

DEALING WITH LONELINESS PART II

In this year's Av edition of "A Chassidisher Derher" we presented a series of letters from the Rebbe discussing the importance of having a good "sevivah" and friends, and different ways to combat feelings of loneliness. We are pleased to present a second installment of letters by the Rebbe on this subject.

ACQUIRE A FRIEND

In response to your letter in which you write that you are presently learning in seminary but have not yet managed to become friends with the other students, as a result of which you feel alone and are not in the best of spirits etc.

In general, you should discuss with your teachers which of your fellow students do they think would be the wisest for you to befriend, and subsequently you should work on those ideas.

Regarding the feelings of loneliness and abandonment: you should reflect on the fact that no-one is perfect and complete, including yourself. Thus, you need not demand that your friends be perfect in every way, either.

Additionally, *Chazal* affirm to us that “Jewish women are beautiful”, and every one of them is considered a daughter of Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel and Leah; certainly, each of your classmates possess many qualities that you will come to recognize over the course of time, and your own virtues will increase through your friendships with them.

The more you will clarify the above mentioned point to yourself, the easier it will become for you to make new friends instead of being alone, as the Torah already tells us to “acquire a friend for yourself”.¹

JOIN CHASSIDISHE FARBRENGENS

Based on the *maamar Chazal* in connection with the pasuk of “hein keil kabir lo yimas” [Lit. “Behold Hashem is great and will not despise”, and is understood to mean that Hashem will not despise those who are great in number, i.e. a minyan], it’s surprising that you rely on your own strength and don’t take part in chassidishe farbrengens. The Mittlerer Rebbe said that even when confiding in just one friend, there are two *nefesh haelokiyos* against one *nefesh habehamis*; how much more is this true with a chassidishe farbrengen where the *Shechinah* rests, as by any gathering of ten Jews. If one is alone, and has no one who loves them deeply and is willing to rebuke them [when appropriate], but rather, the only support one gets is a friendly pat on the back and heaps of praise and idolization as is customary in this country -- then the consequences of such conduct are self evident.

May Hashem give you the merit to experience an immediate

increase in your study of Chassidus, enabling you to advance from strength to strength, as is the wish of the Rebbeim from anyone who merited to be in their daled amos.

With blessings.²

ONE IS MANY

Attached is the *kuntres* for this upcoming Pesach, and surely you’ll share it with the community, as well as the individual. My intent with “the individual” isn’t only to share it with yourself, as that is self-evident; but also for your fellow “individual,” since all our Rebbeim, and our own Rebbe, my father-in-law *ha”kam*, have taught us that one must toil with all of his strength and determination for the physical or spiritual benefit of even a single other person.

This instruction is quite logical, since who can know which individual will be the right one, or if all the others are as good as him.

Aside for the fact that every Jew is an entire world unto himself, it is written in the sicha printed in the *kuntres* (as quoted in the introduction) that “every individual is [considered like] an entire community, for he has the power to make a community and enliven a community.”

In other words, although amongst those whom you have an influence on, there might be an individual who is a “loner,” someone who stays to himself; that is only his nature before he worked on himself. Who knows how his situation might change in the near or more distant future, especially in light of the Yerushalmi which states that a resolution of Torah actually changes nature.

If you will be able to influence this individual, this loner, to move to “Rebbi’s area” [meaning: he will be a follower of the Rebbe], then the halacha will have to follow Rebbi’s [meaning the Rebbe’s] opinion, and this person will influence and enliven his entire environment; and the effort that you’ll have invested in him will bring positive results until the end of all time, [literally the end of the world, “olam”], which also means until it will bring the end of “he’elem”, Hashem’s concealment.³

THE FACTS REMAIN

... Regarding that which you wrote about feeling lonely, it is quite astonishing for me to hear that. Surely you have heard the

saying of my father-in-law, the [Friediker] Rebbe and leader of the Jewish people, “Chassidus has accomplished that we are not lonesome”. If this is true of the connection between a Rebbe and chasid (as explained over there at length), certainly it is true when discussing the relationship between two individuals in the same environment, and certainly it is also true concerning the connection of the Jewish people to Hashem.

This can be understood quite well according to the concept of *hashgacha pratit*, namely, that Hashem oversees each and every detail of life in all of its aspects; and Hashem’s supervision is synonymous with His blessing, considering that they are both rooted in Hashem’s perfect unity.

From the above it is understood in the practical sense, as well as in regards to your feelings and approach to life, that each and every person exists in a world (a highly diverse world, filled with different creatures from all four planes) that is influenced by Hashem and they affect Him (although obviously the respective influences are not at all similar); this being the case, they are created for and are filled with a purpose (at the very least potentially), and it is only dependant on them to bring this potential into fruition. This is a general approach by every Jew, whose function is to be Hashem’s “partner” in creation with respect to the aforementioned.

However, in your case the astonishment is many times greater, considering that divine providence has given you the merit to be involved in the field of educating Hashem’s children, Jewish children. Any influence or effect you have on them creates an everlasting spiritual, holy, good and beneficial “closeness” between you, one that is also helpful in this world.

Physical space has no bearing on this, nor is it able to be divided (which is why it is everlasting). In other words, when you sit in your room and you feel alone, and at the very same time, one of your students is reviewing a *shiur* that you gave or is making a *brocha* to Hashem as you taught her etc., this action increases “life” and “light” in the connection between you, to the degree that your *nefesh haelokis* surely feels it, since it is from your very essence, of which the real essence and innermost part of a person is their *nefesh haelokis*, which in reality also enlivens the animal soul.

I know that this is not always felt by all, since we are dealing with something that is invisible and intangible. This does not,

however, detract from the fact that the *nefesh haelokis* is able to affect one’s mind and even one’s *nefesh habehamis* in the above mentioned way through just a short contemplation. However, since a person is constantly in a state of flux, there are times when a special motivation is necessary. When one enters such a state [of feelings of loneliness etc.], the best advice would be to meet one of your students or at least to talk with someone about the students, classes etc; talking about something increases in the attention devoted to it and brings out the subject on a greater level.⁴

CHASSIDISHE NACHAS

This was written to a mother whose son apparently strayed off the proper path

In answer to your letter from Tuesday in which you write about your son, *shlit”a*:

...With respect to his daily schedule, you should try as hard as possible to arrange that he should learn *limudei kodesh* with a *chavrusa*. This is both to ensure that the study continues longer and isn’t as hard on him, and so that he shouldn’t be alone. In general, you should try to find him work amongst the most *frum* youth, either through arranging *mesibos shabbos* or through arranging a class of those younger than him to learn *limudei kodesh* with them, interspersed with stories of *yiras shamayim* and the like, which will encourage him to be a proper example, as well as decreasing in his solitary times. Surely it shouldn’t be too difficult to find such children, and it could even be from the students of a school who are free from after midday.

With a bracha for *chassidische nachas* from your son and for good tidings in all the above.⁵ **D**

1. Igros Kodesh vol. 18 p. 323

2. Ibid. vol. 10 p. 411

3. Ibid. vol. 3 p. 267

4. Ibid. vol. 23 p. 359

5. Ibid. vol. 12 p. 335