



Limud HaChassidus

As chassidim, the mainstay of our lives is the constant study of Chassidus. Throughout the generations our Rabbeim continuously urged their chassidim of the importance of illuminating their everyday lives with the holy *divrei elokim chayim* of Chassidus.

Many are the reasons that make this daily study so vital. In the following essay we will not necessarily provide an all-encompassing overview on this subject, rather we will offer a selection of *divrei his'oirus* from our Rabbeim, encouraging us to learn more Chassidus and apply its words to our lives.

We hope that this will spark more interest in the subject, and that our readers will be inspired to further explore it; and more importantly: to actually increase in the study of Chassidus.

As the Rebbe instructs us in one of the first entries to *Hayom Yom*:
חסידים דארפען לערנען חסידות: סתם חסידים - יום שני,
יום חמישי ויום השבת, תמימים - שעה אחת בכל יום.

A Great Mitzvah

The positive effect that learning Chassidus has on the student is quite evident and needs no elaboration. One's perception of the world changes, his Torah and mitzvos are illuminated, and a fervor in all matters of Yiddishkeit is kindled.

We must not forget, however, that equally important is the actual study itself. Delving into the levels of *seder hishtalshelus* and occupying one's mind with the wisdom of Hashem is a very important mitzvah. As the Alter Rebbe writes in *Tanya-Kuntres Acharon*²:

אלא שידיעת המציאות מהשתלשלות היא ג' כ מצוה
רמה ונשאה ואדרבה עולה על כולנה כמ"ש וידעת היום כו'
דע את אלקי אביך כו' ומביאה ללב שלם כו' שהוא העיקר...

...The knowledge of the existence of the *Hishtalshelus* is also a lofty and exalted mitzvah. Indeed, it outweighs them all [all of the other mitzvos] as the *possuk* says "Know this day [... that Hashem is G-d]," and "Know the G-d of your father..." [In other words, learning and knowing about Hashem Himself is a very

important mitzvah.] Moreover, this leads to [serving Hashem with] a “whole heart.” And this is the essential thing: [the wholehearted awe of Hashem is the ultimate purpose of all the mitzvos].

This line of Tanya serves as the basis for many explanations in Chassidus on the importance of studying *seder hishtalshelus*.³

Chassidim: With what?

The following are excerpts of a letter from the Rebbe Rashab, reprimanding chassidim for their failure to institute shiurim in Chassidus, and why it is such a vital part of our lives as chassidim.

The letter was published in the HaTomim periodical,⁴ and then again as an appendix to Kuntres Eitz HaChayim. In his introduction to Kuntres Eitz HaChayim, the Rebbe explains that this letter was included, because “judging from its content, it serves as a sort of ‘final word’ and summary of the Kuntres Eitz HaChayim, and in a certain aspect, it is a continuation...”

It seems that this letter was sent to each and every *anash* community, to strengthen the study of Chassidus everywhere:

I have already explained in Kuntres Eitz HaChayim how important it is to study *pnimius haTorah*; one does not fulfill his obligation to Hashem by studying only the revealed part of the Torah...

...Now, already many years ago, the Mittlerer Rebbe protested the insufficient study of Chassidus. What, then, can we say nowadays, when this study is almost non-existent? Only one person in each city is aroused to study Chassidus once in a while, on Shabbos morning before davening. Even then, he sits alone without a partner, and learns only in a superficial manner as if he was skimming through the *parsha*...

...Woe upon the eyes who see such destitution! We are the ones to whom Hashem, in His undeserving kindness, gave the hidden treasure (חמדה גנוזה, חמדה יקרה), the Torah of the Baal Shem Tov...

...We must realize this: we, who merited being the talmidim of our holy Rabbeim, are obligated to learn the holy Torah they taught. Just as there is an obligation for every Jew to study Torah, we also carry the obligation to study

Chassidus. Without the study of Chassidus, with what are we chassidim? And with what are we connected to *rabboseinu nesi'einu*?

How dare we not accept the good that Hashem has given us? He implanted the innermost light of His holy in our midst, through his holy and faithful servants [our Rabbeim]. What will we answer on that day [of judgement]?!⁵

LESS WORRY

You must have a set time to study Chassidus every day. It may be for only half an hour or forty minutes; but it must be done every day.

Yechidus with a bochur, 28 Adar-Sheini, 5727

There are times when a businessman cannot sleep at night; he should learn Chassidus then. Nothing productive will anyway come of all his worrying...

Yechidus with one of anash, 21 Adar Sheini, 5727

TESHUVAH TATA'A

Thursday, 22 Cheshvan, 5711

Tonight at 12:30 am, the Rebbe left his room and entered the *zal*. When he saw two bochurim, Nosson Gurary and Elye Gross, learning a maamor, he turned to Rabbi Kazarnovsky and said: “If you want to see what *teshuvah tata'a* is, look at these bochurim learning Chassidus.”

The Rebbe explained that he was recently asked by Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner (rosh yeshiva of Chaim Berlin) why Chabad Chassidim don't perform *tikkun chatzos*. The Rebbe answered that the Alter Rebbe says in Tanya that *tikkun chatzos* is not for everyone. When Rabbi Hutner asked, “How then do you reach *teshuvah tata'a* without performing *tikkun chatzos*?” the Rebbe explained: “By learning Chassidus after *chatzos*.”

Yemei Bereishis p. 293

Personal Obligation

In his early years in the United States, the Rebbe, as chairman of Kehos, published two unique *kuntreisim* on the study of Chassidus; *Kuntres Toras HaChassidus* and *Kuntres Limud HaChassidus*. Both are based on letters written by the Frierdiker Rebbe, responding to inquiries he received on this subject.⁶

The Frierdiker Rebbe begins the letter in *Kuntres Limud HaChassidus* with addressing a question posed by an individual who heard someone

chazzer a maamar. “The *choizer* certainly erred [in his understanding of the text],” the questioner concludes. “Why speak of these deep and lofty subjects in public? It is impossible for the created being to fully comprehend these things...”

In answer, the Frierdiker Rebbe explains why the *choizer* indeed knew what he was saying, and how these subjects are clearly elucidated in Chassidus in a manner that one can understand them. He also speaks of the importance of learning Chassidus for all, and the positive effect it has proven to have.

The mitzvah of “*Anochi*” [knowing and understanding Hashem] was given to every Jew equally. Every Jew is obligated to perform this *mitzvas aseh*, each according to his intellectual abilities. Hence, one who can fulfill this duty but fails to do so, violates a *mitzvas aseh*. One whose mind is incapable of understanding may fulfill his obligation of believing [in Hashem] through accepting tradition. But one with a strong and healthy intellect cannot discharge his obligation through passively accepting traditional belief. This is not a mitzvah for which one can rely on others. It is a personal obligation (חובת גברא)...

...With Hashem’s kindness, tens of thousands of Yidden were affected by *toras haChassidus* in every generation. Their souls and the souls of their families were given new life, standing in the rays of Chassidus’ light...

...Now then, one cannot be absolved even from the study of Kabbala, by claiming that “we have no business with the hidden (אין לנו עסק) (בנסתרות),” for how can one argue against studying any part of Torah? Regarding Chassidus, this argument is especially irrelevant and makes no sense. Chassidus reveals itself as an orderly and definitive discipline bringing essential benefits in fulfillment of mitzvos—both practical mitzvos and mitzvos on the heart—enlightening man in his understanding of *achdus Hashem*, and placing him on the true path in all his affairs.⁷

The Frierdiker Rebbe concludes how important the study of Chassidus is, especially in the later generations:

...Perhaps at one time, tens of years ago, it was possible to be a *yarei shamayim* without the knowledge or study of Chassidus. In our time however, when an alien wind blows

through all the streets... learning Chassidus is an absolute must, teaching the path of life.

One who fears the word of Hashem and who desires good life with G-dly delight—now and in the hereafter—must set aside specific times for studying Chassidus. The learning must be in order to observe; affecting one’s *avoda* and everyday conduct. You can also fulfill the mitzvah of *ahavas Yisroel*: arouse your friends and acquaintances to study Chassidus as well. From time to time gather together and *farbreng* with love, strengthening the *darkei haChassidus*.

With this you will see the טוב כי טוב, and be blessed with all that is good.⁸

IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT

It is surprising that you don’t also count a study session in Tanya amongst your daily *shiurim* with the congregation. At least on Monday, Thursday, and Shabbos—as Chazal say, one cannot go three days without Torah; *pnimius haTorah*.

Igros Kodesh vol. 9 p. 280

Call of the Hour

From the beginning of his *nesius*, the Rebbe incessantly encouraged the study of Chassidus, initiating new *shiurim* in every place possible. In fact, even before the Rebbe officially accepted the *nesius*, in honor of Yud-Tes Kislev 5711, he sent out a letter addressed to chassidishe Rebbes all over, requesting that they utilize this auspicious day to strengthen the study of Chassidus.⁹

Almost every time the Rebbe was visited by rabbonim or Rebbes from all circles, the Rebbe spoke passionately of the need to study Chassidus and institute regular *shiurei Chassidus* in their communities.¹⁰

The following are powerful words the Rebbe said in this regard at the Simchas Beis Hashoeiva farbrengen, 5714. From the early 5700s, the Rebbe’s Simchas Beis Hashoeiva farbrengens were officially geared towards *talmidei hayeshivos* and was advertised in the newspapers as such. Many *talmidim* from other yeshivos would join this farbrengen, and it seems that the Rebbe intended especially for them to hear this message:



The Gemara says: איתתא בהדי שותא פילכא. Which means: since the primary occupation of women (in those days) is weaving, therefore no matter where she is or what she does, her conversation will always end up being about weaving.

Now, I imagine that people suspect me that while I talk more and more, I will have to seize at least a few minutes before ending and talk about learning Chassidus. So instead of having everyone suspect me (despite the prohibition

of being חושד your fellow Jew), and keeping the matter quiet, let me spell this out clearly:

הערט זיך איין אידן; מ'דארף לערנען חסידות!

Firstly, because Chassidus is a part of Torah, and the Alter Rebbe rules in Hilchos Talmud Torah that every Jew must learn *every area* in Torah (at least once) over the course of his life... It is therefore the obligation of every Jew, and the *zechus* of every Jew, to learn Chassidus each and every day.

Certainly, once you start learning Chassidus, you will eventually develop a *geshmak* in it as well. One should daven to Hashem that the *geshmak* come sooner, so that instead of fighting with the *yetzer hora* to learn, he will actually help you with the learning, because he also feels the *geshmak* in it...

...One must also increase in Chassidus in a manner of לאפשא לה. Even if you think that by learning Chassidus yesterday, this morning, or earlier this evening, you have fulfilled your duties—this is absolutely untrue! One must continuously increase in the study of Chassidus...¹¹ **T**

FURTHER READING:

See lengthy explanation why studying Chassidus is a must specifically in our times: *Yechidus* printed in *Toras Menachem* vol. 30 p. 331.

Why Torah and mitzvos without

Chassidus is incomplete: *Sichas Chof Kislev*, 5717-Toras Menachem vol. 17 p. 278.

Why specifically Chassidus Chabad: *Letters from the Rebbe* printed in *Derher Magazine* - Teves-5775 p. 35

1. 21 Kislev
2. ד"ה להבין מ"ש בפע"ח (קנו, ב)
3. See: *Likutei Torah Vayikra* 5c; *Sefer Hamaamorim* ב"תער"ב 5741; *Maamor V'chol Bonayich* 5741; *Maamor Va'yaancha Va'yarivecha* 5723; et. al.
4. Vol. 3 [p. 290]
5. *Igros Kodesh Admur HaRaSHaB* vol. 2 p. 713
6. Both *kuntreisim* are available in English in the book "On the study of Chassidus" by Kehos.
7. *Kuntres Limud HaChassidus* ch. 10
8. *Ibid.* ch. 22
9. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 4 p. 66
10. See for example, *yechidus* with the Belzer Rebbe, 4 Adar-Sheini 5741; *Sichos Kodesh* 5741 vol. 2 p. 803
11. *Toras Menachem* vol. 10 p. 79