos meals in the finest manner.

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On Thursday night she set the table with the new dishes and matching napkins. It was gorgeous. When the children came home, they all felt the Shabbos atmosphere. When her husband saw his wife’s extraordinary efforts, he also increased his Shabbos preparations. Everyone looked forward to the time when they would sit together at the Shabbos table.

At the Shabbos meal, they sat like princes. The children shared *divrei Torah* and



The Rebbe told her in Yiddish, “Ir zolt ba’sheinin ayer Shabbos tzimmer,” – you should beautify your Shabbos room – and did not elaborate.

the father told a captivating story. They immensely enjoyed the good food and each other’s company. All week, they looked forward to the next Shabbos.

A few weeks passed. One day, the children met their brother, and told him what he was missing. The brother couldn’t believe it, since he remembered what Shabbos was like when he lived at home. But his siblings insisted that he come and see it himself.

He came and loved it. The nice curtains, the beautiful dishes, the wonderful food – all so magnificent. His father sat like a king, relaxed, and not falling asleep; his mother served the food in a happy mood – no one shouted. He could not believe his eyes. He was drawn to come more and more often until he moved back home and returned to *Yiddishkeit*. The mother told the story herself.

Shabbos, especially Friday night, is often the only time when parents and children eat together.

The Satan puts all his energy into ruining the Friday night meal

THE FRIDAY NIGHT CHALLENGE

Shabbos, especially Friday night, is often the only time when parents and children eat together. The rest of the week, many families have different eating shifts: the younger children first, then the older ones when they settle down, the mother sometimes eats earlier and sometimes later (and sometimes not at all), and the father may come home late after work.

The Satan puts all his energy into ruining the Friday night meal. Children complain that when they repeat a *dvar Torah* at the Friday night meal, their father snoozes, so why should they say it? Sometimes there are guests, and the boy is embarrassed to speak. The father says something unknowingly that humiliates the child, and the child concludes that his father hates him.

Reb Shlomo of Karlin, one of the great disciples of the Mezritcher Maggid, once said that the father (or parents) must take a nap Friday afternoon in order to be alert and relaxed at the Shabbos meal. The *Minchas Elozor* of Munkatch astutely commented that this instruction is so critical that he can't understand why it wasn't included in the *Aseres Hadibros*.

An educational expert from Los Angeles who works with high risk teenagers to prevent them from dropping out once spoke at the teachers' *kinus*. He said that for 90% of the children he deals with, the problem begins with the Friday night meal.

He delineated the sequence of events: The father says something critical to one of the children or gets involved in their quarrels, and they all get upset at him. He despairs and gets up from the table and goes off to sleep, with the mother following him and the children remain awake alone and upset. If the child is somewhat older, he leaves the house without the parents knowing and hangs out with other angry kids, and he goes downhill from there.

Giving children the feeling that the home is their security begins with a beautiful Shabbos meal. Parents should be cheerful and be the last ones to leave the table. The father must be alert and run the meal in such a way that the children look forward to the Shabbos meal.

MEMORY OF A SHABBOS MEAL

A group of members of a Young Israel *shul* once traveled to Eretz Yisroel as part of an organized trip.

One participant was an introverted man in his 70's who always sat quietly in a corner. Friday night, they went to the *Kosel* to participate in the special Friday night *davening*. They decided that instead of *davening* together as they do every Shabbos, they would disperse among the various *minyanim* and get a taste of the different customs, and they designated a place to meet when *davening* finished.

After *davening*, all the members of the group convened at their meeting place, except for that man. Not wanting to leave without him, they went to look for him, and found him pacing back and forth emotionally. He told them that he could not leave yet and he could only return to the hotel once he calmed down. His companions were quite surprised since he was not at all an excitable person, but they left him alone and waited on the side.

Half-an-hour later he was ready and they headed back to the hotel. During their Shabbos meal, the man shared his story.

"When I was a young child in Poland, World War II broke out. Since I looked Polish, my father arranged papers for me that said I was the son of a Polish neighbor. He gave all his money to the neighbor

who promised he would take care of me until after the war. I joined the neighbor's family and they treated me well. I grew up as one of their children, went to school and on Sunday I went to church with them. Nobody ever came back for me.

"One day, when I was 12, I came home from school and saw the table covered with a white tablecloth and candles, and a festive meal was being prepared. They said it was a holiday. 'Which holiday?' I asked. They explained that although they were happy to save my life, I was still Jewish, so we would go to church and the priest would make me 'like one of us.' This was the cause for their celebration.

"At the time, I didn't see any problem with it and went along with them. But suddenly on the way, I recalled a song that my father

Giving children the feeling that the home is their security begins with a beautiful Shabbos meal.

used to sing. He was a Nadvorna chossid and his Rebbe would sing '*Shabbos Shalom U'Mevorach*' with fiery passion. When my father would return from the Rebbe, he would sing this song on Friday night with such fervor, before and throughout the meal. I suddenly remembered that song,



I suddenly remembered that song, and
I could picture my father singing it with
zeal, as my mother, my brothers and my
sisters sat around the table.

and I could picture my father singing
it with zeal, as my mother, my brothers
and my sisters sat around the table. I
knew virtually nothing about *Yiddishkeit*
and had no idea of what those words

meant, yet I thought in my mind: *How can
I do this?* I stopped walking and refused
to move forward. The family took me back
home and didn't raise the subject again."



“Life continued and I attended Polish high school. At the age of 17 the same scene repeated itself. A white tablecloth, candles, and a festive meal, and they said they were taking me to the church to make me ‘one of us.’ On the way, that song unexpectedly came to mind again. I couldn’t go.

“At this point, I started thinking what would happen next time they tried. I was very afraid and decided to run away at my first opportunity. I earned some money,

and managed to escape to the United States, where I began studying *Yiddishkeit* and joined the *shul*.

“Tonight, at the *Kosel*, I heard people singing ‘*Shabbos Shalom U’Mevorach*,’ the tune which saved me twice from converting. I was emotionally overwhelmed.”

The power of a Shabbos meal, the songs and the warmth, should not be underestimated. **P**



Again *a* Horse?

RABBI SHALOM BER AVTZON

There is a famous story of Reb Gershon of Pahar, one of Reb Hillel Paritcher's outstanding *talmidim*, that the Rebbe related at a *farbrengen* and that was oft quoted by *mashpi'im*.

Every night after Reb Gershon finished reciting *krias shema al hamita*, he wouldn't go off to bed. Instead, he would place his hand on his *yarmulke*, move it about his head and say, "Gershon Ber, Gershon Ber! *Morgen darf zein gor andersh!* Tomorrow must be completely different!"

Tomorrow the *davening* should be with more fervor, the learning should be with more *geshmak*, and the *mitzvos* should be performed with exactness and *hiddur*.

This is indeed one of the messages that the Rebbe incorporated in the twelve *pesukim*. "*B'chol dor v'dor* – in every generation," and as the Alter Rebbe adds in Tanya "every single day," a person has to go out and beyond his limitations. As chassidim would say, "*Az gut is gut iz besser*"

nisht besser?” loosely translated as, “Even if all is good, isn’t better even better?”



There are many times when we feel uplifted and inspired, and want to be “*andersh*,” but we forget to harness that inspiration and so it dissipates after some time. We need to take advantage of the inspirations we are given from Above and make them our own, as illustrated in the following story:

There was a horse thief who stole only when he had a request for a specific horse. He knew all the horse owners and what they had, so when a request came in he knew from which farm he can obtain that particular horse.

He was an expert in his profession; he knew how to open any gate without it squeaking and had a way with horses so that they wouldn’t neigh when he would lead them away in the middle of the night.

One day he received an order for a stately horse and he knew there was only one person from whom he can obtain it. So around midnight he arrived at his place, greased the hinges that the doors wouldn’t make any sound, and took the horse. After delivering it he said to himself, *I was so foolish! I should have taken a second horse that was there as I could get rid of it in a few minutes.*

So although it was almost dawn, he decided to go back and take the second

one also. But now he was in a rush so he figured that as he had already greased the hinges, he didn’t have to waste his time and do it again. And so, he opened the gate slightly carelessly and a tiny squeak came out.

Normally this wouldn’t wake up a farmer in the middle of the night, but at that time the farmer was about to wake up anyway and the noise disturbed him. He rushed down to the barn to see what caused it. Seeing the barn door open, he began shouting, “You thief! I am going to get you!”

The horse thief heard him coming and realized that at that moment it would be futile to try to escape, so he ran over to the stall of the missing horse and stood still.

A moment later, the owner entered and saw him and realized that one horse, his best one, was missing. Immediately he accused the horse thief and berated him for taking the horse, demanding its return.

There are many times when we feel uplifted and inspired, and want to be “*andersh*,” but we forget to harness that inspiration and so it dissipates after some time.



“Finally I had
enough and I began
beseeching the
Creator to put an end
to my misery thinking,
‘If He would only give
me one more chance,
I would behave
properly.’

The horse thief replied, “If I am a thief
and stole your prize horse, why would I
be here? I would be with the horse!”

“So, if you are not the thief, who are
you?” asked the owner demandinglly.

“I was your horse,” replied the thief, “But
you want to know what happened? Why
I look and talk like a human? The answer
is that in reality I always was a human,
just I always horsed around. Finally the
Creator said, ‘You act like a horse every
moment of the day, so I will fulfill your
desire and you will live the life of a
horse, the life you so much desired.’ And
yes, I was a horse for a few years.

“Initially it was a lot of fun. I could
run around, jump over fences and
everyone enjoyed my antics. But then

you decided to use me for your work. You were so harsh on me, and you were never satisfied. You gave me the heaviest loads to pull, the toughest ground to plow – it was torturous but I did it. Instead of being appreciative, you always wanted more and kept on beating me with that leather strap of yours.

“Finally I had enough and I began beseeching the Creator to put an end to my misery thinking, ‘If He would only give me one more chance, I would behave properly.’ Much better to listen and obey the Creator than this master, who thinks I am a beast, and treats me like a beast. So just before you came down, the Creator had mercy on me, and I reverted to the person that I once was.”

The farmer was utterly confused by all this. How could it be true? But what if it was true, what should he do? After all if he had stolen the horse, he would be with it and not there, standing still in the stall. It was early in the morning and his head wasn’t thinking so he replied, “Since the Creator gave you another chance, I will too. You are free to go wherever you want and I sincerely apologize for treating you so badly.”

The thief thanked the farmer and humbly left the barn, but as soon as he was some distance away and out of danger he began to laugh at the farmer’s foolishness.

Meanwhile the poor farmer had to get his produce to the market place so he hitched a different horse to his wagon and off he went.

Coming close to the marketplace he saw another farmer pulling up, and sure enough he saw his old horse. Going over to the horse he said, “What’s wrong with you? You couldn’t control yourself from acting like a horse for even an hour?”



We all have our moments of inspiration to be a “*mentch*” and to stop being a horse. Let’s pull ourselves higher and remain on that plateau, awaiting the moment that we can climb up yet higher. **P**



MY JOURNEY TO THE YESHIVA IN LUBAVITCH

Memoirs of Reb Shmaryahu Sassonkin

Part 2

Reb Shmaryohu Sassonkin, also known as Reb Shmerel Batumer (in reference to the town of Batumi, Georgia where he served as rov), was the rov of the Chabad community in Yerushalayim from his arrival in Eretz Yisroel in 5710 (1950) until his passing on 19 Menachem Av 5736 (1976).



In his memoirs titled "Zichronosai", he writes in descriptive style about his youth, the Tomchei Temimim yeshivah in Lubavitch, his rabbonus in Batumi and the state of Georgian Jewry, and about the challenges of living Jewishly in communist Russia.

The following chapters convey his impressions of the yeshivah in Lubavitch upon his arrival in the beginning of winter, 5766 (1905).



ARRIVING IN LUBAVITCH

The courtyard of the Rebbe came into view from afar. As we approached, we saw its handsome wooden buildings, and towering above them all – a large hall (known as *der groiser zal*) with big, tall windows on three of its sides. The path to the Rebbe's courtyard took us through almost the entire town, and we saw no other building as large or as arresting as this. The sound of Torah being studied by the *yeshivah* students inside was audible even at some distance, identifying it as the Rebbe's courtyard even before we arrived.

When I entered the *groiser zal*, many of my old friends who I had learned with in the *yeshivos* of Kremenchug and Amtchislav greeted me with excitement. I told them of the uncertainty that had gnawed at me on the journey, but they answered me with excitement and beaming faces that it had all been worth it, and about how happy they were that Divine providence had brought us here. They added that they had already gained some knowledge of Chassidus, which is literally a remedy for the soul. For the discipline of Chassidus is not Kabbalah nor an explanation of Kabbalah, but a "chapter" in its own right: A discipline of depth, wisdom and deep inquiry into matters of *Elokus* similar to the study of Gemara.

My friends had changed a lot. Their clothing was different, their sentiments and aspirations had changed, and even their faces had already altered somewhat. To be honest, at our previous *yeshivos* we'd had a rather poor attitude towards the Torah's spirit and being particular about doing *mitzvos* properly; we were pretty ignorant indeed. Our *talis katan* (*tzitzis*; literally 'small *talis*'), for example, was indeed "small", because we didn't know about the correct halachic measurements. As small as it was, it was still too "large" in our eyes, so we hid it completely in our pants so it wouldn't be visible at all.

It similarly didn't occur to us to be particular about our *tefillin*, and we would buy both *tzitzis* and *tefillin* from the peddlers who circulated from town

to town, or in any store. It was enough for us that the sellers seemed trustworthy and we relied on that. Our only aspiration was to become great Torah scholars, and even when studying we concentrated only on those subjects which lent themselves to scholarly arguments and explanations. Since the *yeshivah* of Vietka was in a chassidic town, our studies there included tractates from Seder Moed as well, but still we would skip the sections of *agaddah*, because what use did we have for anything without sharp *lomdus*?

Everything, even *davening*, we did by rote, without energy, coldly and inattentively. Our time was precious to us, our main aspiration being to acquire the broadest possible knowledge of Gemara, and everything else was secondary. That being the case, this sort of study did not imbue us with the spirit of Torah at all, and there was no visible difference between us and the youths in the marketplace and on the street. We were essentially the same in our external appearance and even in our inner sentiments. The purity and refinement that are characteristic of a *Ben Torah* [Torah student] were not apparent on our faces, as the Rebbe Rashab complained in *Kuntres Eitz HaChaim*.

It is therefore no surprise that I didn't recognize my friends, as their features were already more refined and their clothing had already changed. Their *tzitzis*

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To be honest, at our previous yeshivos we'd had a rather poor attitude towards the Torah's spirit and being particular about doing mitzvos properly.

were in accordance with the Halachic measurements and made specifically of wool. They were particular that their *tefillin* should be made of a single piece of leather, and they took special care that the head *tefillin* should be positioned exactly in the center of the head, and that the end of the *titura* [base] should not be below the hairline. Moreover, in order to fulfill the *mitzvos* of *tzitzis* and *tefillin* in the most beautiful way, there were G-d fearing experts who specialized in preparing these articles.

In Lubavitch there was a modest and G-d fearing woman who was an expert at spinning and weaving the strings for *tzitzis*. Before beginning, she was particular to pronounce that it was "for the sake of *tzitzis*," and she made the strings thin and long, beautiful and *mebudar*. Her *tzitzis* became renowned in the Chabad world as "Sara Chana's *tzitzis*." Likewise, there was a *sofer* and a

battim-macher, both of whom were G-d fearing experts, who would implement every *biddur* and aspect demanding precision that the *yeshivah* people requested.



The desire to be equal with the outside world had already subsided, for why would one strive to fit in with the world after having already realized that the world and all that fills it aren't of real significance? In fact, the notion that the world truly exists as an independent entity is an utter fallacy. If anything, the world ought to seek to become like *Bnei Torah* [students of the Torah], since the world derives its existence from the Torah with which it was created, and the true purpose of the world is the practical fulfillment of the *mitzvos* (*Brachos* 17).

Their aspirations had changed as well. While their desire to become great Torah scholars had grown exponentially, their motive and objective had changed. They were now motivated by the fact that the Torah is the wisdom and will of Hashem, and just as He is infinite, His wisdom

and will are similarly infinite; just as “no thought can grasp him”, no thought can grasp His infinite wisdom either, for He and His wisdom are one (*Zohar*, Rambam and Tanya).

Yet, “in the place where you find Hashem’s greatness, there you find His humility, and Hashem contracted His will and wisdom into the 613 *mitzvos* of the Torah, in their *halachos*, in the combination of letters that form the Tanach, and in the tales and parables in the Midrashim of our sages, so that each soul that is invested within the body of man may intellectually grasp and practically fulfill His will and wisdom”. By way of this contraction we are able to grasp the Torah, and since Hashem and the Torah are one, it transpires that we are in fact grasping Hashem Himself. “And although the Torah is manifest in terms of lowly, physical matters, the study of Torah may be compared to one who embraces a king, where the sublime intimacy and cleaving are no different whether he is wearing one garment or many, since the body of the king Himself is within those garments.” Similarly, it makes no difference if the terminology of the Torah refers to mundane matters, since Hashem himself has chosen to make Himself manifest within that material (Tanya, Chapter 4).

Likewise, since *mitzvos* are the fulfillment of Hashem’s statutes and laws, they inspire a tremendous concentration on one’s studies and the aspiration to become

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The Tomchei Temimim yeshivah building in Otvozk

ever closer to Him. This is expressed in the meticulous care taken in performing the *mitzvos* and their *biddurim*. Once this change in one's outlooks and aspirations takes hold, the way in which one studies Torah automatically changes. The prior coarseness slowly falls away and the character of a true *Ben Torah* begins to take shape, and one's clothing and general

conduct change accordingly as well. It was for this reason that the yeshivah wasn't particular about the dress and conduct of new students, since they were confident that this would be achieved naturally, with the passage of time, through the study and the spirit of Torah that permeated the *yeshivah*.



A DAY IN YESHIVAH

From the moment I entered the *zal*, I felt the atmosphere of Lubavitch encompassing me. The atmosphere of

Lubavitch is different than everywhere else both in study and in practice, and it is filled with care for *mitzvos*.

Although the study of Gemara also had a much beloved tune, the study of Chassidus had a unique melody which was sweet to the ear and pulled at the heart.

Unlike the *yeshivah* building in Kishinev which had separate floors for eating, sleeping and studying, the *yeshiva* in Lubavitch was all on the ground level, with the cafeteria in a second structure. I didn't notice a dormitory building and wondered where the students slept, but when the time to sleep arrived I saw that the beds were fixed to the walls of the *zal*; there were double doors all along the walls of the *zal*, which at night were released and arranged so as to serve as good, strong beds.

I had never witnessed anything like this, I had never seen anyone daven so late, and I stood puzzling over what was going on with their davening.

The older students in the *yeshivah* would recount that in the *yeshivah's* early years, the Rebbe would secretly enter the *zal* in the middle of the night, and observe how the *bochurim* slept. When he witnessed how they all slept on their side as *halacha* requires, he took great pleasure in how particular they were even while sleeping. This was emblematic of how much the Rebbe concerned himself with the education of the students, and how he

watched over them like the apple of his eye.

I noticed that the first person to set up his bed prepared nearby a large bucket of water, a cup, and a dirty bucket. When he awoke the next morning, he washed his hands while still in bed, and passed everything along to the next student, who in turn passed it further, until everyone had washed their hands. This was all in order to be very particular about not walking four *amos* without washing one's hands upon awakening [others rely on a leniency to consider an entire room as "four *amos*"].

Early in the morning, when the students arose and the local students arrived as well, they all accepted the yoke of Heaven upon themselves by reciting *Shma* specifically while wearing *tefillin*. This was referred to as "the little *Shma*". Then, everyone grabbed their seats and began studying Chassidus.

Soon the special melody which accompanied the study of Chassidus filled the room. Although the study of Gemara also had a much beloved tune, the study of Chassidus had a unique melody which was sweet to the ear and pulled at the heart. I would perhaps say that since Chassidus is a study that focuses inward, it acquired a tune that penetrates the innermost part of the heart.

Following the study of Chassidus, the students prepared for *davening*. As

they began to *daven*, one could sense the important role *davening* played in Lubavitch, how it wasn't a burden or debt to be done away with. *Davening* was regarded as something incredibly significant and not something to be trifled with. Though not everyone *davened* at length—and in fact most of the students did not, since there were only two hours allotted for *davening* and eating, from 9:30 until 11:30—still, they *davened* slowly, unrushed, deliberately and with emotion. The words shone with life and feeling. The two hours of Chassidus that had preceded had injected tremendous vitality into their *davening*.

Originally, only the small *zal* was used for *davening*, but during my days when the number of students increased and they outgrew the small *zal*, the *davening* was moved to the large *zal*.

At breakfast the students were extremely careful regarding *netilas yadayim*, following the stringent requirement to pour twice over each hand, no matter how much water was used each time [the practice to pour three times only spread decades later].

I still hadn't been accepted into the *yeshivah*, since I first needed to be tested by Reb Volf Levitin, whose job was overseeing the learning, and so I sought a quiet corner where I could delve into the sugya which I had been told to prepare. I was certain that I would find no one in

But these young men – what are they lacking? They don't suffer from hunger, they have no ill ones at home and their ships aren't sinking!"



In Lubavitch we
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the small *zal* since *davening* had already finished. I entered the *zal* with my Gemara Gittin, but how surprised was I to discover that while the learning had already begun in the large *zal* and the resounding sound of study could be heard throughout the area, here, in the small *zal*, there stood a number of *bochurim* facing the wall, *davening* from the depths of their heart. I stood in wonder, staring at them silently, and could not understand why they were still *davening* after the time for *davening* had ended.

I had never witnessed anything like this, I had never seen anyone *daven* so late, and I stood puzzling over what was going on with their *davening*. Sometimes they would fall silent, deep in thought, apparently contemplating some topic. Then they would become aroused, one humming a heartbreaking tune, while another sang a song of joy. One beseeched

in a pleading voice, "May You illuminate our eyes with Your Torah, and may You cleave our heart to Your *mitzvos*," while another cried out tearfully, "May we not be embarrassed and may we not be ashamed and may we never stumble for eternity."

And there I stood, thinking to myself, "*Ribono Shel Olam!* What is going on here?! I know that people cry over their miserable lot when they're upset or depressed, like a pauper dying of hunger, or someone with a sick relative, or when faced with the prospect of a sinking ship. Crying and shedding tears would be quite appropriate in those situations. But these young men – what are they lacking? They don't suffer from hunger, they have no ill ones at home and their ships aren't sinking!"

But then I discovered that everything was revolving around their inner spiritual world. One was feeling spiritually destitute, as if his soul was afflicted and dying of spiritual hunger; another was pained since his spiritual ship was sinking in the sea of extraneous thoughts. I began to wonder how people so young had acquired feelings that I'd never witnessed even in individuals who were advanced in age, never mind those with so little life experience?

I stood, lost in thought, for quite a while, forgetting all about my upcoming exam. I awoke abruptly, moved along and found a



The town of Lubavitch

corner to prepare the *sugya* that I'd been assigned.

After passing the exam successfully, I joined the students in the large *zal*. It was there that I discovered that those *bochurim* who *davened* at great length were called "*ovdim*", since they serve Hashem in *tefila* which is called *avoda*. But *avoda* wasn't something that one could approach empty-handed, and the title of *oved* wasn't simply available to everyone for the taking. One who wished to *daven* at length had to first amass a knowledge of Chassidus both deep and broad.

In *Kuntres HaTefila*, the Rebbe had already forbidden 'youngsters who had not fully opened their eyes to Chassidus' from *davening* at length, instead bidding them to focus on "*davening* in one place from

a siddur, slowly and with *pirush hamilos* [basic understanding of the words], audibly and clearly spoken so that the words should be alive and shining with emotion and meaning." Once a student had a thorough knowledge of Chassidus and came to recognize and be pained by his spiritual illness, he would visit the expert spiritual doctor – the Rebbe – and reveal his innermost flaws to him, bar none. The Rebbe would then delve deeply into his case, to heal him spiritually and lay out a system of rectification for him. Then, he would be ready to *daven* and practice *avoda*.

From among all the "*ovdim*" who stood near the wall deep in thought, two of them stood out: "Shilem Disner" and "Dovid Horodoker." Let the readers not take me to task for not crowning them with the



Reb Dovid Horodoker

appropriate title, since we are talking about Lubavitch, and the chassidishe atmosphere of Lubavitch was not familiar with or favorably disposed to honorary titles. On the contrary, all titles were kept at a distance, and everyone was called by their name and the city they originated from. Thus, Shilem was from the town of Disna, and so he was called Shilem Disner, while Dovid was from Horodok, and therefore known as Dovid Horodoker.

Both Dovid and Shilem them were exceptionally deep thinkers, but there was a great difference between them. Dovid would sit on a bench wearing *tefillin*, swaying gently with his eyes closed, contemplating Chassidus for several hours. There was no difference between his thinking during learning or his thinking during *davening*, except that in the first

case his eyes were open and here they were closed. Deep thinking came easy to him; he was naturally introspective, removed from the outside world, and distant from people and worldly occurrences, so this was an enjoyable experience for him. His outstanding diligence had already led him to achieve thorough knowledge of the four sections of *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch* even before he arrived in Lubavitch, and once he developed a thorough knowledge of Chassidus as well, he would contemplate it in depth during study and *davening*.

Shilem was different. He wasn't quiet and contemplative by nature, and so deep thinking was something that took great effort out of him, as he found it difficult to concentrate and focus his thoughts. As he stood deep in thought, you could see the strain that it caused him, but after ongoing effort he trained himself into it. Dovid was by nature entirely different than the typical in every aspect, and his *avoda* was clearly apparent. He once commented that he wished (*halevai*) that his desire to study Chassidus would be akin to that of reading a newspaper. When I noted that it was unlikely that he'd ever actually read or even seen a newspaper, and so his supposed desire to read one seemed dubious, he replied: "True, I personally have no such desire, but judging by how other people have such a strong desire to read the newspaper, I wish my desire for Chassidus was as powerful!"...

When everyone settled in their place, the minagnim began their singing. The songs uplifted the soul, and the listeners felt themselves departing the mundane for the holy.

They'd say about Dovid that he was completely vigilant about his every thought, speech and action, and that, moreover, he was said to have reached the status of the Beinoni in the Tanya!

It happened once, years later, that he arrived in the town of L., and was honored with reciting Chassidus. Some of the people were apprehensive that he might discuss deep concepts beyond their comprehension, but they were pleasantly surprised at how clear and comprehensible his words were. He recited a *maamar* from *Likuttei Torah*, *parshas Tzav*, and he explained it in such a manner that even the simplest listeners enjoyed it. How did he do it? Through "*davening* with the *maamar*." When one *davens* with a *maamar*, he must first review it until he knows it by heart, then he deliberates over it until he understands it perfectly. During *davening*, he contemplates it in detail, and thinks it through until even his 'animalistic soul' can understand that G-dliness is something good and desirable, culminating in a real sense of longing for that reality.

Shilem, however, was different after *davening*. Though he was no less advanced than Dovid, his *avoda* did not stand out and he mingled with others. He demonstrated a keen understanding in both Nigleh and Chassidus, and his arguments were well explained and a pleasure to hear. He understood things clearly and his mind was powerful enough to unravel even the most complex matters. When he concentrated on anything, especially on *davening*, he wouldn't see or hear what happened around him. One morning, as they *davened* Shachris, the Rebbe entered the small *zal*. When the *bochurim* noticed the Rebbe, they quickly dispersed out of reverence, but Shilem didn't notice anything at all, though the Rebbe sat not far from where he was standing. The Rebbe watched him for a while, and then got up to leave. The Rebbe then commented that it was evident that Shilem *davened* with complete sincerity and was truly engrossed in his *davening*.

In the Rebbe's courtyard there was a large *sukka* to accommodate all of the students, and the *bochurim* would construct it before Sukkos and place the *schach* on

top. The *sukka* was located right outside the Rebbe's windows, and many students stood on the *sukka* and placed the *schach* on top without realizing that the Rebbe was watching them. The Rebbe later noted that he could tell that Shilem placed the *schach* on the *sukka* with palpable *kabolas ol malchus Shomayim* – acceptance of the yoke of Heaven.

Shilem got married and emerged into the world, but his “*avoda*” never changed. When he visited Lubavitch for the first time after his marriage, the Rebbe was pleased that he was dressed in clean and respectable clothes, because while preoccupied in *yeshivah* with his *avoda* he had never given any attention to his physical appearance.

A while later, the Rebbe appointed Shilem to oversee the study of Chassidus in the *yeshivah*. Shilem dedicated himself to this work with every fiber of his soul, and out of his exceptional love for his fellow *temimim*, he would persuade and influence them to put the ideas in Chassidus which they studied into practice. His sincere words made their mark, and the students all loved him intensely. His tenure saw the students achieve unprecedented heights.

During the later upheavals, when the *yeshivah* relocated from Lubavitch to Kremenchug, he moved along with it. But sadly, he fell ill and passed away, still at his position. When the unfortunate news reached the Rebbe in Rostov, tears flowed from his eyes and he said, “Shilem was a good man (*adam kasher*)” [an understated but meaningful assessment].



SHABBOS IN LUBAVITCH

Shabbos in Lubavitch was entirely dedicated to Chassidus. Shabbos was welcomed with song, which assumed a prominent role in Lubavitch. In my days it was gone about in quite an organized fashion, with a chosen group of vocalists (*minagnim*) led by the *bochur* Nota Paharer – from the town of Pahar. Nota had a beautiful voice, was quite adept at singing, and was overall quite musically advanced. His singing tugged at your heart, and he was the one who organized the group of *minagnim* and directed it.

The Rebbe would appear every Shabbos on Friday night and recite a *maamar* in the presence of the students and guests. Hardly any of the residents of the village itself would come to hear the *maamar*, except for the *rav* and some respected *baalei-batim*. The Rebbe initially recited the *maamar* in the small *zal*, but when the number of students and guests increased, it was relocated to the large *zal*.

On Friday, immediately after *mincha*, the room would be prepared. Four long

tables were placed in the center of the *zal*, forming a square. A chair was placed for the Rebbe inside the square at the middle of the north table, where he would sit facing north. His son would always stand on the other side of that table, directly across from him, with only the table separating them. Around the tables stood all the students and guests. Since everyone strongly desired to see the Rebbe's face, or at least to stand in the first row across from the table, they would press against each other until their faces were covered in sweat.

When the wealthy philanthropist and famous chossid Reb Shmuel Gurary would visit Lubavitch, it was a spectacle in its own right. He possessed a striking appearance, was knowledgeable in both Nigleh and Chassidus, and due to his acumen, fear of G-d and outstanding wealth, he was held in high esteem by government officials. It happened more than once that the time of *mincha* arrived during a meeting with the government ministers and he excused himself to *daven*, and they reverentially acquiesced. It wasn't easy to enter his



Reb Alter Simchovitch

office in Kremenchug and meet with him, since a guard always stood at his door demanding an entrance pass, as was common at the offices of high officials.

Yet when he arrived in Lubavitch, he left his honor behind, and when he entered the *zal* to hear the *maamar*, he would push to be near the Rebbe's place just like everyone else. In Lubavitch we didn't see Shmuel the man of power and influence,

Silence reigned for the entire duration of the *maamar*, as everyone harked to hear the Rebbe's holy words. This beautiful sight usually went on for no less than an hour-and-a-half, and sometimes for two hours.



the wealthy philanthropist, but rather Shmuel the chossid, who was equal to everyone. He was completely nullified before the Rebbe Rashab with concern to his body, soul and possessions. He stood before the Rebbe like a servant before his master, and spent tremendous amounts of money for the *yeshivah* Tomchei Temimim and the Rebbe's other projects.

When everyone settled in their place, the *minagnim* began their singing. The music was multi-faceted: Some *niggunim* evoked sadness, while others were joyous. The songs uplifted the soul, and the listeners felt themselves departing the mundane for the holy. When I first witnessed this hallowed and beautiful scene, as the holiness of Shabbos enveloped everyone, their faces shining, as they listened to the soul-stirring *niggunim* with trepidation

and sweetness – all of my senses came to a halt and I completely forgot where I was.

When the Rebbe entered the *zal*, the square would part at the southeast corner for the Rebbe to enter. The squabble among those who had to move from their places quickly fell away out of reverence for the Rebbe.

The Rebbe was tall, towering over the others. During the week he wore a silk hat, and on Shabbos he wore a beautiful fur *shtreimel*. When he left his house for the *zal* to say a *maamar*, he would wear a silk coat with a brilliantly white silk handkerchief around his neck.

When the Rebbe's approaching footsteps could be heard, everyone immediately fell silent. The singing stopped and everyone turned to the east. When the Rebbe appeared, it seemed as if a G-dly angel had appeared in the *zal*. He would enter slowly, his eyes emanating grace, and would take his place. His son would also wear a fur *shtreimel* on Shabbos.

It was his custom was to wrap his right hand with a red handkerchief, the reason for which we don't know. However, his son attested to the fact that all of the Rebbe's movements were based on some rationale in Nigleh or Nistar.

He would sit for a while in silence, and he and his son would gaze at each other. Then, he began the *maamar* in a low voice, but it gradually rose until it was powerful and

fervent, his face aflame. Silence reigned for the entire duration of the *maamar*, as everyone harked to hear the Rebbe's holy words. This beautiful sight usually went on for no less than an hour-and-a-half, and sometimes for two hours. The *maamar* made a tremendous impression on all the listeners – even those who had never heard Chassidus before. These holy words that came forth in holy flame from a holy heart penetrated every heart.

The listeners stood in a throng, all except for one individual who stood off to the side. He was afraid that he would be distracted by the pushing, and so he stood at a distance, his eyes closed and his hand on his forehead, listening carefully to every word that comes from the Rebbe's mouth. This unique individual was none other than Shilem.

After the Rebbe concluded the *maamar*, the crowd davened *mairiv*, and then most of the students and guests went to eat the Shabbos *seudah*. But a small number of students and guests would gather somewhere to review the *maamar*. Some of the students had exceptional mental faculties and the ability to absorb the *maamar* well, and they would repeat the *maamar* word for word. During my time, it was Der Kleiner Yisroel Noach (referred to thusly because there was another Yisroel Noach who was larger than him) at first, and he was later joined by another student with excellent skills and good grasp, Reb Alter Simchovitch – known as

This is how Shabbos passed – with eating and sleeping playing only an incidental role. The pleasure of Shabbos was experienced exclusively in davening and in the *maamar*.

“Alter Putchiper”. But the main *chozer* was Shilem. Though he wasn't naturally gifted with the same abilities like the others, the incredible work he invested and the effort he put into listening enabled him to know the *maamar* best of them all. He would begin repeating the *maamar* and they would assist him as needed. This goes to show what hard work can accomplish!

It took them quite a while before they managed to piece the *maamar* together, and only then did they *daven mairiv* and eat the *seudas Shabbos*. Though the hour was late, they reconvened after the *seuda* to review the *maamar* again so they wouldn't forget it, and then they went to nap for a short while.

Early the next morning, Shilem, along with his assistants and some other respected guests, went to the Rebbe's home for “*chazara*”. Not many people were allowed to be present for *chazara* by the

Rebbe. The Rebbe would sit and listen as Shilem recited the *maamar*, and if Shilem skipped some point or if the connection between the ideas wasn't clear, the Rebbe would remind or correct him. Sometimes, the Rebbe would elaborate on a difficult concept. Shilem would then emerge from the Rebbe's room and repeat the *maamar* for everyone. At this point, he had solid grasp of the *maamar* in his mind and he repeated it with clarity. After *davening* and the *seuda* his assistants also repeated the *maamar*, but everyone wished to hear it specifically from Shilem.

This is how Shabbos passed – with eating and sleeping playing only an incidental role. The *seudos* were prepared in abundance with meat, fish and many delicacies, but the students were busy with the *maamar*. The pleasure of Shabbos was experienced exclusively in *davening* and in the *maamar*. There are no words to describe the feeling of holiness and pleasure of Shabbos in Lubavitch, as our sages say, “What the hearts senses cannot be captured in words.”

The conclusion of Shabbos, “*raiva deraivin*”, was also accompanied with beautiful singing which spoke to the heart; after *mincha*, not long before nightfall, the group of *minagnim* would gather in the small *zal* and they would sing a variety of soul-stirring *niggunim* long into the night. Everyone present felt that it was a time of “*raiva deraivin*” and was aroused with strong yearnings for the Creator; the soul cleaved to its Beloved.

Shilem would then repeat the *maamar* which he knew so clearly once again. During those moments, we didn't notice the darkness that enveloped us, and on the contrary, it was specifically then that we especially felt the holiness of Shabbos hovering over us. It was literally a taste of *Olam Haba* as we sat and savored the spiritual glory.

It is difficult to describe to someone who was never in Lubavitch at that time – when the sun shone brightly, during the lifetime of our great master and teacher, the Rebbe Rashab of righteous memory. **P**



How to PROTECT *Love* FROM ABUSE?

The Shortcomings of Love and the Meaning of Yiras Hashem

———— RABBI MENDY WOLF

MANKIND'S DESIRE IN A RELATIONSHIP

a feeling of closeness to another person, only to find that feeling dissipates after a short time? The intense feeling is commonly defined as love, but may just be an experience of “here today and gone tomorrow.”

Paradoxically, this emotion is so powerful that it can transform one end of the emotional spectrum to the other, turning

love into abuse. In other instances, the feeling of “love” may become so powerful and overwhelming that it is not uncommon for people to express themselves as being burned by these feelings. They may even become discouraged from trying again to pursue this feeling of closeness to another human being.

What we desire is to experience a lasting love, make love a dynamic interaction rather than a boring routine, and prevent love from turning into abuse.

The primary sources for this article include: *Likutei Sichos*, Vol. 7, *Behar* 2, pages 180-183; *Tanya* chapters 3, 4 and 41; and *DH Shofar Shel Rosh HaShana* 5698 – last two chapters (printed in *Sefer HaMaamorim* 5699).

TWO ROOTS OF A RELATIONSHIP

Chassidus explains that a healthy relationship with Hashem must be based not only on love but also on *yirab* — fear, a feeling similar to that of standing in front of a king.¹ Chassidus adds that these two feelings of attachment and distance (“love and fear”) are like “wings” and are the source of a balanced relationship.²

Chassidus takes this idea further and states that it is fear, not love, that is the foundation of a relationship with Hashem.³ What does this mean? How can distance (“fear”) contribute to connecting?

THE MEANING OF FEAR

A common understanding of fear is of danger or punishment.

For example, a person refrains from attacking another because of the legal consequences. This fear is an instinctive want based on a selfish concerns for one’s well-being, reputation and power.⁴ Fearing punishment is not a true expression of the *mida* of *yirab*-fear. While it is useful for preventing dangerous or unhealthy choices, it’s not the emotion that establishes and builds a (healthy) relationship.

1. *Tanya* ch. 4.

2. *Tanya* ch. 40 (p. 106).

3. *Tanya* ch. 41.

4. *Sefer HaMaamorim* 5665, bottom of p. 202

The fear that is described in Chassidus is of a different nature. Tanya defines the fear that is essential in a healthy relationship as a cognitive experience, contemplating on the King’s greatness.⁵ (“Greatness” refers to the grandeur of his position and stature, not to his “mightiness” and the punishments that he can dispense. Think of Shlomo HaMelech, whose wisdom was a draw for people from all corners of the earth.) This fear becomes a process, which leads to a sense of admiration, respect, and awe.

“FEAR” IN A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

Relationships demand two opposite modes of expression. One is a deep sense of attachment: a feeling of closeness where the two are inseparable, they feel as one. The other is an outcome of recognizing that there is a level of detachment within the relationship.

This recognition is crucial since every person is unique. The lover must ask himself or herself: How will I respond to character traits or actions that I don’t appreciate or cannot tolerate?

There are three ways to respond to this feeling of distance:

5. *Tanya* Chapter 3. The cognitive experience of fear applies even in the “lower levels of fear” — *Tanya, Heichal Menachem*, Vol. 1, p. 354. *Likutei Sichos*, Vol. 36, *Bshalach* 1, footnote 24.

- **Denial:**⁶ not being conscious of the gap. Loving the other to such an extent that the differences that exist within the relationship are simply not detected.⁷
- **Change:**⁸ recognizing the gap while claiming that it is temporary, and becoming determined to change the partner “for his or her own good.”
- **Overlooking the gap:**⁹ recognizing the personality differences between one another, identifying the character traits that one does not appreciate, but telling oneself that they can be overlooked.

The problem with all of these reactions is that the first person is essentially ignoring the other person. Even in the third type where the lover claims to “overlook” the unwanted traits,¹⁰ seemingly accepting the other person’s differences, it is not

true acceptance. Overlooking essentially means that the lover has rejected certain parts of the loved one. The lover has not fully accepted the loved one for who he or she is. Sooner or later this way of responding will exhaust both members of the relationship: the “overlooker” and the one whose shortcomings are being “overlooked.” The bridge of emotions and connections will eventually begin to weaken, leading to an eventual collapse.

Chassidus teaches a fourth response to the emotional distance that exists between the two people:¹¹

- **Acceptance:** realizing that a gap exists between the two, allowing that gap to exist, and accepting it. Acceptance connects us to the parts we dislike by acknowledging them; they have a right to exist. Acceptance is saying, “Even if I don’t appreciate it, I’m here for you. I will do what you want because you want it.”

ACCEPTANCE IN RELATIONSHIPS

Chassidus explains that love on its own will never bring about genuine acceptance.¹² Acceptance is the root for

6. A cruel person only sees the negative in another. Kindness the source of love only sees goodness in another. *Sefer HaMaamorim* 5709, bottom of p. 8

7. Similar to bribery that “blinds the eyes of sages” (*Mishpatim* 23:8).

8. An awesome expression of love can put the differences between the two “to sleep,” but love can’t cause a genuine change. This is why after the giving of the Torah the Jews were able to serve the golden calf. *Hemshech Ayin Beis*, p. 931

9. Another form of denial, *Sefer HaMaamorim* 5709, bottom of p. 8

10. Last two chapters of *DH Shofar Shel Rosh HaShana* 5698, *Sefer HaMaamorim* 5699, p. 9-10. The shortcoming of love is expressed by

allowing room for disagreement, essentially rejecting a complete attachment.

11. See previous footnote.

12. *Sefer HaMaamorim Melukat*, Vol.3, p. 263-4

recognizing a person's individuality, loving them for who they are.¹³

Acceptance is to step back.¹⁴ You can't have a conversation with someone when they aren't really listening. They can be next to you and even look at you, but be elsewhere. Listening is a skill. It demands total acceptance of the other's being, and acknowledging that "I don't know it all." Although it may not appeal to us right now, we are open to listen and make space for another's world. A relationship built solely on love is like a one-sided conversation without a real listener.

When in love, a person doesn't want to hear about the things they don't like, and that's the problem. What will "love" do when it encounters the inevitable surprises that will surface? A healthy relationship is rooted not only in attachment of one to the other, but also in acceptance of each other.

THE ROOT OF RESPECT

Acceptance is difficult. How can we allow something we dislike? On an elementary level, acceptance is not something we enjoy. Sometimes it feels as if it is forced

upon us: "I have to accept it if I want to be in this relationship." For some, acceptance may bring an elementary feeling of fear — a superficial description of finding themselves in a place they do not want to be.

In reality, acceptance is the root for exploring a deeper layer within a relationship. It allows both parties to come to a new appreciation. It is the key to unlock ourselves from our self-imposed prison.

Acceptance enables us to graduate from being intimidated by the gaps that exist between people, to a point of inviting them. It transforms "fear of acceptance" to a deeper level of fear, namely that of "respect."

True acceptance matures into the foundation for respect, admiration and awe. It's an expression of our deep recognition that humans are essentially handicapped; we are locked up in our own prisons, seeing things from the prisms of our perspective. It leads to an understanding that just because I don't understand something doesn't mean it's not important. Instead of feeling forced to be in a place we don't want to be, we push ourselves to explore new horizons by happily moving out of our comfort zone.¹⁵

The inherent gap that exists between two humans is seen as an opportunity

13. The greatness of a neighboring king cannot compare to one's own king. Why? Since acceptance leads to new levels of appreciation. *Hemshech Samech Vov*, p. 330

14. DH Vyadata 5657 ("Moskve"), *Sefer HaMaamorim* 5657 p. 47-48. "Stepping back" is a part of the process in a "proper" giving.

15. See *Hemshech Samech Vov*, p. 316.

for growth.¹⁶ By accepting the other person, we're able to observe and slowly appreciate new qualities. We embrace those parts we don't like. We respect the gap, rather than reject it.

ACCEPTING OTHERS LIKE OURSELVES

Accepting is not a stamp of approval to misguided behavior. On the contrary, acceptance is key in allowing for growth.

Our relationship with a loved one should mirror our relationship with ourselves. How does a healthy person react to his or her own faults? How do we grow out of a rotten behavior pattern?

The first step of growth is authenticity, recognizing our positive qualities and acknowledging our flaws. A healthy person doesn't hate themselves because of their own flaw, and yet doesn't ignore it. Acknowledging a flaw is not accepting it as our mode of behavior, rather acknowledging that this is an issue we currently have. A healthy person understands that it takes time and hard work to grow out of a dysfunctional behavior pattern.

The same level of acceptance that we have for our own flaws is what we should be exercising towards our loved ones. I know

you have this issue, and that doesn't take away an iota of the bond I have with you. I respect the struggle you have, and I am there to help in any way possible. I don't judge or expect anything. I am here with you on this journey.

THE APPEAL OF LOVE

Now we can understand why Chassidus defines a healthy relationship as one rooted in love and fear. Indeed, infusing respect into a relationship is the key to love.

Respect builds a lasting love.

Feeling "burnt out" is an outcome of the continued exposure to the "annoying parts" and of the energy used to ignore the other's being.

Respecting our differences connects us one-hundred percent, even to those parts we dislike. The "surprises" become included in our relationship and are respected.

Respect prevents abuse.

When we build respect, we end up with genuine love. When we seek only love, we may end up abusing those whom we love.

Think of a parent wanting to express their love by scooping up their child in an embrace. But, the child is playing nicely with some toys on the floor. The child feels that the parent is trespassing into his space: "Don't I deserve some privacy

16. *DH Rebbe Oimer 5700, ois 2*: The infinite gap between Hashem and humans is actually the cause for a connection.

too? Am I merely a reflection of what you feel?” The parent is essentially abusing the child, not loving the child.

Infusing respect prevents the love from becoming stale.

Accepting our differences allows us to slowly appreciate them, and eventually expand our love to those same differences. The feeling of acceptance then deepens the level of attachment; the love is greater for the newfound respect gained. Respect transforms the love and fuels its growth.¹⁷ Western culture uses the term “falling in love.” But love is not something one falls into; it is something one *grows* into.

Only through allowing ourselves to see beyond ourselves, by accepting and respecting others, can we connect with each other and build loving relationships. Indeed, acceptance and respect are the cornerstones of a relationship.

YIRAS HASHEM

In Chassidus, acceptance is called *kabolas ol*. It refers to the difficulty we have in accepting those things that Hashem likes, yet for whatever reason don’t (yet) resonate with us. This difficulty isn’t unique in the relationship of Hashem with us, rather as explained above, it is the cornerstone of all relationships.

The fear of Hashem that the Torah extols as a virtue in our relationship with Hashem does not refer to the fear of *punishment*. Having only fear of punishment is the greatest indicator that the person lacks a relationship. Imagine a man whose only reason why he doesn’t divorce his wife is because he doesn’t want to pay the *kesubah*. This person obviously lacks a relationship.

Although the *chachomim* instituted a *kesubah* for exactly this reason, in order to discourage people from divorcing their wives, everyone understands that this was not their idea of a relationship. In truth, they were looking to protect us from the reality of our human condition in which there are moments when we can make irrational decisions that can have long term consequences that we may regret later on. The *chachomim* thus instituted the *kesubah* as a way to protect ourselves from these rash moments.

The same is true in regards to our relationship with Hashem. The punishment/reward system is not supposed to be the *basis* for a relationship with Him; it is there to *protect us* from our human condition, to keep us from falling into our impulsive desires. In no way does it define the depth of our relationship with Hashem.

17. *Likutei Sichos*, Vol. 7, *Behar* 2, p. 180-183:
Yirah is needed to transform the love itself.

“ACCEPTING” HASHEM

A healthy relationship with Hashem is an engaging one, where we allow ourselves to grow and allow for the relationship to happen. “Accepting” Hashem means that we are open to allowing Hashem’s presence penetrate into our lives. Yes, it’s possible to feel a level of strain at certain things within the relationship. That’s alright. Part of learning is asking questions, and developing a new taste. But, we need to learn. We need to get to know our Loved One; the more time we spend getting to know Him (by learning Chassidus), the more we recognize and appreciate the relationship we have.

The initial irritation is a consequence of our mindset. By allowing ourselves to be open to new ideas, chances are that the irritation will slowly fade into “It’s ok, but it’s not my thing,” and then it can turn into “Let me actually try that out.” Once we try it out, we might actually like it, perhaps we will even develop a new taste, and actually start liking some of the things that previously annoyed us. It all starts with allowing ourselves to let go of our own self-defined terms of life.

The fear of Hashem expressed in our acceptance is not only a **behavior** based acceptance, as in “I will do what He says,” rather it’s a **cognitive** experience, “I will learn about Hashem’s presence and come to appreciate His role in my life.”

This doesn’t mean that we suddenly start loving to do all the things that are challenging, just as we don’t love everything in a human relationship. Yet, we can develop a sense of appreciation for the other person and at least feel like “I don’t want to do this. But, I don’t want to let them down. I don’t want them to feel bad. I’m doing it for their smile.”

This is called *yiras cheit*, fear of sin. There is no mention here of punishment, rather of sin. Sin is synonymous with disconnecting. Why are we afraid to disconnect? Because we are somewhat emotionally invested, and we have developed some type of relationship.

As the story goes with a young prodigy who was once asked where Hashem is found. The sharp boy answered, “Wherever you let him in.” Acceptance is a cognitive experience of allowing Hashem into our lives. **P**

My _____ Perspective

READERS WRITE

Hi Rabbi Hellinger,

Outstanding job on this Perspectives. Your introduction was fantastic, and I'm halfway through the article from Reb Yoel's stories. Enjoying every page. Very clear, simple language that really gets the point across.

Simcha Kanter
Chicago, IL
simplychassidus.com



I received the newest issue in the mail yesterday and have read through about half of it so far. There are some wonderful and applicable articles. Hilchos mezuzah with footnotes and pictures was insightful. The excerpt from the sefer on davening gave me what to think of. And I very much enjoyed the translation from Zichronosai, which so had heard of, but not read.

Continued hatzlocha.

Michoel Dovid Leopold
Pittsburgh, PA



Hi,

Some time ago I was babysitting some non-observant kids in a hotel room. I was told to feed their young son lunch and the mother showed me how to make the sandwich

he likes, and then she left. I felt very uncomfortable making not-kosher food to serve to a Jewish child and didn't know if it was even halachically permitted. I had no phone service and nobody to ask and didn't know what to do.

I suddenly got annoyed at myself for always being so strict and worrying so much about such "minute" details, telling myself it's probably okay in this situation and how treif could the organic healthy bread be already, and all these other yetzer hara thoughts. I made the sandwich reluctantly and decided that I wouldn't actually serve it to him but just leave it nearby to where he was sitting immersed in an electronic game, and if he decides to reach for it on his own well it's not my problem. I did so, relieved he didn't reach for it at once, and then pulled out my phone to see what I could occupy myself with.

As I was unable to download new content, I had to suffice with whatever emails I had already received on my phone. I had an email from Lmaan Yishmeu but as it was a Friday, I figured I'd just read the printout someone would bring home for Shabbos, and read something else instead. Then I thought again and decided not to push off Torah learning so I opened it, read it, and then decided to read the Halachic daily life dilemma at the end (which I don't always do) and what do you know, shock of shocks, it discusses feeding not kosher to a Jew, EVEN a child and EVEN indirectly. I felt as if Hashem was directly telling me that I am not crazy for always caring about halacha wherever I am, and that I was right to be careful, and here He saved me by telling me that in fact it was prohibited.

Boy did I snatch that sandwich away from the kid. I am SO grateful to Lmaan Yishmeu for not only saving me from doing an aveirah, r"l, but also for facilitating this opportunity for Hashem to show me that He supports my endeavors to keep halacha wherever I am.

Hatzlocha rabba in your holy work.

Chava M.

P.S. I am sure there are many, many, stories as these that you never find out about. **P**

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