

לזכות
החייל בצבאות ה'
פינחס זאב וואלף שיחי'
לרגל הולדתו ד' אייר ה'תשפ"א
נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' נחום וזוגתו מרת צבי'
ומשפחתם שיחי'
שפירא

The Thought That Counts

Simchas Torah 5728*

Presented is an original letter penned by the famed Chossid, Reb Yechezkel ("Chatche") Feigin, mazkir of the Friediker Rebbe. Reb Chatche's letters are known for their depth of content and genuine Chassidishe warmth, conveying authentic Chassidishe hanachos of generations past.

In this letter, Reb Chatche writes from Riga, Latvia to his friend Reb Yochanan Gordon and his brother Yosef Yitzchok, who were then living in the United States, about the importance of maintaining a strong connection with the Rebbe and to write to him often.

B"H. 16 Tammuz 5693*. Riga.

To my dear and esteemed friends, Reb Yosef Yitzchok and Reb Yochanan Gordon,
Shalom U'vracha!

Your letter along with the check for \$65 was received, and enclosed are receipts. I am sending the receipts to your brother Rabbi S. since the letter was not sent by you, and I don't know your address. I thought it may have changed because it has been a long time since we received any letters from you.

I actually wanted to bring that very point to your attention. The *temimim* who learned more Chassidus than anyone else should really understand this on their own, and due to *ahavas Yisroel* for all Yidden in general, and more specifically, the brotherly love between *temimim*, we need to teach one another:

While it is true that considering the very stressful financial situation that the Rebbe is going through right now, anyone who can be called a Chossid has a sacred obligation to try and send *ma'amad* [funds for the Rebbe's discretion], nevertheless, one should not hinge how often he writes to the Rebbe based on whether he will send

money or not. Just because one is unable to send money, he should not refrain from writing to the Rebbe.

Especially nowadays, when Hashem has decreed that many members of *anash* are far away from the Rebbe and are unable to travel; the only means of *hiskashus* are through the *maamarim* which are sent out [to the various respective communities], and by the Chassidim writing letters to the Rebbe.

It is extremely important to always be on the Rebbe's mind. True, every member of *anash* is constantly engraved in his mind and he remembers each of them always, nevertheless it is still vital that the Chassidim write to him.

Firstly, every *bracha* or *hashpa'a* from the Rebbe must be first stimulated from below, by writing a letter to the Rebbe. This is how Hashem set up all of *seder hishtalshelus* all the way up to the highest levels. Even Hashem Himself wants us to recite *pesukim* of "*zichronos*;" although there is certainly "no forgetfulness at His holy throne"—it is our duty to "remind" Him of that fact. The same is true of *tzaddikim*, who are likened to their Creator. We are supposed to stimulate their memory of us by reminding them.



The simple explanation is: When writing a letter to the Rebbe, a Chossid awakens his heart with a connection to his Rebbe, making himself into a receptacle worthy of having the Rebbe remember about him.

I recall once in Lubavitch at a farbrengen—I don't remember if it was Simchas Torah or Yud-Tes Kislev—one of the participants was feeling a bit uplifted by the immense joy of the occasion, and he called out [to the Rebbe Rashab]: "רבי האט מיך אין זינען—Rebbe, keep me in mind!" The Rebbe replied: "האט מיך אין הארצין—Keep me in your heart..."

There is also a deeper explanation that is important to know:

About two days before the [Friediker] Rebbe left for his travels, I heard something from him that made a very deep impression on me and I feel compelled to share it with you, my friends. However, bear in mind that the written word will sometimes mask over the true intention of what was actually said, so I ask that you read this with the proper attention so as not to misconstrue the Rebbe's words, *chas v'shalom*.

The Rebbe was talking about a certain individual who had not written in a very long time, and he asked me if I

had received any word from this person recently. The Rebbe added that Chassidim ought to know how distressed I am when I don't receive word from them for a long time.

To better explain this concept, the Rebbe related a story:

Once, the Kremenchuger Rav, Reb Yosef Tumarkin, was sitting in the Tzemach Tzedek's room copying manuscripts of responsa or words of Chassidus. The Tzemach Tzedek had two rooms, and in the room where Reb Yosef was sitting there were piles of *panim*, set in a very specific order, as well as the money sent along with the *panim*, also in a very specific order. The Tzemach Tzedek was davening in the next room, moving about from one room to the other while davening. Suddenly, the Tzemach Tzedek came over to the desk and tapped around at one of the piles, as if looking for something. He picked up one of the *panim* from one pile and moved it to a different pile, and then he took a coin from one of the money piles and put it into a different one.

Reb Yosef watched this whole episode, and after the Tzemach Tzedek left the room, he took a *pan* from one pile and mixed it into another. A short while later, the Tzemach Tzedek came back into the room, came over to the piles and looked for that specific *pan*, and placed it back where it was

before. This occurred several times and the Tzemach Tzedek restored the order of the piles each time. This is exactly how the Rebbe told the story as he heard it from Rashbatz.

Rashbatz told the Rebbe that he had related this story to the Rebbe Maharash, and the Rebbe Maharash explained to him that there is a difference between the *panim* from those whose fates were already sealed in heaven for life, and those who...[were sealed for the opposite] *Rachmana litzlan*. The latter require a full revocation of the decree upon them. Then there are those who have not yet received a final verdict whose fates are still undetermined. There might be differences between one person and another, how long it will take until their fate gets sealed, and so on.

Then the [Friediker] Rebbe explained:

Just like we know from *Chazal* how speaking negatively about another can do them great harm, *chas v'shalom*, similarly, a bad thought can also have an effect; only in a higher realm.

He related the story of how the Baal Shem Tov once covered the eyes of one of his students, and the student saw an individual running after another person with an axe, ready to kill him. These were two *baalei batim* who frequented the Baal Shem Tov's court. The student immediately fainted. When the student awoke, the Baal Shem Tov explained that the murder did not occur in this world. It was only that the person with the axe was having a dispute with his fellow, and in the heat of the moment the thought crossed his mind that "I want to kill that person." So in a higher world, this thought came to be and the attempted

killing actually occurred. This is how effective a Yid's thought can be!

By placing his holy hand over his student's eyes, the Baal Shem Tov was able to show the person how reality works in the higher worlds.

What I gathered from the [Friediker] Rebbe's words was that he is constantly thinking about each of his Chassidim, so when a while passes and he hasn't heard from one of them, it is hard for him to avoid the thought that perhaps something [bad] happened to that individual. This is human nature; when you don't hear from someone for a long time, you start thinking along those lines.

It seems that [the Friediker Rebbe] telling me this story was to teach us how potent a thought can be, and that if [he doesn't hear from someone for a while] the thoughts that the Rebbe thinks about that individual until he can confirm that he's doing well might have... [a negative effect].

I think that if you consider all of the above you will understand how important this is. The [Friediker Rebbe] told me many times and demanded: Why is it that when a person has a *tzara*, they immediately notify the Rebbe, but then when Hashem helps [and the issue is resolved], they don't bother to notify?

It seems that the reason he told me the first story [about the Tzemach Tzedek] is also connected with this issue:

One might think, why is it important to write to the Rebbe? The Rebbe can just ask for Hashem's mercy for that person, no matter the situation! But the truth is that each *pan* is different, and for this the Rebbe needs to know the exact situation of the writer, etc.

There is much more to be said about this subject but I think that you will be able to discern and understand it on your own, as long as you are occupied with learning Chassidus. Obviously, you are not learning as much as you did when you were in Dokshitz; the reality of life has changed since then. You probably spend more time just on traveling than you did on all your work as a *shochet* back in Dokshitz. Nevertheless, I'm certain that you still learn Chassidus with fervor.

Otherwise, there is no real news here. The Rebbe Shlita traveled to Marienbad. Although he himself did not think about it because his situation would never allow it, nevertheless he gave in to the doctors' opinion, and a few members of *anash and temimim* were able to scratch together the funds needed for the trip. We hope that Hashem will send him whatever he needs there. Whatever you sent was forwarded there, including the content of the letter and the transcription. Please don't wait for an answer right now, because there was no real question in the letter. There have not been any letters from the Rebbe yet, and no real news, only that he began receiving treatment. On the day of his *geulah*, Yud-Beis Tammuz, the Rebbe was in Warsaw on his way to Marienbad. May Hashem help that his trip should be fruitful.

Your friend who seeks your best, and blesses you with all good,
Yechezkel F.

Please send special regards to your esteemed uncle, R.S.Z. Alpert, and to your esteemed brother Reb Avraham. ⑦

