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NINETEEN

A Different Kind Of YESHIVA



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The Story and Vision of **TOMCHEI TEMIMIM in LUBAVITCH** *Marking 120 Years*

**ONE HUNDRED AND
TWENTY AND FURTHER**

Rabbi Binyomin Cohen

**THE REBBE'S CONNECTION
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EDITOR RABBI SHIMON HELINGER

FEELING FOR A FELLOW

CARING FOR ANOTHER

One day, when the Rebbe Rashab was 76 years old, he and his brother Reb Zalman Aharon, who was over a year older, decided to play "chossid and Rebbe." The Razo would act as Rebbe and the Rebbe Rashab would be the chossid coming into yechidus. The Razo sat on a chair, straightened his hat, and the Rebbe Rashab came to ask him for a tikun.

"For what are you asking a tikun?" the Razo asked.

The Rebbe Rashab replied, "This past Shabbos I ate some nuts, and later found out that the Alter Rebbe writes that it is good to refrain from eating nuts on Shabbos."

The Razo counseled him to make sure henceforth to daven from a Siddur and not by heart.

"Your advice won't help, and you're not a Rebbe!" exclaimed the Rebbe Rashab. "When a Rebbe answers, he is supposed to sigh. You didn't sigh, so your advice is no good!"

Retelling this incident, the Rebbe commented that when one Yid helps another, the assistance itself is not enough; what is vital is his sigh, empathizing with the other's pain. Doing a favor for another for the sake of perfecting oneself, for the sake of one's own shleimus, without feeling the other's heartache, is not kindness, but the opposite.

During one of the Mittlerer Rebbe's visits to the farming colonies that he had established in Kherson, the Czar decreed that Yiddish children be drafted to his army. One day a woman knocked on the window of the Rebbe's lodgings and wailed loudly, "Rebbe, help me! My only son has been taken away."

So intense was the Rebbe's distress, he fell sick and eventually passed away from his sickness.

A chossid called Reb Elyahu Abeler was once asked by the Rebbe Maharash at yechidus, "How is your business going?"

"Boruch Hashem," he replied, "but I am pained by the fact that a fellow villager of mine called Yosef has no success to enjoy. Misfortunes are constantly coming his way. A horse and wagon were bought for him so that he could travel to

Even after the Yidden entered Eretz Yisroel, they were instructed to postpone the mitzva of bikkurim until every Yid had been allotted his plot of land. The Rebbe explains that as long as there is even one Yid who is unhappy, one cannot truly rejoice in his own good. Even if he does not feel the other's pain, he should at least be ashamed of that lack of sensitivity and not display his joy publicly by bringing bikkurim to the Beis HaMikdash.

The Friedicker Rebbe spent Yud-Beis Tam-muz 1928 (תרט"ח) in a village near Riga. During the traditional niggun of Padda b'sha-lom, celebrating the Rebbe's release from prison on that day, a year earlier.

The Rebbe stopped them and said, "As long as the Yidden in Russia are not free I cannot celebrate. For I am together with them, in the same barrel."

CONSIDER

Is feeling another's suering an end in itself or is it a means to motivating a person to help his fellow?

Is there benefit in expressing sympathy if you can't eliminate the suering?

the city and sell some merchandise - but a wheel broke, then the horse broke a leg, and finally his merchandise was stolen.

"Rebbe," Reb Elyahu continued, "What can I do to help him?" And with a heavy sigh he cried out, "Rebbe, give him a bracha!"

The Rebbe Maharash responded, "You help him! For when one Yid is in distress, another and make harsh decisions."

EXPRESSING SYMPATHY

When Moshe Rabbeinu was growing up in Paroli's palace, he would often visit the suffering Yidden and sympathize with them. Seeing them carrying the cement, he would cry and tell them, "Your suering pains me! If I were to take your place!" - and he would cry and tell their loads.



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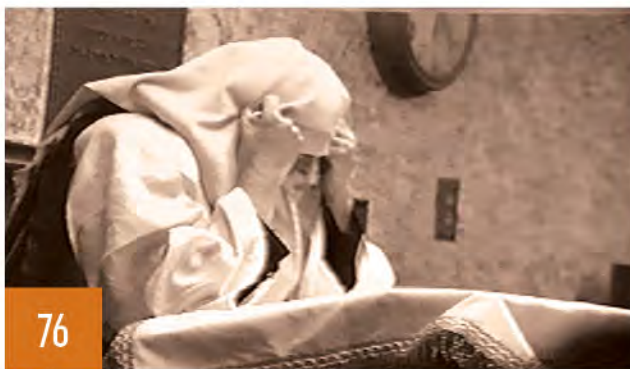
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Cover Photo

Temimim learning outside the yeshiva
building in Otvoztzk, Poland, late 1930s.
Credit: Lubavitch Archives

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FOREWORD

Are You For Real?



*Truthfully,
however, there's no
way to systemize
personal attention,
since any
predetermined
program
isn't personal.*

R. Alexander Bin-Nun was the general overseer of the network of Oholei Yosef Yitzchak schools in Eretz Yisroel. In his effort to guide the teachers, he prepared a list of what he considered the ten foremost principles of education. During his next *yechidus*, he presented the list to their Rebbe.

“It’s missing the most important principle,” the Rebbe told him, “The first principle in *chinuch* is that there are no ‘general principles!’”

THE THEORY of catering to individual needs has become very popular in recent years. We talk about each child’s unique strengths, and the need to teach children “*al pi darko*,” according to their way.

Still, again and again, we find ourselves setting up systems to regulate children’s conduct – rules, grading, awards and chores. Even loose school settings, which teach with differentiated instruction and grade according to individual abilities, often have intricate procedures for using those methods and for regulating overall conduct. Genuine care and connection are replaced with “personalized systems.”

Truthfully, however, there’s no way to systemize personal attention, since any predetermined program isn’t personal. A sequenced program of conduct or consequence is never responding to the needs of that child at that moment. Only by listening to child and reading their eyes, can we respond to their exact needs.

WESTERN SOCIETY is distrustful of personal judgment. To secure our airports, for example, we will impose extensive procedures, rather than just call out suspicious individuals, (as our brothers in Eretz Yisroel have successfully done for years). Similarly in education, we impose extensive lists of rules and consequences, rather than dispense fewer instructions to individual children. We do this for a number of reasons:

Firstly, systems are allow us to sort children into neat compartments, resulting in an impressive presentation (“professional”). Personal



attention – like all organic settings – are, by their very nature, disorganized. If you're concerned with making a good impression, a system is best.

Secondly, systems make things “fair,” putting each child on the same playing ground, (disregarding the differences in abilities). Even in individualized systems, a student's success is measurable according to another scheme. A thoughtful judgment, on the other hand, seems arbitrary, and may cause students and their loving parents to think that they're being handled “unfairly.”

Thirdly, systems produce instant results. With rules, we can coerce children to conform, and delude ourselves into thinking that we've educated them. Careful guidance, however, can take months and years to bring the desired results, and requires patience and foresight.

Finally, systems spare us from thinking, allowing us to detachedly follow a prearranged set of rules without constantly reevaluating or getting emotionally involved. Reading each child and considering their needs is time consuming and draining, especially for a class full of students.



FOR OUR CHILDREN'S WELLBEING, it is crucial that we minimize the number of regulations, giving instead rational guidance or personal instruction. Without a sincere connection, it should be no surprise that years later, they feel disconnected to the education they were given. Instead of hiding behind rules, we must take the time, patience and sensitivity, to listen and to guide them.

Of course, using judgment for sensitive decisions requires subtle skills and fine training. A “turnkey” franchise – which allows unskilled workers to produce based on a set of instructions – may work well for a restaurant chain, but it is hardly the way to cultivate children's souls.

If we wish to engage in education, we must be willing to develop the ability and take the responsibility to raise independent, responsible, and genuine children.

Rabbi Shimon Hellinger

General Editor

*Instead of hiding
behind rules, we
must take the
time, patience and
sensitivity, to listen
and to guide them.*

IMMERSIVE EDUCATION



Sicha of Parshas Shoftim 5741 (1981)

Sichos Kodesh 5741, vol. 4, p. 577

In raising our children to become upstanding Jews, we give them a comprehensive Torah education. We try to fill their lives with as much *Yiddishkeit* as we can.

Why is this acute attention so necessary? Wouldn't it be enough to teach them just the basics, and then take it easy? Do ordinary children really need such a thorough and rigorous education?

GIVE THEM THE BEST

Parents naturally want the best for their children, and seek to spare them of all harm. To this end, they ensure that their children receive the finest education, which for Jewish parents means to enroll them in a school of kosher education, and moreover, of holy education. Belonging to the "wise nation," they raise their child to illuminate the world, and they imbue the child with the boldness not to be ashamed of anyone around him.

There are however some parents who aren't aware that they must provide the best in spirit just as they provide the best in materialism; one must care for the wellbeing of the soul just as one cares for the wellbeing of the body.

DO YOU WANT TO TAKE A CHANCE?

I once had a conversation with someone on the topic of educating for *yiras Shomayim*. He down-played its importance by saying that statistics show that only 5% of children are negatively affected by bad upbringing.

I challenged him, "Did you vaccinate your children for smallpox or measles?" "Of course!" he replied. "Do you know what percentage of children who aren't vaccinated contract those diseases?" I asked him. He happened to know the answer: It was around 4%. Turns out, that for a 4% risk, or even less than that in the US, it is worthwhile to endure the rash the injection causes.

He down-played its importance by saying that statistics show that only 5% of children are negatively affected by bad upbringing.



Fish cannot thrive outside of the sea. Even if they are placed in a decorative fish tank with all sorts of trinkets, they are thrown breadcrumbs, and the water is changed daily...

I told him, "If to protect your child from a 4% chance of contracting a temporary malady, you are willing to put your child through this discomfort, how much more should you be willing to give your child a kosher and holy education which will benefit him for his entire life!"

DRESSED FOR THE WEATHER

During the winter, parents will dress their child in a warm coat, although during the summer he didn't need one. When it is spiritually cold, a child should be dressed in a "warm coat" that will cover his entire body. If not, he may sustain all of his "limbs," but they will be "frozen," and he will be a "cold Jew." Even if just a short while ago G-dliness shone brightly and warmly, right now the G-dly signs aren't visible, and the child needs a "coat" to protect him from freezing.

There are unfortunately some parents who pursue a new attitude in raising children which differs from the approach that sustained Jews and protected them from *goyishkeit* for tens of generations.

According to their approach, what matters most is that a child must have a bicycle, and when he gets

older – a car, and girls should always be getting new clothing. When the children go out, they are encouraged to be "sociable" – which they define as mingling with the non-Jews and not standing apart.

NOT IN A FISH TANK

Jewish children are like fish at sea. As our Sages say, "Just as fish who ascend to the dry land will die immediately, so too Jews who are separated from Torah and *mitzvos*..." A Jew must be submerged in the sea of Talmud, before that age in the sea of *Mishna* or *Mikra*, and as a small child in the sea of "*Torah tziva lanu Moshe*."

Fish cannot thrive outside of the sea. Even if they are placed in a decorative fish tank with all sorts of trinkets, they are thrown breadcrumbs, and the water is changed daily – it is a sorry state (*uch un vey*) for the fish, even for a goldfish!

A Jewish child needs "living waters." Placing the child in a "fish tank" covered in gemstones is not beneficial for the child. Gemstones are constructive when used to entice the child to study or to build infrastructures for Torah study.



IN SUMMARY:

- As parents, we work hard to give our children the best in physical needs. We should do the same for their Yiddishkeit and ensure that there isn't even a minute chance of negative influence.
- We have to be realistic about the challenges our children will face. We can't look back at sunnier times and hope that our children will stay warm without protective gear.
- Jewish children belong submerged in an ocean of Torah and Yiddishkeit. Although a neat measure of Torah along with other activities may look prettier, that isn't the best thing for their development.



A Different Kind *Of* YESHIVA

The Story and Vision of
TOMCHEI TEMIMIM *in* LUBAVITCH
MARKING 120 YEARS

BY RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

PART ONE

The chassidic awareness and dedication of the *temimim* surpassed that of mainstream chassidim in former times. Hundreds of *bochurim* with ordinary talents – not extraordinary chassidim as in previous times – were impassioned with knowledge of Chassidus and its implementation in their lives.



*Temimim learning outside the Gelffish Hotel in Otwożk, Poland, which served as the yeshiva building (later 1930s).
Credit: Lubavitch Archives*

PART ONE

the birth of a yeshiva

In the month of Elul, one hundred and twenty years ago, a revolutionary *yeshiva* was established by the Rebbe Rashab in the Russian town of Lubavitch. The *yeshiva*, called Tomchei Temimim (“The supporters of wholesome ones”), which began with just eight *bochurim*, developed into a major movement, and redefined what it means to be a Chabad chossid.

In this series of articles, we will explore the *yeshiva’s* significance, novelty and ongoing influence.

On recording and publicizing the history of Tomchei Temimim, the Frierdiker Rebbe writes:

The history of the Tomchei Temimim *yeshiva*, and particularly the conduct of the students during its first years, are extremely fascinating. Publicizing this information would bring great benefit to the students who are now being educated in the *yeshivos* that are conducted in the spirit of Tomchei Temimim.¹

Moreover, the Frierdiker Rebbe said on another occasion, the original Tomchei Temimim should serve as the model for all Lubavitcher *yeshivos*:

It is critical that the students of the original Tomchei Temimim in Lubavitch should articulate to the students of the various *yeshivos* that carry the lofty name “Tomchei Temimim” about the life and ways of the *yeshiva* in Lubavitch, and it is critical that the students use this information as a guide to life.²



Temimim see off R. Yisroel Jacobson in 5697 (1937).

A NEW ERA

To understand the revolution inspired by Tomchei Temimim, it is essential to appreciate the time period in which it was established.

Since the beginning of the 1800s, the *haskala* – Jewish “Enlightenment” – movement had been steadily making headway in its influence of Jewish communities in Russia, even within the four walls of the *beis midrash*. *Yeshiva* students everywhere were being enticed to a new type of study, which included Hebrew philology (*dikduk*) and the sciences – all under the cloak of holiness.

At one point, the *maskilim* stopped masking their secular objective in Torah study. They would give *yeshiva bochurim* romance novels and other inflammatory materials to fire their lust for a carefree irreligious life.³ *Yeshiva* students were falling in all directions, and even the most studious *bochurim* were at risk.

Zionism was another threat that traditional *Yiddishkeit* had to contend with. Judaism was taught as a culture instead of as a G-dly ordain, and a

national land and language sought to replace *mitzva* observance. Many secular Zionists said explicitly that once the Jews would settle in their land, *mitzvos* would not be relevant.

The Rebbe Rashab was vehemently opposed to these camps, perhaps more so than any other Jewish leader in Russia. He invested enormous time and effort traveling and writing letters to curb the *haskala's* influence and to promote traditional Torah living. He hired a fulltime lobbyist – R. Elazar Moshe Madayevsky – to work with *rabbonim* and government ministers, even bribing a government insider to spy for them.

It was during this time that the Rebbe conceived the idea of opening a *yeshiva*. This *yeshiva*, said the Rebbe, would succeed in shielding its students from the reach of the *haskala* and Zionism.⁴ Moreover, it would empower them to enter the broader world and, not only remain strong, but to influence others to remain faithful to the Torah way. Thus, the *yeshiva* was catering to its students, but by extension to Jews everywhere.

YESHIVA STUDENTS WERE FALLING IN ALL DIRECTIONS,
AND EVEN THE MOST STUDIOUS BOCHURIM WERE AT RISK.



YESHIVA FOR CHASSIDUS

The Rebbe Rashab sought to address these challenges with two solutions: Proper supervision and Chassidus.

While supervision may seem like a basic element of any educational institution, at a time when organized *yeshivos* were still a new phenomenon, it was not common for *yeshivos* to monitor their students' private lives. Furthermore, many *yeshivos* focused on study, and personal conduct did not earn the *yeshiva's* attention.

Most importantly, due to the lure of the *haskala*, many *yeshivos* felt compelled to find favor in the students' eyes to increase enrollment and cooperation. Students

were awarded great honor so that they felt proud to be in *yeshiva*. In Slabodka, for example, they dressed their students in upscale clothing, so that they wouldn't be enticed to become university students instead.

Recognizing the serious deficit in G-d-oriented Torah study and not afraid of the students' impression, the Rebbe Rashab instituted a *yeshiva* with exact expectations and rigorous supervision, with regards to attendance, study and general conduct. Students were accepted to the *yeshiva* not in merit of their intellectual acuity, but due to their sincerity and pure motivation.



A map of Lubavitch, drawn by R. Hendel Lieberman.

STUDENTS WERE ACCEPTED TO THE YESHIVA NOT IN MERIT OF THEIR INTELLECTUAL ACUITY, BUT DUE TO THEIR SINCERITY AND PURE MOTIVATION.

To boost the students to withstand the winds of secularism, the Rebbe instituted a mandatory Chassidus study as part of the *yeshiva* schedule. Until then, Chassidus was somewhat of an extracurricular study – where the average chossid studied random topics on a haphazard schedule. Now, students would study Chassidus several hours daily, with full comprehension according to the organized and thorough *maamorim* that the Rebbe taught.

The concept of a *yeshiva* for Chassidus didn't go well with everyone, and some chassidic Rebbes

even prohibited their chassidim from attending. Organized classes of Chassidus seemed foreign, and ironically, they suspected it of secular inclination. In the end, though, they came to realize its necessity, and they backed down from their opposition.⁵

Even some prominent Lubavitcher chassidim were inclined against teaching Chassidus to *bochurim*. They thought that it was preferable that a *bochur* develop an identity without Chassidus, allowing him to appreciate its depth when it is eventually introduced. However, the Rebbe Rashab contended

R. SHLOMO CHAIM
KESSELMAN, AN ORIGINAL
TOMIM, CLASSIFIED THREE
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IN THE REVELATION OF
CHASSIDUS: THE INITIAL
REVELATION OF CHASSIDUS
BY THE BAAL SHEM TOV,
THE REVELATION OF
CHASSIDUS CHABAD BY
THE ALTER REBBE, AND
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
TOMCHEI TEMIMIM.

that it was now necessary for youth to be born and bred as chassidim from the very outset.

The *haskala* did not take this move lightly, and they made efforts to shut down the *yeshiva*. They also opened a school in Homil with the explicit intent of countering Tomchei Temimim.⁶

A NEW KIND OF CHOSSID

What ensued through the influence of Tomchei Temimim was a total revolution. It didn't just keep the *haskala* out, rather it introduced an entirely new quality of Chassidus life. So much so, that R. Dovid Tzvi Chein (Radatz) called the period before the founding of Tomchei Temimim, "before *Matan Torah*." And R. Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, an original *tomim*, classified three major turning points in the revelation of Chassidus: The initial revelation of Chassidus by the Baal Shem Tov, the revelation of Chassidus Chabad by the Alter Rebbe, and the establishment of Tomchei Temimim.

The chassidic awareness and dedication of the *temimim* surpassed that of mainstream chassidim in former times. Hundreds of *bochurim* with ordinary talents – not extraordinary chassidim as in previous times – were impassioned with knowledge of Chassidus and its implementation in their lives. Understanding G-dliness became an ultimate priority and the focus of life – the purpose of creation.



R. Shlomo Chaim Kesselman farbrenging



Temimim in conversation outside the yeshiva building in Otwotzk, Poland (1930s).

THIS NEW BEING WASN'T MERELY A YESHIVA STUDENT WITH CHASSIDUS; HE WAS AN ENTIRELY NEW SPECIES – A "TOMIM."

This new being wasn't merely a *yeshiva* student with Chassidus; he was an entirely new species – a "*tomim*."

A chossid could study Chassidus now and then, and even work on himself, but it was something added on to his routine life – be it work or Torah study. For the *tomim*, on the other hand, Chassidus and the *kavana elyona* (the Divine purpose of creation) was his life. He was a man on a mission.

When the *yeshiva* first opened, the title *tomim* was reserved for "those students who study in it and conduct themselves in its spirit," as the Rashab announced. Though, in the years that followed, all students were encouraged to live up to the name.

As it seems, the *temimim* sprouted naturally under the right conditions. Until then Chassidus was taught to mature and established adults, who lived – both geographically and mentally – within the broader Jewish community. Promoting Chassidus to idealistic *bochurim* in an enclosed setting was bound to produce a fervent movement which put Chassidus as its priority. The fact that the wider Jewish environment was hostile to their lifestyle and ridiculed it, made them all the more fired up towards their mission.

Another contribution to the development of the "*tomim*" was the general obsession with world purpose. Society at large was brimming with "-isms"

of global perfection. The *tomim* channeled the trend and sought to achieve the *G-dly* purpose for creation. One could perhaps argue that the “*tomim*” wasn’t just a byproduct of a Chassidus *yeshiva* at the right time, but rather this was its very purpose. The Rebbe Rashab was intent on raising chassidim who

would be single-mindedly dedicated to chassidic ideals (“*temimim*”); people who would personify his principles of inner *bittul*, *kabbolas ol*, and *hanochas atzmuso* (putting one’s entire self aside for the Divine will). And for this exact reason, he founded a *yeshiva*, where impressionable souls could be elevated to unprecedented heights of Chassidus.

IN THE BEGINNING

This was not the first time that students would study in Lubavitch under the Rebbe Rashab.

Three years earlier, in 5654 (1894), the Rebbe Rashab invited a group of seventeen learned *bochurim* to learn and grow in Chassidus. The *mashpia* R. Hendel would teach them *Tanya* each evening, and every Shabbos afternoon, the Rebbe Rashab would recite

a *maamar* for them. But otherwise, they studied on their own, without an organized program. They were known as *yoshvim*, “sitters,” as they would sit in the Rebbe’s *beis midrash*.⁷

The launching of *Tomchei Temimim* took place just after the Frierdiker Rebbe’s wedding celebration

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Hatomim R. Mendel Tennenbaum a"n



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which took place on 13 Elul 5657 (1897). As the Friediker Rebbe records:

The *yeshiva* was established on Sunday of *parshas* Tavo, 15 Elul 5657 (1897). On that day, which was the day of our *sheva brachos*, at two p.m., my father – the Rebbe Rashab – called a meeting of around fifty of the elder *rabbonim* and *gevirim* who were present. At the opening of the meeting he announced that he decided to open a *yeshiva* for learned *bochurim* to study Chassidus.

After elaborating upon the nature of Chassidus, the Rebbe Rashab shared that he had long wanted to open this *yeshiva*, but had faced several obstacles. Now, with Hashem’s help, he would carry it out.⁸

On that occasion, the Rebbe Rashab shared his aspirations for the new *yeshiva*:

“This *yeshiva* which I am establishing with Hashem’s help, it is my request of Him today,

that He should bestow upon it a spirit of *yiras Shomayim*, *avoda* and practice, pleasant *midos*, and *kabolas ol malchus Shomayim* (accepting the yoke of Heaven).

“Thanks to Hashem there are many *yeshivos* in our land, which undoubtedly produce *rabbonim*, *talmidei chachomim* and geniuses of Torah. In opening this *yeshiva* that is not my sole intent. [In fact,] I don’t demand that our students should be specifically of these types.

“Rather, I intend with every strength, and on this condition I am establishing it, that our students should be G-d fearing, servants of Hashem from within and with a sincere heart, and their efforts being spent on fulfilling *mitzvos*. When they mature into grown men, each one of them should recognize his life’s duty and purpose for the sake of a complete Torah (“*temima*”).



Group picture of the Tomchei Temimim yeshiva in Vilna

"THE YESHIVA IS CALLED TOMCHEI TEMIMIM AND THOSE STUDENTS WHO STUDY IN IT
AND CONDUCT THEMSELVES IN ITS SPIRIT ARE CALLED TEMIMIM.

"Then the pleasantness of pure *Yiddishkeit* will shine in their homes, and wherever they live there will be the light of Torah."⁹

[Interestingly, our Rebbe records in his notes that it was the Friediker Rebbe who first proposed the idea of a *yeshiva*. After a discussion, the Rebbe Rashab went to the Ohel in Lubavitch, and upon his return, he told his son that he accepts his proposition.¹⁰]

On Tuesday, 17 Elul, the Rebbe Rashab chose the first eight students, and handed them over to the famed chossid R. Shmuel Groinem Esterman from Zhebin to study Chassidus with them according to the plan that the Rebbe Rashab set out. After first spending Tishrei with the Rebbe in Lubavitch, they traveled with their teacher to Zhebin and remained there for one year.¹¹

At first the *yeshiva* did not have an official name. Only a year later, on Simchas Torah 5659 (1898), did the Rebbe Rashab announce that it would be called Tomchei Temimim ("The supporters of wholesome ones"). As the Friediker Rebbe related:

It was the night of Simchas Torah, before the seventh *hakafa*. The hour was late – it was about 4 a.m. – and my father spoke on the significance of the *hakafos*. He concluded, "With Hashem's help, I established a *yeshiva* where they will study both *nigleh* and Chassidus – meaning that in the study of *nigleh* they will know there is an inner portion to the Torah, and the Chassidus they will comprehend as they do *nigleh*." He then gave an instruction to sing.

After reciting the seventh *hakafa*, the Rebbe Rashab sang and danced for a long while with great joy, and then said:

"The *yeshiva* which was established with Hashem's kindness does not have a name. I am now calling it Tomchei Temimim, since the purpose of the *yeshiva* is that Hashem's Torah should be wholesome (*temima*), at which point it can be a restoration of spirit (*meshivas nafesh*)...

"The *yeshiva* is called Tomchei Temimim and those students who study in it and conduct themselves in its spirit are called *temimim* ("wholesome ones")."¹²

THE FOUNDER OF THE YESHIVA – THE REBBE RASHAB – SET A RULE THAT ANY
YOUNGSTER WHO CAN LEARN ON HIS OWN AND IS G-D FEARING WILL BE ACCEPTED INTO
THE YESHIVA, REGARDLESS IF HE STEMS FROM CHASSIDIM OF CHABAD, CHASSIDIM OF
POLAND OR UKRAINE, OR ASHKENAZ.

In his introduction to *Kuntres Hatefilah* (Tractate on Prayer), the Friediker Rebbe records the development of Tomchei Temimim in its early years:

In its first year, 5658 (1897-1898), there were about twenty students ages 18-20, exceptionally capable and fluent in many *sugyos* of Gemara. Yet, in the knowledge of Chassidus, and particularly *avoda* based on Chassidus, they were very unfamiliar.

The founder of the *yeshiva* – the Rebbe Rashab – set a rule that any youngster who can learn on his own and is G-d fearing will be accepted into the *yeshiva*, regardless if he stems from chassidim of Chabad, chassidim of Poland or Ukraine, or Ashkenaz [non-chassidim].

In the study of *nigleh* – Gemara and *poskim* – students could learn whatever *sugya* they choose, without having to be guided by a teacher (this was until Iyar 5660 (1900)). However, over the study of Chassidus, and particularly the inner *avoda* of the heart in *davening* and its influence on the character traits, there were appointed two elder chassidim...

During the years of 5658-5659, a considerable number of older students came together, and the influences of the *mashpiim* became apparent, as the students amassed a knowledge of Chassidus and the ways of its *avoda*. The G-dly *menorah* began to shine.

When the *yeshiva* opened, it wasn't widely publicized, and few people other than those involved in the *yeshiva* realized that anything special was taking place. In 5660 (1900), when the *yeshiva* was pressed for funds, the Friediker Rebbe was compelled to reach out to the broader public and share what they were doing and why:

On Sunday, the 15th of Elul 5657, Hashem sparked the Rebbe's eyes to look after the *Anash* youth who are thirsty for the "Word of Hashem" – to

study Gemara diligently and be guided in the ways of morals and *yiras Shomayim* – guiding them to dedicate several hours each day to study the Chassidus which has been bequeathed to us by our holy Rebbes. The intent is that the love and awe of Hashem should be fixed in their hearts from a young age, and the holiness of *nigleh* should be planted within them. All foreign ideas should be uprooted from them, as they spread infectiously nowadays, causing one's Torah to become a poison *R"L*, instead of a remedy of life.

We unfortunately see the growing tragedy, even with regards to the [Torah] teachers. Many of them fell, since they didn't have awe and love for Hashem and their study of Torah was like other studies – for the sake of earning a nice living. This is contrary to Hashem's will, as Chazal say that Torah shouldn't be a "crown" or a "hatchet" [for pride or for practical benefit]. As a result, many of them moved on to other studies which are more commanding and more profitable, since in their eyes all studies are equal. May Hashem have mercy on the remainder of His people to enlighten our eyes with Torah, an inheritance from Hashem that is beyond all wisdom and holiness, and through which we can cleave to Hashem and live an eternal life.

Therefore, he revealed his view before *Anash*, his wish to establish a place where *Anash* youth should study Gemara diligently with intense supervision, and dedicate a set time each day to study Chassidus, to fix in their hearts love and awe of Hashem from inception. The light of Torah will thus shine within them, so that they may bring merit to themselves and others.



Learning at the Tomchei Temimim yeshiva in Vilna

A YESHIVA WITH A VISION

In this letter to his cousin and benefactor, the philanthropist R. Yeshaya Berlin, the Rebbe Rashab reveals his underlying motive in opening the *yeshiva* – to save the youth from the secular influences through proper supervision and the light of Chassidus:

Hashem knows the truth that I don't take credit *ch"v* for this establishment, and it wasn't with my power that it came about. Rather it was through a wondrous *siyata dishmaya* (help from Above) in the merit of our fathers, the Rebbes, that Hashem desires them and the continuity of their Torah and holy path for which they dedicated their lives. He created this salvation amongst our brothers, that in this incredibly dark time the light of life should

shine, and young men should go by this light and illuminate their soul in the darkness, to serve Hashem with heart and soul each one according to his measure.

Now that it's been established and conducted in that manner, if we would only have the ability to expand it, we could save many souls from depravation. They would draw near the good light, and with time they would be truly good and uplifted. I will not say that they are all good and that they will all be good, for "it is impossible to have grain without straw mixed in," but the vast majority are good and will be good.

AFTER WHAT I'VE SEEN OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS I CAN SAY WHOLEHEARTEDLY THAT
MANY GOOD SOULS ARE BEING LOST R"L ONLY BECAUSE THEY ARE DISTANT FROM THE
LIGHT OF CHASSIDUS AND BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF SUPERVISION.

After what I've seen over the past few years I can say wholeheartedly that many good souls are being lost R"L only because they are distant from the light of Chassidus and because of the lack of supervision. However, the many souls we can save at this time are more precious than any treasure."

In the winter of 5665 (1905), the Rebbe Rashab worked on supplying Jewish soldiers in the Russo-Japanese war with their Pesach needs. The Friediker Rebbe had suggested that the call for assistance should be written on the Tomchei Temimim stationary, reasoning that the *yeshiva's* ultimate objective is

to impact all Jews in their *Yiddishkeit*. The Rebbe Rashab disagreed and explained why:

My dear son! Your suggestion that the letters should come from Tomchei Temimim doesn't resonate with me, and this was not my suggestion at all...

What you write that Tomchei Temimim is not only for the *bochurim*, but to care for all the spiritual needs of Jews, is not so. The core and foundation of Tomchei Temimim is to strengthen the youth and protect them from anything harmful, and to try and plant within them awe and love of Hashem. Likewise, wherever they can strengthen weak

THE CORE AND FOUNDATION OF TOMCHEI TEMIMIM IS TO STRENGTHEN THE YOUTH AND PROTECT THEM FROM ANYTHING HARMFUL, AND TO TRY AND PLANT WITHIN THEM AWE AND LOVE OF HASHEM.



Tomchei Temimim branch in Shanghai, China, for refugees during World War I

THE GOAL OF OUR ASSOCIATION IS THAT THE YOUNG MEN WHO STUDY THE TORAH'S REVEALED, LEGAL DIMENSION SHOULD BE "YIDDEN" – G-D-FEARING AND WITH A SOUND CONNECTION WITH HASHEM AND HIS TORAH.

hands in Torah and *avoda*, such as to establish *shiurim* in various towns to learn with the youth, both working and not, to draw them to Torah and to endeavor to ingrain in them awe and love of Hashem, that they should abstain from forbidden matters and desire to fulfil *mitzvos* in practice. This is the mission and goal of Tomchei Temimim.

However, it is not its objective to take care of specific *mitzvos* or to protect specific matters. For example, that there should be *meshgichim* for kosher meat (which is extremely important as it is tremendously disregarded...), the observance of Shabbos, *sukka*, *lulav* and the like... Of course, every Jew must care for this as a Jew, and do and try whatever he can. However, that is not the purpose of this association [Tomchei Temimim].¹³

In 5662 (1902), the *yeshiva* had gained such popularity that it attracted many who didn't identify

with the values of Tomchei Temimim, and were simply looking for a place to study. At that time, the Rebbe Rashab wrote his famous treatise, *Kuntres Eitz Hachaim* (The Tree of Life), in which he outlines the vision of the *yeshiva* and what he expects of its students:

Let it be known that our association was not established merely for the purpose of supporting young men and enabling them to study Torah... Instead, the goal of our association is that the young men who study the Torah's revealed, legal dimension should be "*Yidden*" – G-d-fearing and with a sound connection with Hashem and His Torah...

We had seen the Torah girding itself in very thick sackcloth, for those who were occupied in Torah study were doing so for utterly selfish motives, and many of the youth who studied the Torah didn't



possess fear of Heaven at all... They compound its damage by becoming rabbinic authorities among the Jewish people...

We were therefore motivated to found an association to support youth who occupy themselves in Torah study, to protect them from harmful forces. And to endeavor to the fullest extent possible to implant within them - with Hashem's help - an inner feeling of awe and love for Hashem, in order that they know what they are studying [Hashem's wisdom], and that they derive vitality from their study of the Torah. [They should realize] that the "path of life" which leads to these goals is the study of *P'nimiyus HaTorah*.

Therefore, we have established that, as a fundamental necessity, every [student] should study *Chassidus* for a significant time each day. [A student] will be expected to devote more time to the study of *nigleh*, for this is appropriate... Nevertheless, the fundamental core [and purpose] is the study of *Chassidus*, that the students should know G-d and as a result be aroused to the love and fear of Him.

We have established a minimum, that every student will study *Chassidus* for at least four hours every day (representing approximately one-third of the time of the student's daily Torah study)...

Now, the young men with whom our association was founded knew the purpose of its establishment, and they chose and desired this [as their mission]. They

eagerly accepted and carried out [the mission] of occupying themselves with *Chassidus* according to the schedule. They studied well, and thank G-d, their efforts brought forth fruit and were crowned with success.

In the present time as well, there are many young men who follow this path and adapt themselves to this ultimate purpose. They are proceeding and advancing. There are, however, many others who over the course of time lost sight of this ultimate purpose. To a large extent, this happened because over time, there came and gathered new students for whom the concept of involvement in *Chassidus* was foreign to them.

And in his final will (*tzavaa*), written just days before his *histalkus*, the Rebbe Rashab outlined his hopes for the future of his *yeshiva*:

I ask *anash* to continue supporting the *yeshiva* Tomchei Temimim as they have until now, and it is a great *zechus* for all those who support and strengthen it. No person has permission to *ch"v* change its inner spirit...

Myson! Watch and work for the *yeshiva* to strengthen it by its inner purpose of studying *Chassidus* and the *avoda* of the heart... Of course it is necessary to have a thorough study of *nigleh*, for just as there cannot be a body without a soul, so too there cannot be a soul without a body. Still, the inner person is primary, and one who accepts upon himself the yoke of Heaven will succeed at both.¹⁴ **P**

To be continued.

Endnotes

- 1 *Igros Kodesh Rayatz*, Vol. 10, p. 365.
- 2 *Likutei Diburim*, Vol. 1, p. 398.
- 3 *Igros Kodesh Rashab*, Vol. 3, p. 42.
- 4 *Igros Kodesh Rayatz*, Vol. 2, p. 108
- 5 *Igros Kodesh Rayatz*, Vol. 1, p. 9.
Memoirs of R. Yisroel Jacobson.
- 6 *Igros Kodesh Rashab*, Vol. 3, p. 358.
- 7 *Igros Kodesh Rayatz*, Vol. 2, p. 108.

- 8 *Igros Kodesh Rayatz*, Vol. 10, p. 365.
- 9 *Igros Kodesh Rayatz*, Vol. 1, p. 484.
- 10 *Likutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p. 484, footnote 14.
- 11 *Igros Kodesh Rayatz*, Vol. 10, p. 365.
- 12 *Igros Kodesh Rayatz*, Vol. 10, p. 365.
- 13 *Igros Kodesh Rashab*, Vol. 1, p. 318.
- 14 *Sefer HaMaamorim* 5680, p. 334.



ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY

AND FURTHER

RABBI BINYOMIN COHEN

It was the month of Elul in the year 5657 (1897), and the town of Lubavitch was preparing itself for a momentous occasion. The Rebbe Rashab was marrying off his only child, Yosef Yitzchak, some two and a half weeks before Rosh Hashanah.

Regardless of the group to which they belong or the dynasty to which they are attached, Chassidim have invariably made an effort to personally participate in any and every *simcha* involving their Rebbe or his family. The approaching marriage of the young Reb Yosef Yitzchak (later to become the Rebbe Rayatz) was no exception, and many distinguished chassidim arranged to be in Lubavitch at the time of the *chassuna*.

One such person was Reb Yehoshua Garelik who lived in the town of Rogatchov. His father-in-law had served as the Shochet in the home of the Rebbe the Tzemach Tzedek, and he therefore felt a special closeness to the Rebbe's family. Given that Rogatchov was not that far from Lubavitch, he decided that not only would he personally attend the *chassuna*, but that he would also take his seventeen year old son Schneur Zalman along with him to share in the celebration.

I do not demand of our students that they necessarily be Rabbis or great scholars. What I do expect is that they should be G-d fearing Jews who serve Hashem from the depths of their heart.



The *chupa* itself was held on Erev Shabbos the 13th of Elul, but apparently the main *seudah* in honor of the occasion did not take place until two days later i.e. the morning of Sunday the 15th of Elul. Schneur Zalman and his father were both present at the *seudah* and, together with all of the other guests, were extremely surprised when the Rebbe Rashab made an unexpected announcement.

“On Wednesday the 18th of Elul,” said the Rebbe, “I shall inform the Chassidim of a matter which is of importance to them and the whole of the Jewish People.” The Chassidim were naturally both excited and curious, but no more details seemed to be forthcoming.

In fact, they did not need to wait until Wednesday to discover the nature of the impending announcement. That very afternoon, the Rebbe summoned some fifty of his leading Chassidim to a special meeting. He there informed them of his decision to establish a Yeshivah where young Torah scholars would occupy themselves in the study of Chassidus.

“There is,” said the Rebbe to those assembled, “no shortage of Yeshivos where Torah is studied, scholars are nurtured and learned Rabbis are produced. I do not demand of our students that they necessarily be Rabbis or great scholars. What I do expect is that they should be G-d fearing Jews who serve Hashem from the depths of their heart. The fulfillment of Mitzvos should be precious to them, and each one of them should know his purpose in life and his obligation to strengthen all aspects of Torah.”



Seventeen year old boys do not speak to the Rebbe when they feel so inclined. Accepted protocol maintains a clear distance between the Rebbe and his younger Chassidim.

The Rebbe's words made a profound impact on all who were present at the meeting, and a short while later the whole town of Lubavitch was agog with excitement. No-one had expected anything like this.

If the average chossid was excited, young Schneur Zalman Garelik was absolutely electrified. He had come to Lubavitch for the first time in his life in order to participate in a *chassuna*. Now, however, he was being confronted with something entirely different. The Rebbe was establishing a new *yeshivah* for *bochurim* of his age. The Rebbe saw this as important for chassidim and all Jews. Surely *hashgacha pratis* had arranged for him to be here at this time? Surely there could be no doubt as to what all of this meant for him personally?

Seventeen year old boys do not speak to the Rebbe when they feel so inclined. Accepted protocol maintains a clear distance between the Rebbe and his younger Chassidim. Under normal circumstances there was no way that the Rebbe Rashab would speak to any *bochur* outside the confines of his private room. Under the circumstances,

however, perhaps Schneur Zalman could be forgiven for feeling that the usual restrictions did not apply. Casting caution to the winds he approached the Rebbe, described his situation, and requested that he accept him as a student in the Yeshivah he was planning to open.

Apparently, the Rebbe was impressed by the young man and his enthusiasm. Two days later the Rebbe chose a group of eight *bochurim* with whom he would start his Yeshivah. Schneur Zalman Garelik was one of those eight, and for the rest of his long life he never looked back.

The emphasis in the new *yeshivah* on the study of Chassidus and *avodas hatefilah* (devotion to prayer) did not prevent Schneur Zalman from spending a good part of the next four years on diligent and uninterrupted study of Halacha.

Completing the entire Shulchan Oruch by the age of twenty one, he was duly ordained as a Rov by some of the leading Rabbis of the time. He subsequently married at the age of twenty-one and occupied his first Rabbinic post in the small town of Brezna.

If being a Rov in Czarist Russia was not always easy, performing the same functions under the Bolsheviks was a positive nightmare. The Yevsektzia were the section of the Communist regime dedicated to the eradication of Yiddishkeit. They pursued their goals diligently and enthusiastically, and in 1927 managed to force Rabbi Garelik to relinquish his position in Brezna which he had held for more than twenty-five years.

As a captive in Stalinist Russia, he spent the next nineteen years moving from place to place, strengthening the observance of Torah and Mitzvos wherever he went. From Snovsk to Vitebsk and from Stalingrad to Tashkent went the Rov, until he and his family finally managed to escape from the Soviet

“paradise” in 1946. After some years of wandering through the D.P. camps of Europe, the Rov and his family arrived at last in Eretz Yisroel in 1949.

Given that the Rov was already in his seventieth year, one would have thought that he could now at last permit himself to quietly retire from active Rabbinic duties and involve himself totally in the study of his beloved *seforim*. The Rebbe Rayatz, however, had other ideas. He had already founded in Eretz Yisroel the settlement of Kfar Chabad and was pleased to hear that Rabbi Garelik had chosen to settle there. When the inhabitants of the Kfar subsequently wished to appoint Rabbi Garelik as their Rov, he wrote a letter to the Rebbe Rayatz explaining his unsuitability for the position due to his relatively advanced age. The Rebbe replied that a Rov should always feel himself to be young and energetic in the performance of his duties. He wished him Mazal Tov on his appointment as Rov of Kfar Chabad and encouraged him to continue organizing Shiurim in learning Torah and working for the building of a *mikveh*.

Needless to say, the Rebbe’s words put to rest any doubts which the Rov may have entertained with regard to his own strength and capability. It is even more interesting to note that he subsequently occupied his position as Rov for almost twenty five years until a tragic car accident cut short his life at the age of ninety-four.

Taking the Rebbe’s encouragement very literally, the Rov served his community with more energy and devotion than others half his age. When he was nearly eighty years old he travelled, for the first time, to the U.S.A. in order to raise funds needed for the *mikveh* in Kfar Chabad. The Rebbe was so impressed by the elderly Rov’s unbounded vigor that he openly recommended that others would do well to learn from his example.

The emphasis in the new yeshivah on the study of Chassidus and avodas hatefilah did not prevent Schneur Zalman from spending a good part of the next four years on diligent and uninterrupted study of Halacha.



*“I accept payment as your Rov
in order that you should listen to
what I tell you, not in order that
you should tell me what to do.”*

Energy and determination tend to go hand in hand. Therefore when it came to matters of Halacha the Rov's approach was as straightforward as it was uncompromising. When some of the inhabitants of the Kfar felt that he was being over-zealous in his demands, the Rov called a public meeting and announced to all present, “I accept payment as your Rov in order that you should listen to what I tell you, not in order that you should tell me what to do.” Rather than engendering resentment and rejection, the Rov's forthrightness only served to increase the respect which the community had for him and what he stood for.

I too had the opportunity to witness the Rov's insistence on things being done in the right way.

The Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim of Kfar Chabad, where I was learning in 5727 (1967), started davening *shacharis* (morning prayers) at 9:00 am every weekday morning. Rabbi Garelik, despite his not occupying any official position in the *yeshivah*, nevertheless made a point of *davening* in the *yeshivah* on every day apart from Shabbos. At about twenty to nine his diminutive figure would appear at the door and he would slowly make his way to his place at the front of the Beis Midrash. Given that he was then already in his upper eighties he found it easier to walk with a stick, which he would put on the table directly in front of his seat.

In general, the students of the *yeshivah* took it in turn to act as the *shliach tzibbur*, and this arrangement was normally workable and to everybody's satisfaction. One day, however, the student who was acting as *shliach tzibbur* was, either due to nervousness or some other reason, *davening* rather rapidly. The tranquil atmosphere was all of a sudden interrupted by a loud and insistent knocking. Everyone looked around in surprise as they tried to locate the source of the unexpected disturbance.

It didn't take more than a few seconds for us to realize that the noise was coming from the Rov's place. He had picked up his stick from the table in front of him and was banging it on the table as a sign to the *shliach tzibbur* that he should slow down. Theoretically the *shliach tzibbur* could have ignored the Rov and his message. He was not, after all, the one in charge of the students and their conduct. There was a *hanhala* (supervisory body) of the *yeshivah* and **they** were the ones ultimately responsible for all that took place in the Yeshivah, including the pace and quality of the davening. The Rov was, at the end of the day, no more than an honored guest who had chosen to *daven* together with the students.

It didn't take more than a few seconds for us to realize that the noise was coming from the Rov's place.

Clearly, the Rov had no interest in such a fine distinction. As far as he was concerned davening should not be rushed. The *shliach tzibbur* was *davening* too fast and needed to be corrected on the spot. The standard of *davening* in the *yeshivah* was **everyone's** concern, and he had no intention of allowing one inexperienced individual to debase the *tefilah* of two hundred others.

Needless to say, the Rov's remonstrations were accepted and acted upon immediately. There could be no clearer example of his absolute and unquestioned authority.

So much for Rabbi Garelik, the resolute and uncompromising religious leader. However, I soon

discovered that he had an entirely different side to his character.

It was the fifteenth of Elul 5727 (1967) – the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the Yeshivah in Lubavitch. To mark the occasion, the Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Kfar Chabad held a special celebratory *farbrengen*. Under normal circumstances the Rov of the Kfar did not attend *farbrengens* held in the *yeshivah*. Today, however, was different. Given the fact that Rabbi Garelik had been one of the original *talmidim* seventy years earlier,





Rabbi Garelik (with face covered) reciting kinus on Tisha B'Av

it was clearly appropriate for him to be invited to participate in this particular gathering.

The Rov came and spoke at the *farbrengen* about the establishment of the *yeshivah* and of his recollections of his years as a *talmid* in Lubavitch. One remark of his I found particularly interesting. His exact words were:

”אז איך דערמאן זיך אויף די ציור ווי עס איז יעמאלט געווען, ווער
איך נאך היינט א צעבראכענער.”

“When I remind myself of the atmosphere as it was then (in Lubavitch), I become a broken person even today.”

The Rov’s description of himself as broken was rather surprising. We are sometimes confronted with difficult situations which ultimately turn out to be a challenge to which we can easily rise. On other occasions, we are faced with circumstances which we can find no way to meaningfully address. This could be frustrating, but hardly a reason to feel broken. Only when the obstacles overcome and conquer us, leaving us crushed and deflated, could there be any reason for us to consider ourselves broken.

The elderly Rov in front of me had successfully survived decades of Czarist repression and Stalinist persecution. He had managed to bring his whole family to Eretz Yisroel and was now totally involved

in the study of Torah and the spreading of its values. Why on earth should he feel broken? The catalyst for his feelings was even more surprising. One would have imagined that reminding himself of his days as a *talmid* of the *yeshivah* in Lubavitch – the best days of his life – would serve to inspire and elevate him. Instead of this, the process left him, as he himself said, feeling broken. I found this very difficult to understand.

Further thought on this matter brought me to the realization that we sometimes use words without clearly defining their meaning. We borrow, on occasion, terms which are used in a specific framework, and then insert them into a rather different context, thus increasing the opportunity for misunderstanding and confusion.

So too when we talk about a person being broken. This normally implies that he has been shattered or crushed in one way or another. In Chassidic parlance, however, the term is used in a rather different sense.

Chassidus explains that every person, however virtuous and perfect he may be, needs to be constantly aware of his own shortcomings. While he should certainly be conscious of his virtues, these should not be the sole object of his attention. Any focus on the positive must be coupled with a keen perception of the negative in order to ensure that his Avodas

“There is nothing more complete than a heart which is broken.”

Hashem (service of Hashem) has both balance and stability.

Knowing his achievements will enable him to realize that he is indeed a worthy vessel for the Divine. Simultaneously, however, he needs to recognize, and be somewhat disturbed by the fact that the vessel is broken due to his personal imperfections. Only such a dual approach will enable him to address his situation in a responsible and meaningful manner i.e. to make an effort to mend the vessel by bringing it closer to perfection.

Since the only way for a person to achieve completeness is through an honest and realistic recognition of his defects, it follows that reacting to the negative is in fact the first step in the construction of a new and better positive. As the Rebbeim of Chabad put it:

“There is nothing more complete than a heart which is broken.”

Being broken in this way is not seen as an obstacle to serving Hashem with *simcha*. On the contrary, only one who knows how much he is personally lacking will be able to happily accept everything meted out to him, be it from Hashem or from others (see *Igeres HaTeshuva* Ch.11). The one who is broken is neither depressed nor gloomy. He has, after all, discovered how to bring true meaning into his life.

Rabbi Garelik constantly reminded himself of this intensely positive and practical approach which he had absorbed many years earlier as he studied Chassidus in Lubavitch. He reminded himself of the time when he lived in the four cubits of the Rebbe Rashab and breathed the air which was permeated with his holiness. He pictured in his mind hundreds of chassidim standing in front of the Rebbe as he said a *maamar* every Shabbos. And above all he recollected the atmosphere in the *yeshivah* itself, where the *talmidim* were totally committed to living in accordance with all that the Rebbe and Toras HaChassidus demanded and expected of them.

Seventy years later and the Rov lived his every day with these recollections. They were his present, not some vague detail from the dim and distant past. No

wonder that he felt both challenged and inspired as he energetically renewed his efforts to come ever closer to all that Chassidus advocated. He may have been an uncompromising leader who demanded much of others, but, first and foremost, he demanded of himself. If his exterior sometimes seemed a little hard, it was more than matched by an interior which was completely humble and compassionate. His efforts to help the dwellers of the Kfar through lending them money were legendary. He established a free-loan fund at a time when it was very difficult to maintain its viability, and toiled tirelessly to ensure that those in need should always have a means to ease their financial burdens. His personality was more than just a harmonious blend of טוב לשמים (devotion to his Creator) and טוב לבריו (devotion to his fellow). In the Rov, the two became one as he tirelessly invested all his faculties in the strengthening of Torah and his fellow Jew.

The Rov was one of the first *talmidim* of the original Tomchei Temimim. He carried in himself its message and exemplified its ideals for all of his long life. Since then, many thousands of Talmidim have passed through the doors of Tomchei Temimim and studied Torah in an atmosphere which has emphasized all that a Jew should strive for, while at the same time recognizing the pitfalls which may confront him. The message has always been that the inspiration of the positive should be utilized to overcome the negative. This has enabled countless *temimim* to go to places where there has been no shortage of difficulties and enormous negativity, and even there to discover and reveal all that is positive in Jews and their connection with Torah.



As the Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim completes its one hundred and twentieth year we wish it continued good health and long life. May its *talmidim*, like Rabbi Garelik, use that inspiration which they received within its walls to enrich themselves and all those around them. May their efforts bring the coming of Moshiach Tzidkenu speedily in our days. **P**



Why So Much Negative?

RABBI SHMUEL KAPLAN

A realistic assessment of the current situation with American Jewry makes it clear that we have a huge uphill struggle regarding proper *mitzvah* observance.

Despite all that has been accomplished with the *mitzvoym* over the past forty years – and it has truly been revolutionary – most American Jews (as indicated by the recent Pew study) are still only minimally committed to *mitzvah* observance. Considering this, it may become quite frustrating for *shluchim* – as well as whoever fulfills the Rebbe’s instructions to seize every opportunity to encourage *mitzvah* observance by fellow Jews – when they contemplate what are really accomplishing? What value does it have?

This dilemma can perhaps be resolved based on a general understanding of the impact of *mitzvos*.

MORE MERIT

We are all well familiar with the statement of R. Chananya ben Akashya in the *Mishna* (*Makos* 23b), “*Rotzo HaKodosh Boruch Hu l’zakos es Yisroel l’fichoch hirbo lohem Torah u’mitzvos*” – Hashem wished to bring merit to the Jewish people, so he gave them many Torah and *mitzvos*.

An earlier passage in the *Mishna* deals with the assertion that “*Yoshav v’lo ovar avaira nosnim lo s’char k’ose mitzvah*” – one who abstains from preforming a sin is given reward as if he performed a *mitzvah*. It is here that R. Chananya adds that the reward for *mitzvos* is in fact the *purpose* of the many *mitzvos* that Hashem gave us.

Rashi (as further clarified by the Maharsha and others) explains R. Chananya’s question as such: Why are there more negative commandments (365 *mitzvos lo ta’aseh*) then there are positive commandments (248 *mitzvos aseh*)? R. Chananya answers that the purpose of the many more negative commandments is to provide many more opportunities to receive additional reward by just avoiding a whole array of activities that the Torah prohibits. This is then the conclusion of the *Mishna* that one is rewarded for fulfilling a *lo ta’aseh* as well.

Meforshim add that one is granted reward for fulfilling negative commandments only when one has the opportunity and (at least) some natural attraction to the transgression, *and then* makes an effort to avoid it. This is alluded to in *parshas Acharei* where the Torah says “*U’shmartem es mitzvosai...asher ya’asseh osom ha’adam vachai bahem*” – And you

Why are there more negative commandments (365 *mitzvos lo ta’aseh*) then there are positive commandments (248 *mitzvos aseh*)?

shall guard my *mitzvos*... which man should do and live by them, is, in its literal meaning, a promise of the reward of life for keeping the *lo ta'aseh* (*u'shmartem* – "guarding" implies avoidance). This is immediately followed in the Torah by the *posuk* "*Ish ish el kol sh'eir b'saro lo sikrevu*" warning us to stay away from forbidden relationships.

ROOTED ABOVE

The extraordinary value of the observance of the *mitzvos lo ta'aseh* are addressed in many places in Chassidus.

In a *maamar* in Likutei Torah (*Pekudei* 3:2), the Alter Rebbe quotes the Zohar which explains the *posuk* "*Zeh Shmi l'olam v'zeh Zicri l'dor dor*" – This is my name forever and this is my remembrance for future generations, and notes that the *gematria* (numerical value) of the word "*Shmi*" (350) together with the first two letters of *Shem Havaya* – *Yud and Hey* (15) – is equal to 365, the number of *mitzvos lo ta'aseh*, and the *gematria* of the word "*zichri*" (237) together with the last two letters of the *Shem Havaya* – *Vov and Hey* (11) – is 248, which is equal to the number of *mitzvos aseh*. The Alter Rebbe notes that it appears from the fact that the sum of the *mitzvos lo ta'aseh* are equal to *Shmi* and the first two (and higher) letters of the Name, that indeed the *mitzvos lo ta'aseh* are higher than the *mitzvos aseh*, and he goes on to explain why it is so.

In the *Hemshech Samech Vov* (*maamar* beginning *Hashomayim Mesaprim*), the Rebbe Rashab elaborates on this theme:

Will (*ratzon*) is an expression of the one who wills (*baal haratzon*), and therefore the person must be proportional (relate) to the subject of his will. However, something that runs *contrary* to one's will (*hepech haratazon*) does not express the individual, and therefore the will isn't proportional (doesn't relate) to the thing which is against his will.

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Today, much to our consternation, many American Jews are attracted to every kind of alien activity conceivable and have every opportunity to actually engage in them.

To illustrate the point: When a person has a desire to have a sum of money, it reveals his relative net worth as well (because it will necessarily be proportional to what he already has). However, when a king objects to dirt in his palace, it doesn't give any indication about the greatness of the king. It doesn't have to be proportional to him in order for him to object to it.

Following this reasoning, we can now understand why a *mitzvas lo ta'aseh* is higher than a *mitzvas aseh*. *Mitzvos aseh* are the will of *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* and therefore can only reveal that light (*ohr*) which is relative to *giluy* (expression). The *mitzvos lo ta'aseh*, however, do not actually reveal Him and therefore they are rooted in the essential light (*etzem ha'ohr*) which is not in the realm of that which can be revealed.

Indeed, the Alter Rebbe in Chapter 27 of Tanya, concerning the fulfillment of *mitzvos lo ta'aseh* quotes the Zohar, "*Kad iskafya sitra achara l'sata d'istalek Kudsha Brich Hu l'eila al kula yatir mibishvacha acharina*" – when the *sitra achara* is subjugated below, HaEm is elevated above more than with other praises. The words "*yatir mibishvacha acharina*," more than other praises, refers to this notion that the *mitzvos lo ta'aseh* are higher than the *mitzvos aseh*.

AT THE BRINK OF GEULAH

Based on the above analysis, it might be possible to throw some light on our current situation:

The fact is that for many hundreds of years most Jews lived in isolated *shtetel* environments, and as a result

were not exposed or attracted to many of the practices prohibited by the Torah. In such circumstances, it cannot be realistically suggested that they were fulfilling all of these many *mitzvos lo ta'aseh* of the Torah. As stated above, the only time one is deemed to have fulfilled them is when there was opportunity to do them *and* one had an attraction to them; by and large neither of these conditions existed compared to their frequency in the modern world.

Today, much to our consternation, many American Jews are attracted to every kind of alien activity conceivable and have every opportunity to actually engage in them. When, as a result of our influence, a Jew refrains from doing this, it is an extraordinary accomplishment – "*Yatir mishvacha achara*." Though we can never know how often this happens, we know the facts that it does.

If we fully appreciate the immeasurable difference (*ein aroch*) between reaching the *ohr* which is relevant to *giluy* (revelation) and the *etzem ha'ohr* (essential light) which is accessed by the *mitzvos lo ta'aseh*, we should always be happy with the extraordinary *zechus* that has been accorded to us in these very last days of *golus* (as the Alter Rebbe emphasizes in the end Chapter 33 of Tanya) – to be part of this crowning achievement, "*yatir mibishvacha acharina*," more than other praises. **P**

The author is the director of Lubavitch activities in the state of Maryland.

Teaching Torah



THE JEWISH WAY

RABBI AHARON DOVID GANCZ

PREPARED BY RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

In recent years, there is more awareness about how *Yiddische chinuch* differs from secular education, and how the values of Torah and Chassidus are inherently dissimilar to societal values. Moreover, parenting methods and tools created by secular society are founded on and saturated with the secular mindset.¹

When it comes to instruction methods, however, we seem to be more or less on the same page. We are all interested in communicating content to our students – be it mathematics or, *l’havdil*, Torah. And since general educators have proposed systems to best absorb materials based on studies of how people learn, it would be wise to adapt these neutral methods to teach Torah.

Is there any specific method to study Torah or is any method fine? What exactly is the knowledge we are trying to impart? How is success in teaching Torah measured?

THE “STRAIGHTFORWARD” METHOD

Let us begin with this letter of the Rebbe to someone who inquired about a curriculum for studying Chassidus (*Igros Kodesh*, Vol. 5, #1302):

The *posuk* states, והם בקשו חשבונות רבים, “Hashem made man straightforward, and man sought out many calculations.” Many generations studied Torah without analyzing how to arrange it in the most effective manner and according to the rules of education and so on. Only recently have some people come along to probe and introduce systems and schemes for learning.

In actuality, the results of this approach have been the exact opposite of what one would expect. Whereas in past generations there was a tremendous passion for Torah study and the knowledge of Torah flourished in quantity



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1. For an elaborate discussion of the topic, see “What’s Jewish about Jewish Education?” in *Perspectives Seventeen*, and “A Unique Approach to Education” in *Perspectives Twelve* – both by this author.

We will see that the Rebbe's rejection of "new methods" does not stem from inflexibility, but from a distinct understanding of Torah and how it should be studied.

and quality, since these systems were established, both the number of people studying and their level of interest has decreased.

The Rebbe then continues to apply this approach to the study of Chassidus:

The same is also true regarding the study of Chassidus. The correct approach is not to pursue calculations. One should study and review the material without looking at the clock to calculate how much you covered during that time. When you will delve extensively in Chassidus, then your mind and heart will automatically be refined, and will become suitable vessels to receive the light of Chassidus.

The Rambam famously writes at the end of *Hilchos Mikvaos* that *tevilah* alludes to immersion in correct values. We can derive from this that just as a *kosher tevilah* requires the water to flow above

one's head, so too the immersion in correct values only purify if they flow "above one's head" – above one's logic and understanding. That is to say that one must nullify his logic and understanding in the waters of true values.

What is the Rebbe telling us? Why can't someone invent a new and improved method to study Torah? Is it about being unbendingly committed to tradition, or is there perhaps a tried-and-true logic?

In this article we will explore the unique dimension of Torah study, and how it differs from general studies. We will see that the Rebbe's rejection of "new methods" does not stem from inflexibility, but from a distinct understanding of Torah and how it should be studied.

Moreover, it will be demonstrated that real naiveté is to think that methods that work for secular subjects could be applied to Torah.

WHICH WAY ARE YOU HEADED?

Reb Elchonon Wassermann *z"l* was a renowned *rosh yeshiva* in pre-war Europe. Reb Elchonon had a friend from *yeshiva* who had taken a different path and became a professional. This fellow once visited Reb Elchonon and saw how his old friend was living in such poverty, with such meager amenities... He told Reb Elchonon "If only you would have joined me! With your mind, you would have made it big." Reb Elchonon didn't respond.

Later Reb Elchonon escorted his friend to the train station. While bidding him farewell, he noticed that

the cabin he was about to enter was old and run down. Reb Elchonon asked him, "Why don't you take the train on the other side of the platform? It looks much more comfortable!" The friend smirked at Reb Elchonon's seeming naiveté and remarked, "What good is that train if it's not traveling my way?"

Whenever we're presented with an innovative tool, we must consider: Is it taking me to where I want to go? Or is it perhaps a very efficient tool that will take



me somewhere else? In the latter scenario, the faster and the better it works, the more worrisome it is.

When it comes to practical improvement, we have no qualms about adapting new methods. If the invention will provide the same results in less time and effort, it would surely be a smart thing to use it. It would be foolish to ride a horse and buggy or wash clothing at the river bank in order to preserve the traditions of our grandparents...

But when it comes to social or educational changes, we cannot be so eager to adopt innovative methods. We must carefully analyze the new tools to ascertain if, in any way, it rewrites the Torah attitude.

THE ESSENCE OF TORAH STUDY

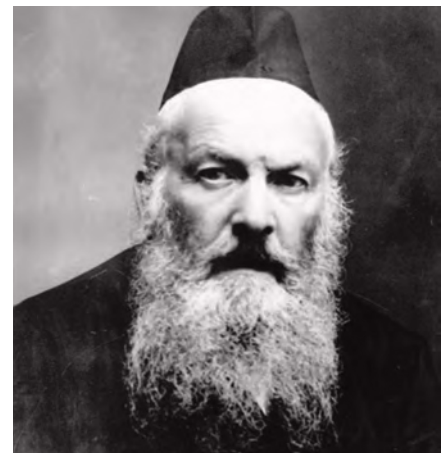
What is Torah study? And how does its study differ from the study of other subjects?

Torah is *not* a scholarly work that discusses Jewish topics and happened to be created by Hashem. Rather, as the Alter Rebbe explains in Tanya, Torah is “*chochmaso urtzono shel Hakodosh Boruch Hu*,” Hashem’s personal wisdom. Hashem invested Himself in the Torah, as Chazal derive from the word *Anochi*.

Literacy and knowledge on their own are not Jewish values.

We are instructed to continuously review the Torah that we know, and as we walk in the street or travel, we should try to occupy our minds and mouths with *mishnayos* or Tanya. We are supposed to set aside time each and every day for *kvias ittim l’Torah*, regardless of how much we already know. There is no parallel to this in secular wisdom. One who knows a law of science fluently gains nothing from reviewing it again and again.

“Why don’t you take the train on the other side of the platform? It looks much more comfortable!” The friend smirked at Reb Elchonon’s seeming naiveté and remarked, “What good is that train if it’s not traveling my way?”



Reb Elchonon Wassermann z"l

How do traits such as forbearance, humility, purity, and decreasing pleasures, enable a person to know a subject?



Torah is a G-dly revelation, and it can only be properly accessed in a G-dly ordained manner.

The Mishna in Pirkei Avos (6:6) lists 48 qualifications needed to fully acquire Torah. Many of those conditions are not intellectual in nature, and there's no reason that they should assist in amassing knowledge. How do traits such as forbearance, humility, purity, and decreasing pleasures, enable a person to know a subject?

It is evident that a proper comprehension of Torah is not achieved through intellectual study alone. *Limud haTorah* and *kedushas haTorah* go hand in hand. If a person lacks the holiness of Torah, he cannot properly comprehend the study either. For this reason, chassidim were particular to learn from G-d

fearing teachers and *seforim* that were authored—and even printed!—by G-d fearing men.

In fact, this instruction was already given by Chazal when they said,² “If a teacher bears similarity to a G-dly angel, you should seek out Torah from his mouth, and if not, you should not seek out Torah from him.”

In order to attain the G-dly light of Torah, it is necessary to study it in the prescribed manner. Using mundane methods to study Torah, even those that have been proven to work well in other disciplines, will result in a superficial understanding of Torah. Without a connection to the G-dly element in Torah, even one's intellectual understanding of Torah will fall short.

TORAH TRADITION

We didn't find a book in a cave.

The Torah was handed down to us by Moshe Rabbeinu together with the manner of how it should be studied. For over three thousand years, Jews have preserved this tradition – in their own study and in teaching their children. To think that they didn't have

it entirely right and that we can develop a better way to study it is an appalling *chutzpa* and a disgrace of the word of Hashem (“*dvar Hashem baza*”).

Moreover, even if the secular study methods would concur with the Torah approach, still, to derive that method from secular sources in place of the

2. חגיגה טו ע"ב: אם הרב דומה למלאך ה' צבאות יבקשו תורה מפיהו ואם לאו אל יבקשו תורה מפיהו.

In secular subjects we have no tradition. We weren't told how to generate electricity or how to heal Diabetes, and we are encouraged to explore and invent solutions for those problems.

Jewish tradition is disrespectful. As Rashi quotes at the beginning of *parshas Mishpatim*, “Even if you know that they [secular courts] judge a certain law similarly to the laws of Israel, you may not bring it to their courts.”

The Mishna in *Avos* (5:21) states, “*hafoch bo v’hafoch bo d’kula bo*” – dig into it again and again for everything is in it. The *Tanna* then adds, “*umina la sozua*,” don’t budge from it, which Bartenura explains that one should not turn instead to secular subjects.³

Tosefos Yom Tov elaborates:⁴ A person may think that there are some topics – such as political etiquette, proper conduct and good attributes – which require the study of secular writings. The *Tanna* therefore teaches us that everything is in Torah. How much more so that the study of Torah itself is included in Torah, and one need not look elsewhere.

Even the bringing of secular sources to support Torah values was rejected by the Friediker Rebbe. As he writes (*Igros Kodesh Rayatz*, Vol. 2, p. 342):

“About what you wrote that you proved to your friend the advantage of the path of Chassidus not only over other paths in *Yiddishkeit*, but also over the path of European culture – I cannot comment on that since I am unfamiliar with the European culture. However, [I can say that] I have always viewed the bringing of proofs for Torah and *mitzvos* from other disciplines, or proofs for Chassidus from applied subjects, like taking a

promissory note of one hundred coins from a great and famous magnate and asking the doorman to be a guarantor...”

In secular subjects we have no tradition. We weren't told how to generate electricity or how to heal Diabetes, and we are encouraged to explore and invent solutions for those problems. However, we have a Torah tradition, and it is not up for new techniques.

Alternative methods may successfully take us... somewhere else.

DON'T INVENT SQUARE WHEELS

In truth, the *entire notion* of systematic learning methods is not in line with *limud haTorah*.

The Torah is an organic entity which must be consumed in its original form. Reconstructing the Torah concepts in a logical system destroys its holy structure and results in a lifeless subject.

In the abovementioned letter about a curriculum for Chassidus (*Igros Kodesh*, Vol. 5, #1302), the Rebbe identifies a clear correlation between innovative approaches and losing the *geshmak* of Torah. He notes that the age-old method of straightforward study (*yoshor*) produced masses of passionate students, while the reconstructed materials (*cheshbonos rabim*) produced much fewer who were also less interested.

3. רע"ב אבות פ"ה מ"ב: הפך בה והפך בה - בתורה: דכולה בה - שהכל תמצא בה: וסיב ובלה בה - גם עד זקנה ושיבה לא תעזבנה: ומינה לא תזוע - שלא תאמר למדתי חכמת ישראל אלך ואלמד חכמת יונית שאין מותר ללמוד חכמת יונית אלא במקום שאסור להרהר בדברי תורה כגון בבית המרחץ. או בבית הכסא. כששאלו את רבי יהושע מהו ללמד אדם את בנו חכמת יונית אמר להם ילמדנו בשעה שאינו לא יום ולא לילה דהא כתיב והגית בו יומם ולילה:

4. תוי"ט שם: שאין לך מדה טובה הימנה - שלא תאמר שבלמוד חכמת יונית בהכרח אלמד מהם מדיניות והנהגה ומדות טובות. להכי קאמר שאין לך מדה טובה הימנה. כי כל המדות טובות ערוכות בכל ושמורות בה. ועוד יש לפרש דתנא דידן מהדר אכולהו מוסרי החכמים וקאמר שאין בכל המדות טובות שיעצוך שתקנה ותשתלם בהן כמדה הזאת שיעצתיך שזאת היא עולה על גביהן.

*The Rebbe favored the straightforward and direct study of Torah
without newfangled stratagems.*

In other words: Sophistication is not always better. Simple and direct Torah study is the best method of all, and says the Rebbe, the results speak for themselves.

Should one want to distinguish between personal study and teaching children, arguing that schooling must be methodical, one must only read this letter of the Rebbe (*Igros Kodesh*, Vol. 13, #4499):

In response to your letter about your curriculum for Chassidus and the need for a gradual understanding of this portion of Torah.

I have already replied to several questioners that this depends on each person and his background. However, generally speaking, there is no place for such an expectation in the study of Torah. There isn't a gradual curriculum in the study of *nigleh* either, as the *minhag Yisroel* is to begin the study of Tanach with *sefer Vayikra* and the study of Gemara from the chapter of *Hameiniach* or *Hamafkid*. It is specifically this method of study that produced the *geonim* (Talmudic geniuses) throughout the generations – geniuses in comprehension, elucidation and analysis.

The Rebbe thus makes it clear that even the beginning of study, specifically the teaching of young children, does not follow a logical pattern, yet it is this system that brings success.

In a *yechidus* with R. Mordechai Eliyahu (*Toras Menachem* 5745, Vol. 5, p. 3109), the Rebbe voiced his displeasure that *yeshivos* had changed to a new systematic and analytical style of learning Gemara, and expressed hope that they would return to the classic style.⁵ Thus, even within *Yiddishe* styles of learning, the Rebbe favored the straightforward and direct study of Torah without newfangled stratagems.

DECEPTIVELY SIMPLE

Is the Rebbe suggesting that we take on a subpar method of study? Should we just *shukkel* and chant the holy words of Torah? Not at all!

When it comes to *limud haTorah*, holiness is not enough. One must actually study and understand it with his intellect. As Chazal say, “*Torah lo bashomayim hi*” – Torah isn't in Heaven, and “*Yogata umatzasa taamin*” – only one who toils in learning will succeed.⁶ While *kedusha* is imperative to success in learning, one must actually learn to know that.

In *Hilchos Talmud Torah* (4:5-6), the Alter Rebbe explains that the *mitzva* of *talmud Torah* has two elements: *talmud Torah* – continuous study of Torah, and *yedias haTorah* – knowing all the *mitzvos* of the Torah and their laws.

Every Jewish male is required to master the entire Torah according to his ability. Comprehending and

5. R. Eliyahu mentions by name *Maharsha* and *Maharam Shif*, and the Rebbe encourages him, but it seems that the Rebbe would approve of any straightforward study of classic Rishonim and Acharonim. What the Rebbe is seemingly rejecting is excessive *pilpul* and the hyper analytical style of attempting to fit everything into logical patterns.

6. See *Sichos Kodesh* 5729, Vol. 2, p. 361.



Is the Rebbe suggesting that we take on a subpar method of study? Should we just shukkel and chant the holy words of Torah?

retaining all that knowledge requires rigorous study, and cannot be replaced with other holy endeavors.⁷ (Only one who has mastered the entire Torah, and studies solely for the sake of continuous learning – *v'hagisa bo yomam valayla* – may practice *dveikus* all day in *davening* instead.)

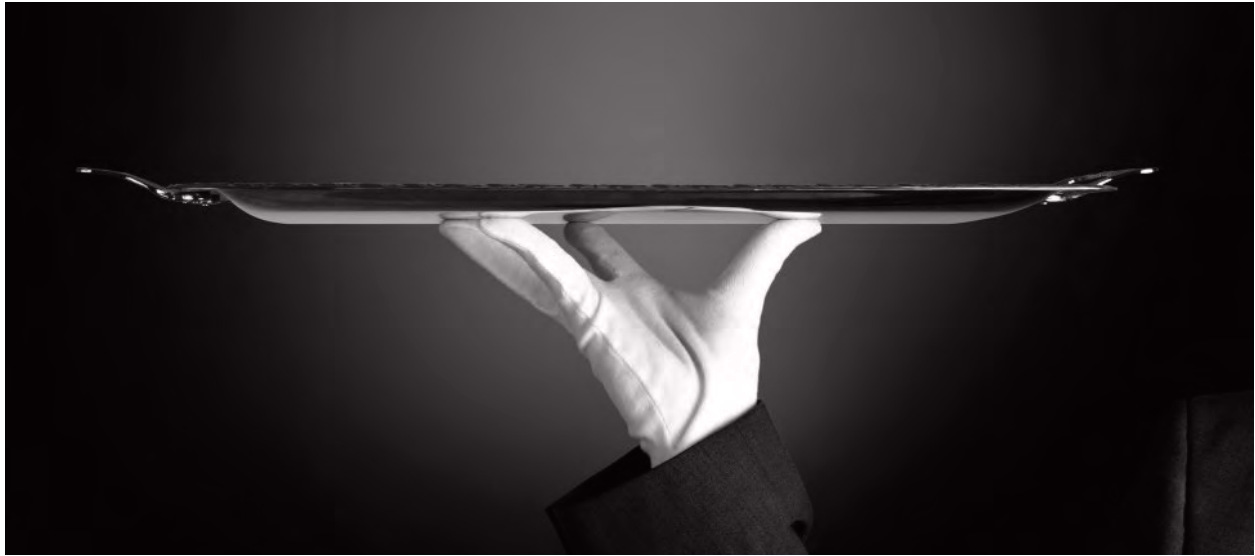
Even from a spiritual perspective, a person's intellectual knowledge of Torah makes him a resting place for *Elokus*, as the Alter Rebbe explains in *Likutei Torah*.⁸

The point is that to have that knowledge; Torah must be studied *thoroughly*, without shortcuts.

The above is true of any in-depth subject, *l'havdil*. What is unique about Torah is that the study itself is holy, and one will study a passage that he knows fluently again and again. Moreover, every aspect of Torah – the Gemara's original thought, opinions that weren't accepted, and even statements that Gemara says are "mistaken" – are holy and are a part of the study.

7. הל' תלמוד תורה פ"ד ס"ה-ו: גם חסידים הראשונים לא היו רשאים להשהות כל כך בתפלה אלא מפני שלמדו כבר תחלה כל התורה שבכתב ושבעל פה כולה וקימו ידיעת התורה שמתוך חסידים הם היתה תורתם משתמרת ומתקיימת בידם ולא משתכחת מהם. רק שמצות תלמוד תורה היא והגית בו יומם ולילה וכנגד מצוה זו שקולה מצות הדביקות האמיתית ביראה ואהבה אמיתית ליפטר ממצוה זו כדין כל העוסק במצוה פטור מהמצוה אבל לא כנגד מצות ידיעת התורה וליפטר ממנה ח"ו... ומאחר שידיעת כל התורה למי שאפשר לו היא מצות עשה של תורה כמ"ש למעלה והשוכח דבר ממשנתו מפני שלא חזר על לימודו כראוי כשאפשר לו עובר בלאו א"כ איך יעבור בלאו ועשה מחמת שעוסק ביראת ה' כל היום (וגם מי שאי אפשר לו ידיעת כל התורה הרי אמרו לו עליך המלאכה לגמור). עיי"ש.

8. לקו"ת פ' קדושים: והדרת פני זקן זה שקנה חכמה. שקנה היינו כמ"ש ותופשי התורה. דהיינו מי שתופס במוח הזכרון וחקוק על לוח לבו תמיד. כמאורז"ל איזהו ת"ח כל ששואלין אותו דבר הלכה כו'. שאז מצוה לעמוד מפניו גם בשעה שאינו עוסק בתורה. לפי שהקב"ה שוכן עד בקרבו גם כשעוסק במילי דעלמא. מאחר שהתורה חקוקה במוח הזכרון שבנשמתו ועל לבו. ואורייתא וקוב"ה כולא חד.



The student must work it out and think it through with his own mind. If you hand him the conclusions on a silver platter, he will not have the key to decipher other sugyos.

TEACHING TO LEARN

In *Hilchos Talmud Torah* (1:6) the Alter Rebbe explains that the obligation of *talmud Torah* is to know all of *Torah Sheba'al Peh*. However, nowadays with *Torah Sheba'al Peh* printed, it is no longer necessary to teach a child all of Gemara and *halacha*, since he can study it on his own. Rather, our responsibility – as parents and by extension the teachers as well – is to give him the tools to be able to learn Gemara and extract the conclusion on his own.⁹

How do you give a student the tools to do that?

First and foremost is *yegiah*, personal toil. The student must work it out and think it through with his own mind. If you hand him the conclusions on a silver platter, he will not have the key to decipher other *sugyos*. It's not just about knowing ideas, but about working them out.

Moreover, if a student toils and understands to the best of his ability, he has fulfilled his obligation of *yedias haTorah*. It's not about good grades, but about the learning itself.¹⁰

In studying Torah, the process is the product.

9. הל' תלמוד תורה פ"א ס"ו: ובזמן הזה שכל התורה שבעל פה היא כתובה לפנינו א"צ לשכור מלמד לבנו שילמדנו כל התורה שבע"פ אלא שילמדנו להבין היטב בתלמוד ברוב המקומות גם בהלכות וסוגיות העמוקות עם רוב הפוסקים ראשונים ואחרונים ויעמידנו על עיון ההלכה למעשה שיוכל לעיין בעצמו ללמוד ולהבין ולהורות כל הלכה למעשה מתוך עיון בתלמוד ופוסקים ראשונים ואחרונים ואז יוכל הבן ללמוד בעצמו כל התלמוד והפוסקים לידע כל ההלכות של תורה שבע"פ שהן פירוש התרי"ג מצות ודקדוקיהן בטעמיהן ומקוריהן כאלו למדו המלמד.

10. הל' דומלת תורה פ"ד ס"ה-ו הנ"ל "וגם מי שאי אפשר לו ידיעת כל התורה הרי אמרו לא עליך המלאכה לגמור", עיי"ש. וראה הל' ת"ת פ"א ה"ד באריכות.

DON'T GET CHEATED

Studying Torah in its original form requires effort, and transmitting it to students requires considerably more effort. Besides trying to penetrate their young minds, the students' attention must be held to begin with. Naturally, we look for tricks to engage our students, and that of course is a good thing.

Nevertheless, we must be very wary of shortcuts. If a method abridges the path and we end up somewhere simpler, then we haven't gained anything. We've simply been cut short. We must always remember what *limud haTorah* is about, and make sure that this is what we are doing.

To apply this practically¹¹:

Teaching Gemara to young students can be quite a challenge. Getting the students to follow along inside the Gemara, and learn the translation and punctuation, is a tedious task. Teachers in all times, and even more so in recent years, are compelled to prod their students in all sorts of ways to get them to learn the Gemara.

Seeking to eliminate this challenge, a teacher may be tempted to discuss the Gemara's concepts and opinions orally. He may show visualizations on the board, distribute worksheets and give written tests. However, a student who spends most of his time learning from external aids, will remain incapable of reading a Gemara. When he enters *yeshiva*, he should be ready to delve deeper into the ideas of the Gemara, and then to go on to learn *Rishonim* and *Acharonim* on his own. Instead, this student must now start from the beginning – how to read a Gemara. Just ask any *magid shiur* in *yeshivos* how unprepared many of today's *bochurim* are for learning Gemara and *meforshim*.

A teacher may be tempted to discuss the Gemara's concepts and opinions orally. He may show visualizations on the board, distribute worksheets and give written tests. However, student who spends most of his time learning from external aids will remain incapable of reading a Gemara.



11. Note: This article focuses primarily on the instruction of Gemara students and beyond. The education of younger children will be addressed in a future article *bez"H*.

*A lecturer only needs to know his presentation well, a melamed
must be immersed in the learning himself.*

A sincere *frum* psychologist and *talmid chochom* had come up with some new methods in learning which he began implementing in certain schools. He asked to meet with me, and challenged me, “What’s wrong with it?”

I told him that I’m not a “methodist.” It’s not the “right methods” that we’re missing, but the value and *koch* in Torah that we need. He then shared with me his own story:

He had a son who went to a certain *yeshiva*, but did not succeed. The father’s assessment was that the teacher knew the material only from an Artscroll Gemara; he couldn’t answer questions more than on a superficial level and he really wasn’t into it. The *bochur* ended up in another *yeshiva*, where he really thrived, and until today, as a father of a family, he still has a real passion for learning.

Naturally, I asked him: Did that successful *yeshiva* use your methods? He laughed and said, “No. What they did was they brought every *talmid chochom* or *meshulach* who visited from Eretz Yisroel to the *yeshiva*, so that he could test the *bochurim*. Instead of being absorbed in fun and games, they developed a real passion for Torah.”

To my obvious question, “Isn’t your story and experience a contradiction to your own opinion?” he responded, “Of course, in essence, you are right. But, statistics show that it takes 75 years to change a regime. Knowing our current situation and the types of homes the students are coming from, we must implement new methods.”

This type of thinking has become prevalent recently, with people claiming that children are drifting since the old methods don’t work anymore.

Have we thrown in the towel? Have we given up on upholding the tried-and-true *koch* and *geshmak* in Torah, turning instead to outside methods? Such an attitude only causes the situation to spiral downward, as the Rebbe notes in his letter.

In the ’60s and ’70s, when liberal students introduced permissiveness into the colleges, turning study halls into party halls, changing the face of America until today, did the educational system as a whole work to put a stop to it and reeducate them? They did not.¹² Instead, they sought to adapt to the “new reality” and introduced methods on how to teach “partying students.” Is that the model that we should be emulating?

As far as the psychologist’s concern, it may be true that he, as an outside consultant, can’t do more than adapt to the situation. However, it would not be right for *yeshivos* and *mechanchim*, who are responsible for pure chinuch, to settle for that.

In a similar vein a *menahel* related this episode to me: A father came to him and suggested that children have camp year round. “Look at how my friends and I turned out,” he said, “and I don’t see the children getting any better. At least in camp they are full of *chayus*, they do things and learn in a fun way; maybe that will stick.” The *menahel* challenged him, “Do you open a *sefer* at home? Do you have a *shiur* several times a week?” The response, of course, was in the negative. At least he was honest.

The story is told of a poor shoemaker who was offered an enormous amount of money by a close friend to enable him to learn how to become an expert jeweler. But the shoemaker vehemently refused, “Now at least I make a meager living; your idea, however, will

12. See *farbrengen* of 19 Kislev 5731 – *Sichos Kodesh* 5731, Vol. 1, p. 261 and onwards.



ruin my *parnassa* altogether. You see, in the past twenty years, not one person came into my store to buy a piece of Jewelry.”

Of course, a shoe repair shop isn't conducive for selling jewelry. He must change the sign outside his store. Likewise, if one doesn't change his identity, he can't claim that "it's not working."

A lecturer only needs to know his presentation well, a *melamed* must be **immersed** in the learning himself. His teaching is an expression of something much deeper and that is subtly conveyed to the students. If he just gives out copied worksheets and tests, then he may be doing a good "job," but he's not a "*melamed*."

A *melamed* who, had he not become a *melamed*, would not open a Gemara, has no place being a *melamed* in the first place. Just preparing for the job won't have the desired results. He must develop a *koch* in learning Torah, and actually learn above and beyond what he must for his job. This will certainly impact the entire class.

BOTH WHAT AND HOW

One may then ask: Why is training at all necessary? Why can't a successful *yeshiva* student just walk into a classroom and deliver his Torah knowledge?

The obvious answer is that while he has the *ikar*, the fundamental understanding and appreciation of Torah, he might lack the tools to convey it to his students. However, with tools alone – without a solid understanding of Torah – one cannot educate.

A melamed who, had he not become a melamed, would not open a Gemara, has no place being a melamed in the first place.



Upon leaving the compound, he approached someone on the street and asked, “Are you normal?” When the fellow replied in the affirmative, he retorted, “Do you have a document to prove it? I do!”

Torah and teaching skills are like a soul and a body; neither can succeed on its own. A soul needs a body to function, and a body without a soul is dead. A teacher who lives with Torah but hasn't acquired teaching skills, won't be able to fully engage his students. Thus, he will learn to look at each student, to stop periodically and summarize what was learned, to assess the students' comprehension, and the like. But if a teacher lacks a meaningful connection to Torah, his teaching will be lifeless.

Sadly the case may be that one who cannot find a normal job resorts to becoming a teacher. This is a catastrophe of the first degree.

A teacher must be of higher caliber than every other professional, as he is doing Hashem's work and is

entrusted with Hashem's children.¹³ For this very reason, he must be *genuinely qualified* in the field that he is teaching. A diploma or other superficial credentials do not say anything about his knowledge and connection to Torah.

QUALIFIED, NOT “CERTIFIED”

A story is told of an unstable individual who was confined in a mental institution for several months. When his chemical balance was restored, the doctor gave him a note of release. Upon leaving the compound, he approached someone on the street and asked, “Are you normal?” When the fellow replied in the affirmative, he retorted, “Do you have a document to prove it? I do!”

13. See *Bava Basra* 21b.

Every year, students in yeshiva approach me and ask, “Why don’t you teach ‘JLI classes’ in yeshiva?”

Some principals have shared their observation with me that the emphasis on “certification” often compromises teachers’ devotion, as if their certification compensates for the lack of passion and connection.

Certification doesn’t make a good teacher. A person who is not cut out for teaching can take a course and be “certified,” and yet not be suitable for teaching at all.

Better to be normal than to be “certified normal.”

EDUCATIONAL FADS

In addition to waiving the need for a learned *melamed*, there are several issues with the new educational methods themselves.

Educational challenges require real solutions. Anyone who follows the “field of education” will tell you that educational trends come and go. Each time, the proponents of that method provide the “evidence” and “data” that their method is the ultimate answer.

Moreover, many times the issues discovered by these methods turn into self-fulfilling prophecies. Instead of lifting the student above his challenge, the prognosis defines the student’s capabilities and limits him for years to come.

Likewise for the classroom as a whole. Each time the bar is lowered to match the “students’ capabilities,” the students fall with it. To ease the learning challenge, we can give more recess and incentives, however we should not change the form of Torah study.

Lift up the children to the Torah, not lower the Torah to them.

METHODICAL STUDY

Every year, students in *yeshiva* approach me and ask, “Why don’t you teach ‘JLI classes’ in *yeshiva*?” They watch *shluchim* all over deliver these lectures for enthusiastic crowds, and the listeners are

interested and involved. It’s relevant, it’s interesting, contemporary and practical – which is in sharp contrast to the *shiurim* given daily in *yeshiva*.

My response to their question is: A lecture and a *shiur* (or class) have two entirely different purposes.

A lecture is not a step towards anything further. The purpose is to convey the information in a concise manner, so that the listeners are informed without being bogged down. Make the talk relevant and practical, use visual demonstrations, and add some humor plus a story or two – and you’ve got yourself a marvelous lecture. A class, on the other hand, is a process of training and teaching. The teacher is giving the student tools and deepening their understanding.

Torah lectures are indeed important since they enable many people to be informed of Torah information which they would have otherwise not known. Yet, no one expects a faithful lecture attendee to be able to write his own series of lectures, no matter how many years he is enrolled.

By contrast, a student in a classroom is meant to be gaining the skills of delving into a difficult *sugya*, eventually reaching the point to be able to deliver a *shiur* himself. This is hard work for which there are no shortcuts.

It should be noted, that to **conclude** a *shiur* with practical halachic application is welcome and worthy. Besides making the Gemara more relevant, it is the fulfillment of “*la’asukei shmaita aliba d’hilchesa*” - to conclude a study according to *halacha*, and is the ideal form of Torah study.

(Chazal say that a *talmid chochom* is called “Shabbos.” People explain it in jest: A true *talmid chochom* is one who can learn even on Shabbos when electronic tools aren’t available, since he can explore a *sugya* in its original format. Creating such a *talmid chochom* requires poring over the original text, not PowerPoint presentations on the board.)

What then is the job of a teacher? Are we saying that a teacher should keep the material difficult for his students?

THE PURPOSE OF EFFORT

The Rebbe tells a story of how the Alter Rebbe once called the Tzemach Tzedek and offered to grant him a gift – a blessing to understand Torah. The *Tzemach Tzedek* declined the offer, saying that he wanted to acquire Torah through toil. He later regretted this, for whatever levels of Torah he could have received as a gift from the Alter Rebbe, there would always be additional levels for which to toil.

From this story, we see the significance of effort in learning Torah. The Tzemach Tzedek didn't regret having worked so hard; he only wished to utilize the same measure of toiling for a higher level.

Educators everywhere are troubled by this question: Should we allow students to use various translations and Gemara aids in the classroom? Should we use PowerPoint visualizations?

The answer is that it depends. If it is used as a stepping stone to cut through the difficult words so that the student could focus on the *shakla v'tarya* (content), it is sometimes worthwhile (for a mature student). The same is true if the student wishes to understand the basic meaning of the Gemara faster and easier, so that he can utilize his time to delve deeper into the *sugya*. But if it's used just to make things easier so that the student should have it all on a golden platter, then it isn't helpful.

(It is self understood that students with learning difficulties who cannot learn without aids, must benefit from it, as they benefit from medication. The above is referring to the vast majority, who when taught properly, will eventually be able to learn in the original form.)

This is also the answer to how to engage today's students who are more distracted than ever. It is true that more tools are needed to get them involved,

but the objective throughout the entire process must be that the child should be able to study *with his own mind*.

We must always maintain a clear vision of our goal. If we want our students to *study* Torah, shortcuts won't help. Shortcuts can convey information, but not learning.

SIMPLIFIED, BUT NOT SIMPLE

What then is the job of a teacher? Are we saying that a teacher should keep the material difficult for his students? Shouldn't a teacher be making the learning easier?

A teacher's job is not to eliminate the complexity, but to *introduce* it to the students and *train them into it*. To give them a handle on the material, not to run away from it. A teacher is there to help his students, to coach them, and empower them to toil and navigate a difficult *sugya*.

When beginning the *sugya*, a teacher should give his students an outline of what the *sugya* is about. It would run something like this: There are three opinions in the *Rishonim* on how to explain the *pshat* (simple meaning) of the Gemara. Rashi's explanation isn't so clear and it seems to contain a contradiction, don't get carried away with it and leave it for later. Then, look in this Pnei Yehoshua. The overall *sugya* is about a contradiction of two *beraisos*, but according to each of these opinions, the contradiction is understood differently, and the answer is therefore different.

If this would be a lecture, this is approximately where it would stop. However, if this is a class, the work just begins. Now, the details must be analyzed to uncover *how* each of these opinions arrived at their conclusions. In order to prepare the students for



their own study, the teacher will advise the students to research certain sources, while skipping others.

The student now has direction; he knows what he's looking for and he isn't lost. This is known as a *derech halimud*, and is at the crux of a student's development. Naturally, there are multiple ways to do this, and the above is just one example.

A *derech halimud*, a "way of learning" developed by great *geonim* through intense toiling in *Shas* and *Poskim*, must not be replaced with a mere "tool," a clever technique. Techniques are appropriate for setting up a classroom or catching students' attention, but the study itself must remain a *limud*.

The techniques should be arranged so that they raise the students up, rather than lowering the bar. Sadly,

many are under the impression that making learning accessible means to decrease the level of learning to fit the child's current comprehension. This is a copout and a sign of poor teaching skills. It's no feat to drop the standard, the challenge is to lift up each child individually – according to his ability – so that he too can learn Torah.

(The above focuses on students in *yeshiva*. A working person who has limited time each day for learning should perhaps make use of all the various tools and lectures so that he can amass much Torah knowledge in the minimal time that he has.)

The rule of thumb is this: If the tool minimizes effort, discard it. If it enhances the learning – by either feeding into the *sugya* or summarizing it afterwards – it has a place.

EDUCATION, NOT PRESENTATION

One attraction of the "professional methods" is that they look impressive. Fancy slideshows and neat

diagrams look intelligent, and they impress parents and administrators.



*A talmid is born through laboring in study and acquiring the derech halimud, the **process** of study.*

The Mishna in Pirkei Avos (3:18) says that there are certain calculations, such as Gematriya, that are merely *parparaos lachochmo*, “desserts of wisdom.” Bartenura explains that these are teachings that feel and look impressive, but they are void of real Torah content.¹⁴ Similarly, introducing the era in which a *Tanna* lived, including the prevailing culture at the time, and who his colleagues were, looks impressive and has some benefits, but it’s merely *parparaos lachochmo*.

Likewise, “professional methods” are no doubt shinier than the classic way of study. The student who is taught “professionally” will bring home elaborate worksheets and will sound very knowledgeable. Whereas the student who wracked his brain to dissect the Gemara won’t come with such a presentation, yet he knows the Gemara and will be able to grow in learning. Historically, one can see how the continuity of Torah came specifically from the in-depth “disorganized” works, not from the methodical compendiums. The Pnei Yehoshua and R. Akiva Eiger have many thousands of “*talmidim*” in every generation who were educated by their works, whereas halachic encyclopedias, as valuable and useful as they are, don’t have “*talmidim*.” A *talmid* is born through laboring in study and acquiring the *derech halimud*, the **process** of study.

In the times of the Tzemach Tzedek, a suggestion was made to print textbooks of selections of Chumash, Gemara and Mishna. The idea was to choose only the passages that are suitable for the child’s comprehension.

¹⁴ רע"ב שם: פרפראות לחכמה - כמו הפרפראות שרגילין לאכול בסוף הסעודה לקנוח דרך תענוג כך החכמות הללו מכבודות את בעליהם בעיני הבריות.

Our innovative methods must be solidly grounded in and guided by Torah and tradition.

The Tzemach Tzedek strongly opposed the plan, and insisted that children must learn from an original *sefer*, following the original order.

In one letter, the Tzemach Tzedek writes (*Igros Kodesh* of the Tzemach Tzedek (5773), p. 72):

“The main study is to learn in order and not to skip from place to place... How much more so not to make a shortened version of Mishna, and to make changes and omissions, the likes of which our ancestors never dreamt of... The *masechtos*, *perakim*, and the *mishnayos* in each *perek* were organized with specific intent by Rabbeinu Hakadosh, and many other *chachomim*, masters of *ruach hakodesh*...

“Likewise, with the study of Gemara... for without the study of Gemara the children won’t understand anything, and they will remain void of the wisdom of Torah.”

One can see from the Tzemach Tzedek’s and our Rebbe’s letters, that the pursuit of innovation isn’t new. There have always been attempts to introduce original methods. If one will go back in history, he will see that their arguments were no less compelling than the arguments put forth nowadays. We also see from the letters that the rejection of these “new methods” doesn’t stem from ignorance or inflexibility, but from a specific approach to Torah study. Regardless of whether one agrees with the reasoning presented in this article, the Rebbeim’s letters speak for themselves.

I once heard a *vort* that succinctly captures these the correct balance between innovation and tradition.. The *posuk* says (*Devarim 32:7*), בִּינו שְׁנוֹת דָּר וְדָר שָׂאל אֲבִיךָ וַיְגִיד לְךָ זְקֵנֶיךָ, וַיֹּאמְרוּ לְךָ – “Study the times of each generation; ask you

father and he will tell you, your elders and they will say to you.” The first half of the *posuk* tells us to consider and recognize the uniqueness of every generation, and the need to tend to each one in a suitable manner. However, the second half reminds us that in doing so we should consult our elders and history. Our innovative methods must be solidly grounded in and guided by Torah and tradition.

IN CONCLUSION

When teaching Torah we must make sure to transmit these three vital points:

- (1) ***Kedushas HaTorah***: We are not teaching students mere “concepts,” but *chochmaso shel Hakadosh Boruch Hu*. To this end, students should make themselves worthy through proper conduct – the 48 *kinyanim* – and by learning from holy sources.
- (2) ***Yedias HaTorah***: The study must be done in a manner that the student will be able to continue to study the rest of Torah. The goal is that he be able to learn any *masechta* and work out the Gemara’s final conclusions on his own.
- (3) ***Ahavas HaTorah***: We must impart an appreciation for Torah study and the desire to study it throughout life to our students and children. They should continue to review what they know at every available opportunity.

By following the path of *Yiddishe chinuch* – as outlined by Torah and tradition – we will *b’ezeras Hashem* raise strong Jewish children who will be connected to Torah for years to come. **P**



SONG *and*
CHAZANUS

IN CHASSIDIC HISTORY

RABBI YEHOShUA MONDSHINE A"H

A FIT INTERMEDIARY

“I heard my holy ancestors repeat in the name of the Baal Shem Tov, that he had come to earth to correct a major flaw in this world, which had come about through the erosion of the three pillars on which the world stands: the pillar of Torah had been ruined by the *darshonim* who went from town to town sharing false words of Torah; the pillar of *tefilah* was destroyed by the *chazanim*...” These are the words of the *Minchas Elozor* of Munkatch in his *sefer Divrei Torah* (Vol. 3, §86).

In fact, in his letter regarding the structure of a Chabad *minyán*, the Rebbe Rashab lumps these two destructive tendencies together: “There should always be a Chabad *minyán*, they should never let a

maggid speak... and they may not hire a *chazan*, not even for the *Yomim Noiro'im*.” (*Igros Kodesh*, Vol. 1, p. 287)

Here is not the place to discuss the erosion to which the Baal Shem Tov referred, which involved the inappropriate conduct of those *chazanim*; rather we’ll discuss another—partially less severe--aspect of it, namely their style of *davening*. This too already existed in the early days of Chassidus, as the leading student of the Baal Shem Tov, R. Yaakov Yosef of Polna’ah, writes in his *Toldos Yaakov Yosef* (*Parshas Tzav*):

“I have heard that in earlier times the *chazan* was a prestigious individual who knew the proper intention and meaning of each word, and he would sing the words at length as he finished thinking the meaning of each word. However, with the passage of



RABBI YEHOShUA MONDSHINE OBM was widely recognized as the preeminent Chabad historian of our times. As a young man under the Rebbe’s close guidance, he began to work on indexing and publishing Chassidic texts. During his lifetime he authored many seforim and articles on Chabad history, bibliography and minhagim, in addition to publications in various other fields. He also served as manuscript librarian in the Israeli National Library.

As a chossid operating in the academic sphere, he was unapologetic and unintimidated. His writing is characterized by comprehensive and impressive knowledge, originality, provocativeness, and a willingness to battle against what he saw as distortion of Chabad’s image by outsiders.

“The halachic queries that are brought to me during Yom Kippur davening don’t disturb me since they are Hashem’s Torah, but when the chazan starts to foolishly perform his chazanus (machen zich narish), that disturbs me...”

time and the decline in holiness of each generation, they would sing the tunes without thinking about the words, so the tune which was supposed to be secondary became primary, while the meaning of the words became secondary.”

[Elsewhere in his *sefer* (*Parshas Naso*), he writes, “I have heard from a certain scholar that nowadays the *yetzer hara* has become clever, and instead of targeting each individual to sin, he goes for the one person who will cause the public to stumble. For example, he appoints a *shochet* in a town who will cause everyone to eat *treif* meat, and everyone is thus brought into the *yetzer hara*’s domain. Likewise, our Sages, *Rishonim* and *Acharonim* warned that the *shliach tzibur* – who is the intermediary between the congregation and our Father in Heaven – should be the most noteworthy person in the congregation, whereas today they choose the most disreputable...”]

CHASSIDISHER BAALEI TEFILAH

Honestly, choosing empty *chazanim* wasn’t novel to that time period. The Gemara (*Ta’anis* 16b) already applies the *posuk* (*Yirmiyah* 12:8), “she raised her voice against me, therefore, I hated her” to an inappropriate *chazan*, and it is quoted in the responsa of the *Rashba*, *Rosh*, *Maharshal* and others, regarding *chazanim* whose musical talent outshone their integrity and good deeds. (See also the Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch* 53:4-5,14.) As each generation passed, the secondary tunes become the primary focus.

It is self-understood that the more a Chassidic community focused on *davening* and its meaning, the more it was repulsed by a ceremony led by a “*chazan*”

singer, (something that was common in other circles where people came to *shul* to hear a concert from the *chazan*). As the Alter Rebbe writes in *Tanya* (Ch. 10) the greater one’s love for Hashem, the more he is put off by its rivals..

The Rebbe Rashab, who set out to raise the standard of *davening* among his chassidim, was the one to enact that “only R. Avraham Charitonov or someone of a similar caliber” (a *chassidisher baal tefilah*) should be appointed as a *chazan*. R. Yechiel the *Shadar*, the *chazan* in Lubavitch for the *Yomim Noira’im*, was of this standing. (Parenthetically, the *nigun* “*Hu Elokeinu*” which the Rebbe taught on Simchas Torah 5724 is one of R’ Yechiel’s compositions).

In the same vein, R. Avremke, the *rov* of Zhebin and a prominent chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek and the Rebbe Maharash, once said, “The *halachic* queries that are brought to me during Yom Kippur *davening* don’t disturb me since they are Hashem’s Torah, but when the *chazan* starts to foolishly perform his *chazanus* (*machen zich narish*), that disturbs me...” (*Likutei Sipurim*, p. 322.) [On a lighter note, that is implicit in *Shulchan Aruch*’s instruction not to appoint a “foolish *chazan*” ... (Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch* 53:25)].

[There is a well-known expression, “A *chazan* is a fool.” *Tzadikim* have explained that this is because the chamber of music in Heaven is adjacent to the chamber of *teshuva*, and since the *chazan* doesn’t jump inside the chamber of *teshuva* he is obviously a fool. Now, how do *we* know that he hasn’t actually made the jump? Can we read his heart? It is simply that we observe how he continues to yodel away, and with that he demonstrates that he hasn’t changed.]



MEANINGFUL MUSIC

The above critique is despite Chabad's renowned passion and endearment for *neginah*. Chassidim sing *nigunim* on their own or as an extension to *davening* when the soul seeks to express itself with joy or yearning.

According to the Mittler Rebbe, "The true expression of G-dliness in one's soul during *davening* happens through singing and exultation, when the heart is inspired in song or in motion of the hands or feet." He also quotes the Alter Rebbe as having instructed those who feel downcast to *daven* with joyous song. (Igras Kodesh, p. 264)

It seems clear then, that Chabad emphasizes *neginah* – soul song, but has an aversion to *chazanus* – cantorial singing.

The difference in attitude lies in the distinction between the two. While the basic distinction is clear, it can be better understood by examining the Mittler Rebbe's words regarding singing during *davening*, which will also explain another shortcoming with cantorial singing.

In the first chapter of *Kuntres HaHispailus* [an essay on the appropriate form of excitement during *davening*] the Mittler Rebbe writes, "The spiritual excitement that comes from a *nigun* must be spontaneous, without premeditation or intent to become excited; it should come on

"The true expression of G-dliness in one's soul during davening happens through singing and exultation, when the heart is inspired in song."

- The Mittler Rebbe

its own... This is known in Chassidus as the ‘absence of feeling one’s ego,’ [as the nigun arose freely].”

In other words, the desired song during *davening* is the unprompted one, and not one that comes from a person’s ego and self-consideration – the abhorrence of Chassidus – which is expressed in a *davening* with prepared song.

MELODIES OF THE HEART

One of the differences between a Chabad *nigun* and other *nigunim* is that those of Chabad are generally wordless melodies. Chabad *nigunim* are not arbitrarily wordless, rather they communicate the very essence of a *nigun*: the inability of the created and defined word to exist in the infinity of a melody.

Song is the pen of the heart and soul. *Neginah* allows the soul to express its yearning and desire to connect to an infinite G-d, while also conveying the person’s emotion – whether joyful or bitter – which the finite word is simply not capable of capturing.

Every rule has an exception, and there are many Chabad *nigunim* that have words. Many of those are not originally Chabad, but were introduced by other sources. Some original Chabad *nigunim* do have words, however the words are secondary to the melody, and the climax of the *nigun* is at the wordless part that follows. (Think of “*Yemin Hashem Romeima*,” and “*Nye Zuritzi Chluptzi*.”)

“The spiritual excitement that comes from a nigun must be spontaneous, without premeditation or intent to become excited; it should come on its own.”

- The Mitteler Rebbe



The Alter Rebbe didn't integrate Shabbos zemiros (hymns with words) in his siddur, since he wanted chassidim to "sing nigunim (wordless melodies), which are loftier than zemiros."

Another type of Chabad *nigun* with lyrics is one whose very words are fluid, expressing a deep yearning to Hashem. Such are the melodies of “*K'ayol Ta'arog*” (As a deer cries longingly for creeks of water, so does my soul cry longingly to You, Hashem), or “*Tzama Lecha Nafshi*” (My soul thirsts for You, my flesh longs for You, in an arid and thirsty land without water). Anyone who watched the Rebbe sing these *nigunim* needs no additional explanation.

WORDLESS TUNES

The words of the Alter Rebbe in *Torah Ohr* (Hosafos to *Parshas Ki Tisa*) about *neginah* are very telling:

“It is a *mitzva* to sing *zemiros* on Shabbos as the Arizal writes, for they facilitate expiration of the soul (*kelos hanefesh*). This is alluded to in the words of our Sages (Shabbos 5:1), ‘*Yotzin b'shir v'nimshochin b'shir*’ [literally meaning that animals may go out and be drawn with a leash on Shabbos, but the chassidic interpretation is] that one ‘goes out’ and ascends from the constraints of the body through song (‘*shir*’). Song is *bitul* (self-nullification) without words, only an expression of being drawn towards something with selflessness and yearning.”

As we know, the Alter Rebbe didn't integrate Shabbos *zemiros* (hymns with words) in his *siddur*, since he wanted chassidim to “sing *nigunim* (wordless melodies), which are loftier than *zemiros*” (the Rebbe

Rashab in his notes to the *siddur* quoting the Tzemach Tzemach). In other words, he wanted his chassidim to sing songs from their hearts, not ones dictated to them.

Even *nigunim* that are not profound enough to bring to *kelos hanefesh* still cannot be defined by words, as the Rebbe writes, “The spoken word confines the melody, for a tune on its own is flexible and can contain multiple meanings that cannot be incorporated into one text.” (*Igros Kodesh*, Vol. 18, p. 157)

A group of chassidim can be sitting together at a *farbrengen* singing the same *nigun*, yet each one injects it with an entirely different meaning, in line with his spiritual state at the time. If the *nigun* would have words, it would be restricted and limited to one single message!

Melodies that have been adapted to unrelated words (such as camp songs and the like), lose their deep meaning. When former campers hear that *nigun* sung at a *farbrengen*, even years later, they automatically recall memories of those fun times, instead of focusing on the depth of the *nigun* and the soulful experience it offers.

Words can sometimes make joyful tunes even more joyful, as long as they are aptly fitted to the tune. A perfect example would be the Dubrovna *nigun* – an old-time chassidic melody (*Sefer HaNiggunim*, *nigun* 143) to which the words “*U'faratzta*” were added. Today, we couldn't separate the words from the tune and sing the melody alone, and it is difficult to understand



how it was ever sung so bare without the words! It is almost as though the tune was waiting from the beginning of time to be joined with those words.

If, however, the words are unnaturally pasted onto a tune, the tune will lose some of its original liveliness. For example: Try singing the *nigun* “*Ovoï Bigvurois*” with the words and then again without them, and I am sure that you will find the melody alone far more joyful.

SINGING DAVENING

Having begun on the subject of *chazanim*, let us turn to their failed attempt at coupling tunes and words – ruining both the *davening* and the tune.

First, on *davening* to a tune:

I recall one *yom tov* in 5727 (1967), a *chazan* who was prone to sing a different song for every paragraph (including such tunes that the Friediker Rebbe labeled “*nigun shoteh*,” pointless songs) went up to

daven musaf. Before he began, one of the secretaries warned the *bochurim* who were standing nearby not to disrupt the man’s *davening* because “the Rebbe cherishes his *davening* very much.” I have strong doubt whether the Rebbe actually told the secretary that piece of information, (what I do know is that in the middle of *chazaras hashatz* the Rebbe turned around and expressed wonderment when the *chazan* repeated words to fit the tune better...). At any rate, it was clear that singing *davening* was not a Chabad *minhag*, which is why the secretary had to warn the *bochurim* not to disrupt the *chazan*.

Some of the younger readers may not even know that in Chabad they did not sing “*Lecha Dodi*” or “*Keil Adon*”; in fact, it was completely unheard of! Those words were recited as a part of *davening*, not as musical lyrics.

Although “*Lecha Dodi*” was sung in the Rebbe’s *shul* in the later years, (and the Rebbe encouraged it), the Rebbe himself would not sing “*Lecha Dodi*” or “*Keil*

*The spoken word confines the melody,
for a tune on its own is flexible and can
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Adon” when he served as *chazan* on Shabbos. (Besides for one occasion when the Rebbe soloed the verse in “*Keil Adon*” beginning “*Peir V’chavod*”).

I wonder if someone who understands the meaning of “*Lecha Dodi*” would consider coupling it with random tunes. While the tune may make the congregation joyful, what connection does it have to the words? Besides, how can one tune encompass so many different messages? “*Lecha Dodi*” discusses the unity of Hashem, the *ratzo*-yearning of the *neschama* and its subsequent *shov*-return (as explained in Tanya Ch. 50), the *golus* of the *Shechina* and of the *neschama*, the shine of the *Geulah*, and more.

If we reflect on the *nigun dveikus* (cleaving to Hashem) that the Alter Rebbe sang to the phrase “*Likras Shabbos*” (which is only a half of one verse!) we can appreciate the depth of “*Lecha Dodi*” and what sort of song suites it.

[In fact, the Rebbe Rashab would sing this tune during *Shema* (*Sefer HaNiggunim, Maftaiach, Nigun 7 and 177*), which besides for demonstrating the depth of the tune, it also indicates a common denominator between “*Shema*” and “*Lecha Dodi*” – and one wouldn’t think of turning *Shema* into a song...]

MISMATCHED SONGS

Secondly, there is the destruction that the *chazanim* have wrought upon the *nigunim* themselves, which

is aside from the problem of melodies being ill-fitted with the words. It is especially worth mentioning the tampering of those *nigunim* with words that the Frierdiker Rebbe calls “*nigunim mechwonim*” (composed or chosen by the Rebbeim with special intentions).

Two notable examples are in “*Hallel*”:

The Tzemach Tzedek had a *nigun* of *dveikus* and joy to the *posuk* of “*Yemin Hashem romeima*.” It is mostly a wordless melody which flows from the deep meaning of the few words and their impact on the one singing. Came along some *chazanim* and haphazardly pasted it onto a bunch of other *pesukim* that follow it just to fill the tune.

Effectively, the soul that the Rebbe placed in the *nigun* was removed, and the part of the *nigun* which expresses the outpouring of the soul was filled with incongruent words.

The second example is the Alter Rebbe’s *nigun* on the *posuk* “*Keili Atah*,” which *chazanim* have extended to the following *posuk* of “*Hoidu La’Hashem*” as well. This also shows a lack of sensitivity and appreciation for the *nigun*, as well as tampering with a “*nigun mechwon*.” This distortion will likely remain forever since young children are taught the *nigun* as though it were composed on both *pesukim*, and they often hear it sung that way at *farbrengens*.

The problem of course was the very fact that the wealthy chassidim did not recognize that they should not enter first. Even if the Tzemach Tzedek would institute that they go second, the issue would not be resolved – just disguised.

IT'S UP TO YOU

Everything I've written here is simply my *hergesh* (feeling), and since people think differently, there are surely those who think otherwise. Now, while I think that matters of *hergesh* are indisputable (as you can't claim that someone's feelings aren't true), I would nevertheless like to address one argument that could be raised against me. That too, I will explain according to my own *hergesh*.

The glaring issue is the fact that many *chazanim* in the Rebbe's *shul* did sing parts of *davening*, and not only did the Rebbe not protest their behavior (which one can argue is because the Rebbe in principal did not get involved in *shul* policies – a practice he quoted many times in the name of the Rebbe Rashab), but on the contrary, the Rebbe encouraged it!

I will answer this with a story and a parable told by the *mashpia* R. Groinem:

The Tzemach Tzedek once lamented that under his father-in-law – the Mittlerer Rebbe's leadership – *Chassidus* had been on the rise, and when he became the Rebbe it had declined. His proof was this: When the Mittlerer Rebbe had *yechidus*, the Torah scholars and *melamdim* would enter first and then the wealthy chassidim followed, while during the his own *yechidus*, the wealthy chassidim entered first.

When R. Shaul Ber Zislin, who was then a student in the Tomchei Temimim *yeshiva*, heard this story he asked his *mashpia*, "Surely the Tzemach Tzedek could have instituted at his *yechidus* that the *melamdim* should enter first as well?"

R. Groinem responded with a parable:

It once happened that a simple *yishuvnik* (*shtetl* Jew) came to the big city and overheard the *rov* discussing with the community leaders about establishing a fast day due to the drought. The *yishuvnik* quickly interjected and told the *rov* that he has a way to fix the rain problem: Everyone knows that before it rains the cats jump behind the oven, so they should go around town, collect all the cats, place them behind the ovens, and then there would be no need for a fast.

The problem of course was the very fact that the wealthy chassidim did not recognize that they should not enter first. Even if the Tzemach Tzedek would institute that they go second, the issue would not be resolved – just disguised.

I would argue the same is true regarding the behavior of *chazanim* and those that request their services: If they are comfortable distorting the *davening* and the *nigunim*, let them do as they please, and the Rebbe will be the last one to take away their joy (as he said regarding other practices).

However, let it be clear, that it wasn't the Rebbe who initiated this conduct, and he personally did not conduct himself that way. Even when the Rebbe introduced the song "*Hu Elokynu*" in "*Keser*," it was only sung on *yom tov* and select *Shabbosim* (as per the Rebbe's instruction). It wasn't until the later years when it was sung every *Shabbos*.

GENERATION OF THE GEULAH

A positive way of explaining this practice, in line with the Rebbe's custom of seeing the good in everything:

The Rebbe often repeated *Chazal's* statement that "*Kalkalaseinu zu hi takanaseinu* – our devastation is our remedy." The spiritual structure of a generation is not decided solely by the people themselves, rather it is by Divine providence and intervention from Hashem. Perhaps it can be said, that since *Moshiach* and *neginah* are strongly related, song during

davening is specifically related to the generation of *geulah* and a sign that *Moshiach* is on the way.

In that case, you may ask, what is the purpose of discussing and contemplating the comportment of *chassidim* in previous generations?

The answer, in short, is similar to the explanation (in *Kuntres Eitz HaChaim* 7-8) of the obligation to contemplate "*Yichuda Ila'a*" (the higher level of G-dly unity), although very few can ever actually attain it, since it leads us to strive for elevation and loftiness, if only for a moment. If we only consider the lower level of "*Yichuda Tata'a*" which is attainable by all, we are more prone to fall.

In other words, remembering our history and striving to greatness uplifts us and contributes to our overall growth. Considering the meaning and role of *nigunim* in Lubavitch of yesteryear can likewise elevate us, to some degree, in the song of the soul. **P**





MIND OVER MATTER

Although “Man is born a wild foal,” and “Man’s inborn inclination is bad,” as he grows physically, he should also mature intellectually and emotionally.

A human being is made up of two parts: the body and the soul. The body’s desires are “the spirit of an animal that faces downward,” and the soul’s desires are “the spirit of man that faces upward” (*Koheles* 3:21). Simply speaking, the body is drawn to eating, drinking and other physical pleasures, whereas the soul is drawn to intellectual and spiritual matters.

Now, since the soul and intellect only emerge some years after the body has already been running strong, the soul is “imprisoned” within the body. But as a person grows, the good within him should also grow. So although “Man is born a wild foal,” and

Raising a Mensch

AN ADDRESS ON EDUCATION

Yud Beis Tammuz 5741 (1981) - Sichos Kodesh 5741, Vol. 4, p. 148

INTRODUCTION

The notion that education consists of nothing more than schooling and the acquisition of knowledge challenges its very essence. This distorted viewpoint has even penetrated the frum community, causing a student's spiritual character and his awareness of the Creator to be overlooked in favor of mastery of content.

A greater and more recent challenge is the fear of modern parents and educators to dictate anything to the youth. In haste to be "accepting" of difficulties – indeed an important aspect of dealing with any person – they may ignore the need to give their children authoritative guidance in life.

In this talk, the Rebbe speaks forcefully about the crucial importance of character development in education, and need for it to be based on faith in the One Above.

"Man's inborn inclination is bad," as he grows physically, he should also mature intellectually and emotionally.

We find the same with the world as a whole. The material elements of the world are easily visible, but to notice its spiritual life requires concentration. By considering the creation, we can come to recognize how it is the handiwork of Hashem. And as the world advances, particularly after the explosion of intellect predicted by the Zohar for the year 5600 (1840), there should be an improvement in world peace, and a decline in theft, slander and harm.

The reality, however, is the exact opposite. The advances of intellect are being utilized for the negative. Without these

What does he see there? That if he is a "smart boy" – and his parents told him that he is as smart as can be! – he can get whatever he wants.



The most obvious change in education is that in earlier times, parents believed in a Creator of the World and that the world isn't a free-for-all.

advances, a madman could only cause damage in his immediate surroundings, but now he can wreak havoc throughout the entire world.

MORAL DECLINE

The same is true socially. Not only are people not becoming more refined, considerate, and willing to forego for the sake of another, but they want more than what they have and demand to be given whatever they want. Moreover, they gain particular enjoyment from taking other people's possessions!

Children today are being taught what they can accomplish by behaving immorally. Parents bring the "infamous machine" [television] into their home, which should not be mentioned by name at a *farbrengen*, and they tell the child that since he or she was a "good boy" or "good girl" – for not hitting their teacher... They consider this an "achievement" – the child deserves to be rewarded by turning on the "toy" so that he can watch whatever interests him.

What does he see there? That if he is a "smart boy" – and his parents told him that he is as smart as can be! – he can get whatever he wants. When the parents are challenged, they respond that the United States Constitution rules that we may not interfere with an individual's freedom. How then can anyone tell them what to do?

DID YOU CHECK THEIR EDUCATION?

I met with the governor of New York and I asked him: "You were the Attorney General for many years. Why is it that despite you doing all that you can the crime rate has increased tremendously?" He just smiled. I then told him that perhaps there was a change in how children are being educated.

The most obvious change in education is that in earlier times, parents believed in a Creator of the World and that the world isn't a free-for-all. They didn't need the school to inculcate faith into the children. The child had it naturally; that's how he

was raised and that's what he observed in his parents, grandparents and siblings. As the years passed, this was less emphasized, yet it was still a standard practice to pray and offer thanks before or after eating, and before going to bed.

Later, the school played an important role in inculcating faith. Whether it was part of the curriculum or not, teachers, being mostly believers, influenced the children with their way of speech and conduct so that it did not have to be formally taught. They transmitted to the students that there is a G-d who is greater than the "smart child," and the child must conduct himself properly out of fear of G-d.

Recently, however, destructive people decided to throw faith out of school *R"L*!

They have made an "idol" out of this ideology: it is untouchable, it must be bowed to, and one must "sacrifice" the children to it! *Generations of children are being sacrificed* to this ideology that a child should not be told that there is Someone above him – "an eye that sees, an ear that hears," and his actions are repaid with good for him and his family, or the opposite.

There is no need to look for irrelevant solutions when the cause is obvious. And if it isn't resolved immediately, it will only become worse.

STOP RAISING CRIMINALS!

The first step is not to wait until the child becomes a danger to society, at which point he must be jailed, costing taxpayers an exorbitant sum. Even in prison, he is busy trying to be released sooner so that he can continue on the same path...

So, the first step is to avoid the illness from the outset: *Don't raise children to become criminals! Teach the children that there is "an eye that sees and an ear that hears"!*

The parent argues: "I'm not raising a criminal, I teach him to go on the correct path." Yet, he's setting the child up for that, since he raises the child to think that he can get whatever he wants. This is a *person* you're dealing with, and as much as you give them they will always want more. This problem exists both among Jews and non-Jews; it's become an epidemic *R"L*.

Generations of children are being sacrificed to this ideology that a child should not be told that there is Someone above him.



HUMAN RIGHTS VS. G-D RIGHTS

Being cornered with these arguments, they came up with a “religion” called “Human Rights”: You cannot tell parents that there is a G-d who has more “rights” than humans. If someone insists that he wants someone else’s belongings, you should not say anything. If you must, say it softly, but don’t mention punishment.

It is irrelevant whether they actually tell the child to go and take someone else’s property or not. Tragedy results by raising the child with the mindset of “me and no one else,” that he can have what he wants regardless of all the other children.

Hashem blessed this country with bountiful “external” wisdom (“*chochmos chitzoniyus*,” secular wisdom). This wisdom can produce “external” inventions which – like every part of Hashem’s world which was created for His glory – can be used to increase purity and refinement in the world. But instead, they say not to mix in to a child’s life. The child is educated “according to his way” – in this case being his *negative* side – so that when he becomes older he will continue on that negative path...

From the outset, the child must be told that good conduct requires sacrifice. He shouldn’t think that as a result of his good behavior he will get what he wants, rather he should be told that it isn’t beneficial for him to succumb to his desires.

Being cornered with these arguments, they came up with a “religion” called “Human Rights”: You cannot tell parents that there is a G-d who has more “rights” than humans.

FINDING THE EXPERT

When an expert in physical health says that a certain food is harmful and dangerous, even if it looks enticing and is honey coated, you won’t argue. Not because you know medicine yourself, but because you rely on the expert who studied for many years to discern between what is enticing and what is beneficial.

If we conduct ourselves so in physical health, how much more so should we do for emotional wellbeing. Yet, when it comes to emotional health everyone considers themselves an “expert”!

If someone comes along and offers advice, parents don’t verify whether he lived his life righteously – in which case he can be trusted with the most precious thing that parents have, their very own child – rather they ask for his diplomas. It’s no difference to them how he conducts himself. He’s handed a class and appointed their “authority,” since the students rely upon him for guidance. Yet the teacher demonstrates in his private life who he really is!

MORALLY HEALTHY CHILDREN

Hashem is the source of kindness, and along with the *yetzer hara*, He gave every parent and educator the strength to overcome the darkness of the material world and illuminate it with the light of Torah.

Those in leadership positions must recognize their primary responsibility to ensure that they are raising





healthy people. And it isn't possible to be physically healthy without emotional and moral health. This was already phrased in Latin thousands of years ago.

A doctor dispenses all sorts of pills, but doesn't mention that for the body to be healthy, one must have a healthy soul. That is much more vital than pills and treatments.

The doctor argues that there are "Human Rights" and he can't meddle in someone else's beliefs. *What do you mean?!* You need to make the body healthy, and you know that it requires a healthy soul! He can't be healthy with a "split soul": half of him is being pulled towards pleasures, (including going against the doctor's orders), while his soul yearns for at least some measure of spirituality.

He shouldn't think that as a result of his good behavior he will get what he wants, rather he should be told that it isn't beneficial for him to succumb to his desires.

FOUNDATION FIRST

Whoever has influence in education should see to it that every day should begin with an announcement that there is "an eye that sees and an ear that hears" of Whom one cannot hide or outsmart. Then, one can teach other things, which as important as they are, come secondary to the foundation. Without the "foundation," the entire "building" has nothing to stand on.

This is the first responsibility and the greatest merit. One should not wait for the child to mature and make his own choices, rather one should begin training the child from a very young age, not to behave like an animal that kicks, but like a human being who acts humane and makes the world a place where people can live humanely.

And if one tries, it is a sure thing that they will succeed. **P**



SNAPSHOTS

21 SHORT STORIES

— OF —

THE REBBE'S CONNECTION TO THE YESHIVA STUDENTS

ONE

THE YESHIVAH BOCHURIM'S POSSUK

It was Simchas Torah night 5712 (1951), the first after the official *nesius*-acceptance, in the wee hours of the morning. The Rebbe had finished *seudas yom tov*, and unexpectedly came out to the *bochurim* who were still dancing downstairs. To the chassidim's surprise, the Rebbe instructed them to do a second set of *hakofos*!

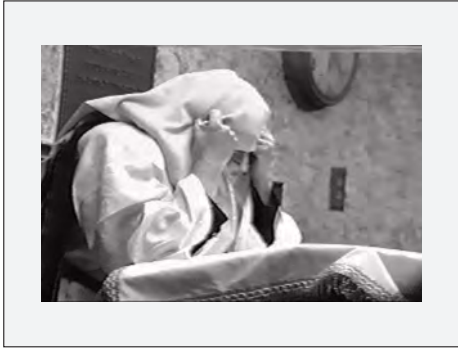
The Rebbe honored all the *yeshivah bochurim* with the *possuk* "Vayehi Binsoa." After they recited the *possuk*, the Rebbe said that they should repeat it, "shtarker un lebediker" (with more energy). The repetition didn't

satisfy the Rebbe, and the third try also wasn't good enough, but the Rebbe said to continue.

The next time the *possuk* was read, in the next round of "Ato Horeiso," the *bochurim* invested all they had in the *possuk*. The Rebbe remarked with satisfaction, "Es geit shoin af a veg..." (We're getting there).

The next year, 5713 (1952), at 3:00am the Rebbe again joined the dancing circle, and then again honored *di yunge noisei ha'aron* (the young *aron*-carriers) with the *possuk* "Vayehi Binso'a."

To the chassidim's surprise, the Rebbe instructed them to do a second set of hakofos!



TWO BIRKAS HABONIM

The chozer, Harav Yoel Kahan relates:

It was in the year 5712, the first Erev Yom Kippur after the Rebbe had accepted *nesius*. The Rebbe benched the chassidim after *mincha*, as was the minhag of the Rebbeim. After the bracha, the Rebbe called me over, and I approached with trepidation. The Rebbe told me to tell the bochurim to enter the Rebbe's holy room before Kol nidrei.

We were a very small group. When we entered, the Rebbe was already dressed in a *kittel* and *tallis*, and his holy face was aglow. The Rebbe turned to us, and said in a voice choked with emotion: "You learn in the Rebbe's yeshiva, so you are the Rebbe's children ... *Yevarechecho Hashem v'yishmerecho ... Yoer ... Yiso...*"

From that year on, it became the *minhag* that the Rebbe benches the *yeshiva bochurim*, his children, on *Erev Yom Kippur*.

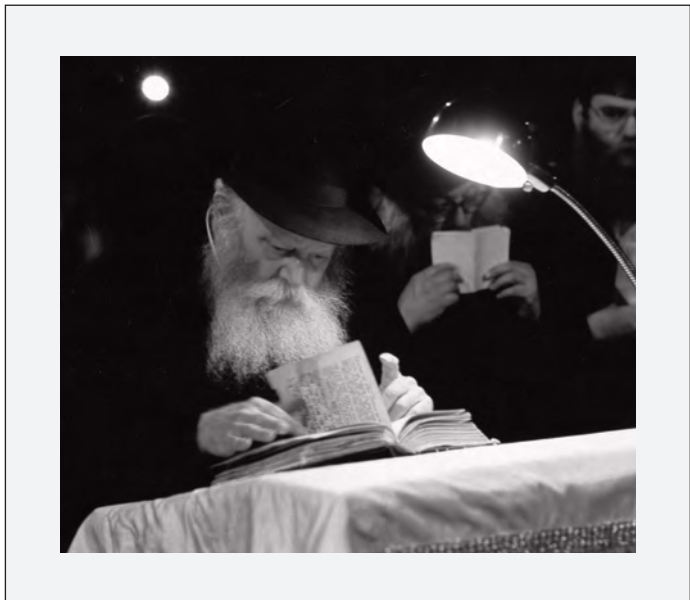
"You learn in the Rebbe's yeshiva, so you are the Rebbe's children..."

THREE NOT TO DISTURB THEIR BOCHURIM

The learning of the *bochurim* was always very dear to the Rebbe. The *hanhala* of the yeshiva in 770 would go to the Rebbe regularly, to report on the *bochurim's* learning, and as to how much they are utilizing their time.

In fact, the Rebbe once explained (at the *Purim farbrengen* of 5745), that the Rebbe's *farbrengens* don't begin until nine thirty p.m., so as not to disturb the *seder* of the yeshiva which extends until that time.

For the *Kiddush Levanah* of *Kislev* 5739, the Rebbe came out at 8:10 pm, ten minutes after the beginning of *seder chassidus*. The Rebbe told the *mazkirus* (secretariat) to announce that he will be saying *Kidush Levanah* with this *minyan*, on the condition that no *bochurim* disrupt their learning to come out!



FOUR**THE RIGHT PLACE FOR ROSH HASHONO**

Amongst the Rebbe's many directives to the Rosh Yeshivos, was one that began repeating itself from the early years of the *nesius*: That the bochurim should spend Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and the days in between, in yeshivah. These days, the Rebbe explained, are to be utilized to their fullest. This can only be done within the walls of the yeshivah.

To the administration of the yeshivah at seven seventy, the Rebbe would demand that they accommodate the guests, so that every bochur remain in yeshivah.

From the dean of Beis Rivka Seminary of Paris, Harav Yaakov Shlamey, the Rebbe made the same request.

Harav Shlamey relates: "The Rebbe explained his directive to me in yechidus in the year 5729. The Rebbe stated, 'I know that if they are in seminary for Rosh Hashono, they will spend the day saying Tehillim. If they are home, I don't know what the topic of discussion will be around the table...'"

If they are home, I don't know what the topic of discussion will be around the table...

FIVE**A SEVENTEEN YEAR-OLD BOCHUR...**

There was a *bochur*, in a Lubavitcher *yeshiva*, who felt that the *hanhala* were not sufficiently dedicated to him. In a *yechidus* of 23 Nissan, 5734 (1974), he told the Rebbe that he is not sure what to do and doesn't know where to go.

The Rebbe replied:

"Go back to *yeshiva*. Especially now that summer is approaching your present *yeshiva* is good, since they learn through the summer.

"Now, generally, a seventeen-year-old *bochur* should be self-motivated to learn, and should not need

the assistance of a *mashgiach*..." be self-motivated to learn, and should not need the assistance of a *mashgiach*..."

During the momentous *farbrengen* of Purim, 5718 (1958), the Rebbe spoke of many touching issues. The Rebbe turned to the *bochurim* and said:

"A *bochur* should have nothing on his mind, other than fulfilling the wish of the Rebbeim, the founders of the *yeshiva*. He should be free of materialistic worries for his future, and even free of preoccupation of finding favor in the eyes of the *hanhala*..."



SIX

SOLELY TO THE YOKE OF LEARNING

In the early 5730s, when the *kovtzei haoros* (Torah journals) written by bochurim and Anash first began appearing, the Rebbe expressed a keen interest in their contents and derived much nachas from them.

The Rebbe would regularly walk in to *shul* on Friday night carrying a new *kovetz*, and would read it in his place. Often at a *farbrengen*, the Rebbe would address something a *bochur* had written in that week's *kovetz*.

However, the Rebbe also insisted that the financial side of the publications should not become the responsibility of the *bochurim*. In 5743, the *ho'oros* editorial of a certain yeshiva, wrote to the Rebbe that they are considering stopping the publication due to lack of funds.

The Rebbe encouraged their withdrawal (*Lku" S* vol. 39, page 241):

"It is obvious that the financial burden is not theirs, for the *bochurim's* shoulders should be bearing solely the yoke of learning *Nigleh* and *Chassidus*. They should therefore not take upon themselves any other responsibility which should belong to others, for this will be at the expense of their own duty..."

Often at a farbrengen, the Rebbe would address something a bochur had written in that week's kovetz.

SEVEN

EIDELE EATING

Reb Yossel Segal, Rosh HaKolel of Tzemach Tzedek of *Yerushalayim*, relates:

"When the legendary *mashpia* of the central yeshiva in Kfar Chabad, Reb Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, was *niftar* in 5732, the Rebbe chose Reb Mendel Futerfas to fill his place.

"At first, Reb Mendel would not hear of it. The Rebbe spoke to him at length about the importance of *Tomchei Temimim* and the *ma'alos* of the *bochurim* who studied there. Finally, Reb Mendel agreed to accept the monumental task of guiding the *bochurim*. Thus began a new chapter in the history of *Tomchei Temimim*.

"Reb Mendel told me that he asked the Rebbe what he should teach the *bochurim*.

"The Rebbe answered, 'Talk to the *bochurim* about how they should eat. Teach them that a *tomim* should eat with *eidelkeit*.'"



Reb Mendel Futerfas



Reb Shlomo Zarchi farbrengs in 770

EIGHT TO BE A TOMIM AS REQUIRED

Reb Shlomo Zarchi began serving as a *mashpia* in the *yeshiva* in 770 during the early 5730's. When he was appointed, the Rebbe told him, "*Dain inyan iz az di bochurim zolen zich kochen in chassidus* (your job is to see to it that the *bochurim* be enthusiastic about *chassidus*)".

On another occasion, the Rebbe told him that he should work '*bimesira unesina*' (with total dedication).

Before the Rebbe's 70th birthday, Yud Alef Nissan 5732, there was a tremendous *hisorerus* (renewed enthusiasm) among *Anash*. Many *yungerleit* wrote into the Rebbe that they wish to go on the Rebbe's *shlichus*.

Reb Shlomo also had a great urge to go on the Rebbe's *shlichus*. Before Yud Alef Nissan he wrote to the Rebbe that he wishes to join the army of *shluchim*.

The Rebbe's penned response read, "Do you really think, that ensuring that a *bochur* acts a *tomim* is **not** connected to the *shnas hashivim* (the seventieth year)?"

Reb Shlomo had a great urge to go on the Rebbe's shlichus.

NINE A BOCHUR'S AVODAH

A transcription of the *yechidus* of a *bochur* from 5732 (1972):

"Hashem should help that the next time you come in you should be able to write of the good that you do, and not only the negative. When I hear of a *bochur* in Tomchei Temimim who learns, *davens* and acts appropriately, this gives me *simcha un tanug nafshi upnimi* (personal, inner joy and pleasure).

"The opposite affect is also self-understood. Certainly, at least out of *ahavas Yisroel*, you and your friends at the *yeshiva* will work to this end...

"Regarding your request for a *bracha* for *hiskashrus* --- it is obvious that one cannot *drei zich arum pust*

un past (pass time fooling around) and concurrently be a *mekushar*.

A *bochur* in Tomchei Temimim that doesn't keep the times, learn or *daven* properly – I won't accept bribery from the fact that he learns *Likutei Sichos* periodically and does me a favor by getting involved in *uforatzto* activities...

Hashem should help that you become a true *tomim*, a true *mekushar*, firstly by being *tomim* (wholesome) with Hashem, with *simcha*. And we should be able to say "*Reu gidulim shegidalti*," (look at the 'blossoms' that I have cultivated).

It is obvious that one cannot drei zich arum pust un past (pass time fooling around) and concurrently be a mekushar.

TEN

ONE MAIRIV OF A TOMIM

The Yeshiva Gedolah of Australia was established in 5726 (1966) to serve the graduating class of the local Lubavitch School. For many students this was a great sacrifice, as they had planned to continue on to college, but thanks to the tireless work of younger and elder chassidim, the impossible happened and a *yeshiva* was erected 'down under'.

There was, however, a young man who was steadfast in his plans to pursue his secular education. Still, he first wanted to spend some time in the *yeshiva*, so he approached Reb Chaim Gutnik, asking him if he could spend a short period of time in the *yeshiva* before proceeding to college.

Reb Chaim, unsure of how to respond, consulted the Rebbe in *yechidus*. The Rebbe said, "Yes, take him; he *thinks* it's for a short period..."

The Rebbe clarified his intent. "The main thing is that he should be in *yeshiva*, and see a *dugma chaya* (role model). Even observing one *mairiv* of a *tomim* could have a profound affect..."

"Yes, take him; he thinks it's for a short period..."



Reb Chaim Gutnik speaking at the Yeshiva Gedolah

ELEVEN

MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS

At a group yechidus, the Rebbe expressed his anguish to the bochurim, saying that this mashpia "heard Chassidus from the Rebbe Rashab before you were born!"

In Teves 5717 (1956), a notice on behalf of the *mazkirus* appeared in the press, that the Rebbe had officially removed his name from the 770 *yeshiva*. Since it was understood that this was a result of "*Hatikva*" being sung at the *yeshiva* dinner, some *bochurim* were disrespectful to one of the elder *mashpiim* who was present at the dinner.

Word of the incident reached the Rebbe, and the *bochurim* were expelled from the Rebbe's next *farbrengen*. At a group *yechidus*, the Rebbe expressed his anguish to the *bochurim*, saying that this *mashpia* "heard *Chassidus* from the Rebbe Rashab before you were born!"

Reb Yoel Kahn, who was asked by the *bochurim* to speak on their behalf, defended them, saying that "they want the Rebbe's *yeshiva*." The Rebbe responded, "They want to have a connection with me?! Learn *nigleh*, learn *Chassidus*, and begin toiling in *avodas hatefila*! Don't mix into my politics; politics is *omek hara* (the depth of evil)!"

Reb Yoel Kahn relates:

It was during the first period of the Rebbes *nesius*, when we felt there was a change taking place in the yeshiva at 770. The Rebbe began directing bochurim in yechidus, how to learn and in what areas to invest their time.

To me the Rebbe said: "Although a *bochur* should not be thinking of material goals and aspirations, there comes a time when a *bochur* should ask himself where he wishes to place his emphasis in his learning." The Rebbe then went on to direct me in detail what to learn.

Reb Menachem Meir Blau *a"h* relates:

During one of my yechidus, I asked as follows: "There are those whose interests lie in learning nigleh, and there are others whose dedication is to the study of Chassidus; in what should I invest?"

The Rebbe answered me: "Today there is no such thing; everyone must learn both. The question is only what your foremost focus is. You write that you are turning twenty years old - do you not know yet where your interests lie?!"

We felt there was a change taking place in the yeshiva at 770.



One day, we got together, and wrote to the Rebbe that we are dedicating ourselves entirely to the Rebbes uforatzto call.

As world Torah Jewry pulled itself out of the ashes of the holocaust, they looked worriedly into the future, hoping to build strong enough defenses from the secular influences.

The Rebbe, however, saw things differently. He explained that "We should not be on the defensive, looking to survive; we ought to go on the offensive." With the battle cry of '*uforatzto!*' the Rebbe blazed the way for the teshuva movement.

Reb Moshe Herson, the Rebbe's shliach to New Jersey, related: We were then a small group of bochurim, at the yeshiva in 770. The Rebbe spoke very powerfully, and we were swept up with the Rebbes vision.

One day, we got together, and wrote to the Rebbe that we are dedicating ourselves entirely to the Rebbes *uforatzto* call.

The next day, HaRav Chodakov called each one of us in separately. On his table were piled up the letters the bochurim had sent in. He told us that the Rebbe had directed him to call us in individually, and to personally show us the Rebbes answer.

The Rebbe wrote: "For now, your *inyan* is to have *uforatzto* in your [personal *avoda*] *ruchnius*."

I had a strange feeling that someone was watching me. I looked up, and behold the Rebbe was there, observing me and inspecting my work.

Reb Nachman Sudak A”H related:

To us *bochurim* of the 5710s (1950s), the Rebbe was like a caring father. We would often *fabreng* amongst ourselves at our dormitory on Eastern Parkway, and there were times when the Rebbe, walking on his way home from *yechidus*, would stop outside and listen in. There was a feeling of closeness.

One Thursday night, at 3am, I was sitting in the *zal* of 770, typing the Rebbe’s *sichos* for publication. I was the only one in the *beis hamidrash*, besides for one other *bochur*, who had fallen asleep on a bench with an open *Likutei Diburim*.

I had a strange feeling that someone was watching me. I looked up, and behold the Rebbe was there, observing me and inspecting my work.

The Rebbe didn’t say anything to me. He gently approached the sleeping *bochur*, bent over on his side, and peered into the *Likutei Diburim* to see which *sicha* he was reading. The Rebbe smiled, turned, and left the room.

“Since I’m not satisfied with the morning Chassidus attendance, I hereby announce that in ten days time I will ask for the *hashgacha* list,” the Rebbe said at the Yud-Tes Kislev *farbrengen* of 5712 (1951). “This will be relevant for something,” the Rebbe concluded ambiguously.

Ten days later, on the fifth night of Chanukah, the Rebbe summoned the punctual *bochurim* to his room. At 7:30 pm, forty two *bochurim* appeared. The Rebbe turned to the Mashpia and said, “Some of the assembled should not be here. This is not the time for *chesed* and *rachmonus*...”

The Rebbe moved his hand over his forehead, and began speaking. Following the short *sicha*, the Rebbe opened his desk drawer, and distributed silver dollar coins to the assembled.

The next day, Reb Yisroel Jacobson told the Rebbe that some *bochurim*, who had been particular with time keeping, were at a *chassuna* the previous evening, and were now asking to get their deserved *Chanukah gelt*. The Rebbe asked firmly: Did they get permission to go to the *chassuna*?

When Reb Yisroel interceded that “Had they asked, they certainly would have been allowed,” The Rebbe said, “Permission cannot be given in retrospect.”

“Some of the assembled should not be here. This is not the time for chesed and rachmonus...”



Reb Yisroel Jacobson



Reb Berel Junik behind the Rebbe at a Kabbalos Ponim

SIXTEEN A PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

“I feel a personal responsibility,” the Rebbe once confided to Reb Berl Junik, “to care for the *bochurim* who follow the Torah true way. I spoke to *Harav* Chodakov and to [the *shadchan*] Reb Yitzchok Goldin to care for the *shidduchim* of these *bochurim*.”

Indeed, throughout the *nesius* the Rebbe spent countless hours advising, guiding and encouraging *bochurim* and girls regarding their *shidduchim*.

In the following case, the Rebbe vetoed a proposal for a girl who had not even written directly:

A potential *shidduch* was proposed to her, and she was not sure whether to go ahead with it. Through her

brother she got an explicit answer from the Rebbe: to pursue other ideas.

The surprised girl wrote to the Rebbe that she had received the answer, to which she received the reply, “From your brother’s letter, I understood that you were unsure. If this is not true, then disregard my answer, and do as you feel.”

“However,” the Rebbe continued as a father cares for his child, “one of the reasons I answered in the negative is since it would be advisable for you to pursue a *bochur* who is a greater *lamdan*.”

“One of the reasons I answered in the negative is since it would be advisable for you to pursue a bochur who is a greater lamdan.”

SEVENTEEN**WHERE DO THE BOCHURIM LIVE?**

if someone was to be the only chossid in the world, he would have the responsibility, and therefore the power, to make the entire world a chassidishe place.

“If in a city, or even a country, there is even one single chossid, he has the power to transform the place into a *chassidishe* city or country!” the Rebbe said at a 5714 (1954) *farbrengen*.

“Just like Avrohom Avinu, the only *Yid* then in the world. Indeed, if someone was to be the only chossid in the world, he would have the responsibility, and therefore the power, to make the entire world a *chassidishe* place.”

At the conclusion of the *sicha*, the Rebbe instructed that every guest be called upon separately by name to say *l’chaim*, and they should be introduced as “the leader of this and this city.”

When “the leaders of Montreal” were called upon, the Rebbe remarked that it didn’t include the Montreal *yeshiva bochurim*. “They don’t live in Montreal; they live in Lubavitch!”

(Toras Menachem, Vol. 10, page 127)

EIGHTEEN**THE SEVEN MENORAH BRANCHES**

“This is a call to all the *temimim*,” the Rebbe declared at the Yud-Beis Tammuz *farbrengen* of 5718 (1958). “Everyone should proclaim *uforatzto yomo vokeidmo tzfoino vonegbo!*” The bochurim called out the *possuk* in unison, and the Rebbe sprung out of his seat to the beat of a joyous *niggun*. The *Uforatzto* era had begun.

“*Uforatzto* for a *bochur*” the Rebbe elaborated (Chaf Av 5718), “means to learn without limitations.” Still, three months passed, and no specific directives were given.

During Cheshvan 5719, the Rebbe instructed the *hanhala* of the yeshiva, “Fourteen bochurim should be selected, seven for *nigleh* and seven for *Chassidus*, who will learn diligently, and deliver weekly *pilpulim*. Each set of seven will correspond to the seven menorah branches.”

As an expression for the *nachas* this exceptional group gave him, during the Yud-Tes Kislev *farbrengen* the Rebbe called each one by name, and said with them *lechayim*.

During this period, the Rebbe told a bochur to deliver a *pilpul* one particular week. As if he was the program director, the Rebbe listed out the scheduled speakers from memory, and concluded, “You see, this week we have an empty slot...”



As an expression for the nachas this exceptional group gave him, during the Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen the Rebbe called each one by name, and said with them lechayim.

In the year 5712 (1952) the Rebbe began encouraging older *bochurim* to study practical *halacha*, and get a *semicha* ordination. At the 24 Teves *farbrengen*, the Rebbe explained why:

“In past generations, one would only receive *semicha* if he was very proficient in Torah. However, these days it has become the custom to learn the basics and get *semicha*. This is the approach I want the *bochurim* to take.

“Knowing practical *halacha* is imperative for a *Yid* so he won’t stumble in many areas, for example the intricacies of *Hilchos Shabbos*.

“The paper certificate is not the issue, rather the knowledge. However, technically, in order to know that a *bochur* has done his work, he should get the paper.”

The *rosh yeshiva Harav Piekarsky* was present at the *farbrengen*. The Rebbe turned to him at one point and said, “You will surely pressure the *bochurim* until they get their *semicha*; give it to them in the end, but make sure it doesn’t come easy.”

(*Toras Menachem*, Vol. 4, Page 259)



Harav Piekarsky gives a shiur to the bochurim

Seeing that his learning was suffering as a result, he penned a letter to the Rebbe.

From the very beginning of the *nesius*, the Rebbe included *yeshiva bochurim* in his holy work for *Yiddishkeit*: Wednesday Hour, *mitvzoyim* and *Merkos Shlichus*. However, it was consistently stipulated that these activities shouldn’t be on the account of growth in learning.

There was once a *yeshiva bochur* who met outstanding success in various *mitvzoyim* projects, in which he invested his time. Seeing that his learning was suffering as a result, he penned a letter to the Rebbe with the following question:

“Should I dedicate my time to *hafatza* initiatives, or should I devote myself entirely to *yeshiva* and rise in its levels?”

The Rebbe responded, “In order for you to be successful in *hafatza*, preparation is necessary – Torah knowledge, etc.”

(See the handwritten answer in *Klein-Lazar Teshurah*, Sivan 5766)



"HASHEM SHOULD HELP THAT YOU BECOME A TRUE TOMIM, A TRUE MEKUSHAR, FIRSTLY BY BEING TOMIM WITH HASHEM, WITH SIMCHA. AND WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO SAY "REU GIDULIM SHEGIDALTI."

In accordance with the Rebbe's wishes, every year, thousands of bochurim and *bale-batim* go on *tahalucha*, often walking great distances. The Rebbe sent the foot soldiers on these long Yom Tov walks in order to bring extra *simcha* to *shuls*.

One year, after *Simchas Torah*, a Rabbi of a New York shul was in *yechidus*. He thanked the Rebbe profusely for the liveliness the bochurim had brought to his shul, and added with great admiration that

the bochurim deserve much credit for their *mesiras nefesh* to walk such a great distance!

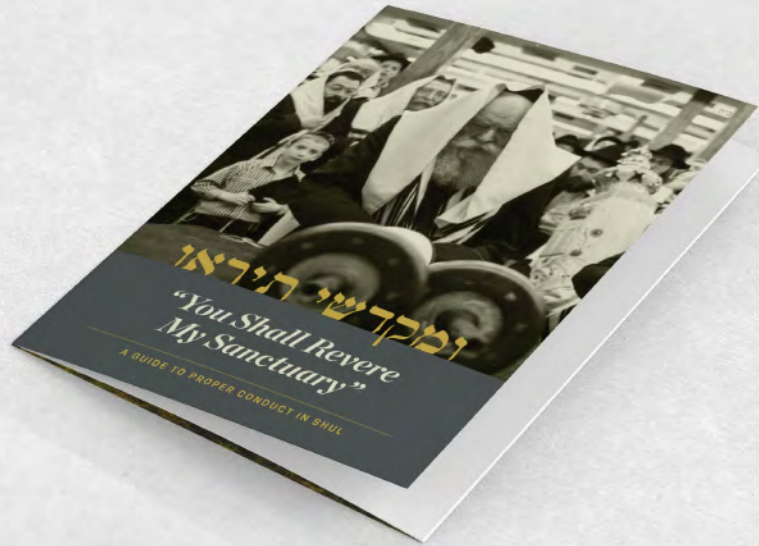
The Rebbe smiled and responded, "The walk is not their *mesiras nefesh*. Their sacrifice is that they know that there is a *farbrengen* here in Seven Seventy, and they forgo this for other *Yidden*."

With that, the Rebbe continued, "And for me too, it is a sacrifice to be separated from these *bochurim* at the *farbrengen*."

The Rebbe continued, "And for me too, it is a sacrifice to be separated from these bochurim at the farbrengen."



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