

WHAT IS A REBBE

In a letter written several months after the histalkus of the Friediker Rebbe, the Rebbe gives, in short concise words, the ultimate definition of a Rebbe, and explains the importance of connecting with him.

The letter was originally written in lashon hakodesh, and printed as an introduction to a maamer of the Friediker Rebbe. It is noteworthy to mention that the letter was dated Gimmel Tammuz 5710, which hints at a resounding pertinence for the times we live in. It is well worth reading and rereading it, memorizing and internalizing its contents.

Gimmel Tammuz, 5710:

Many seek and propose to explain the qualities and greatness of Chabad Rebbes in general, and, in particular, the Rebbe of our generation, my father-in-law, *hareini kaporas mishkavo*, in various areas: as a man of self-sacrifice, Torah genius, lofty character, tzaddik, possesses ruach hakodesh, miracle-worker, etc., etc.

These qualities are further magnified when defined by Chassidus, which explains true self-sacrifice, true Torah genius, and so on.

And yet the main point [of defining a Rebbe] is lacking. In addition to being of an essential nature, it is particularly relevant, especially to us, his chassidim and followers, namely: that he is the Nossi, and the Nossi of Chabad.

A Nossi, broadly defined, is a “head of the multitudes of Israel.” He is the “head” and “mind” compared to them. Their source of life and vitality is derived from him. Through their attachment to him, they are bound and united with their source on high.

There are several types of Nesi'im: those whose influence was “internal” and personal, and those whose affect was of a more “superficial” nature. This is further divisible into the particulars of whether they imparted the teaching of the “revealed” part of

Torah, its mystical secrets, or both; whether they offered guidance in the service of G-d and the ways of Chassidism; whether they drew down material provision; and so on.

There are also Nesi'im who were channels in several of these areas, or even in all of them.

Such was the nature of the leadership of the Nesi'im of Chabad, beginning with the Alter Rebbe, leading up to and including my father-in-law, who embraced all these categories and areas: they nurtured their chassidim both “internally” and “superficially”; in Torah, divine service and good deeds; in spirit and in body. Thus, their bond with those connected with them was in all 613 limbs and organs of their souls and bodies.

Each and every one of us must know – that is, think deeply and implant the awareness in his mind – that the Rebbe is our Nossi and head: that he is the source and channel for all our material and spiritual needs. It is through our bond with him (and he has already instructed us in his letters how and by what means this is achieved) that we are bound and united with our source, and the source of our source, up to our ultimate source on high... ■

1. Kuntres Yud Beis – Yud Gimmel Tammuz 5710. See also Igros Kodesh vol. 3 letter 635.