



ציוור פני הרב

“When the image of one’s Rebbe, nesi doreinu, stands before him—all the challenges preventing him from fulfilling his Rebbe’s shlichus happily, or from fulfilling the shlichus at all, are completely annulled.

“Those who saw the Rebbe can certainly envision his face... Even those who were not zoche to see him can envision his face by looking at his picture...”¹

In honor of Yud Shevat, marking the Rebbe’s *hascholas hanesius* and a day that we recommit our *hiskashrus* with the Rebbe,² we present this collection of *divrei his’oirerus* on the importance of envisioning the Rebbe’s holy face and the positive effect it has on a Chossid; especially in times as ours.

As Chassidus teaches, based on Tanya *perek beis*, the connection one has with the Rebbe is much deeper than that of an ordinary *talmid* with his teacher. The Rebbe is the ראש אלפי ישראל—the head of the *klal Yisroel*. The Rebbe is the *neshama klolis*, the *yechida* of the Yidden in his generation.

From this we understand how important the Rebbe’s image is to a Chossid. Rabbeinu HaKadosh said that the reason he was better versed in his studies than his peers is due to the fact that while learning from Reb Meir, he saw his back. “And if I would have seen him from the front, I would be even sharper,” he concluded, quoting the *possuk*, “והיו עיניך רואות את מוריך”—And your eyes shall see your teacher.”³

If seeing the face of one’s Rebbe has such a profound effect on the student with regards to learning, all the more so seeing the face of the Rebbe has a positive effect on the *neshama*.

The earliest source in Torah for this concept can be traced back to Yosef HaTzaddik. Rashi on the *possuk* says (based on the Gemara in Sota) that

when Yosef was faced with a challenge enticing him to commit an *aveira*, his father's image appeared to him (דמוות דיוקנו של אביו נראתה לו), giving him the necessary courage to withstand the temptation.⁴

At Challenging Times

The Frierdiker Rebbe often spoke to the Chassidim about the importance of envisioning the holy face of his father, the Rebbe Rashab, especially during the first year following his *histalkus*.

On one such occasion he warned the Chassidim not to do so on a regular basis but to reserve this practice for special times. "When one is in distress; either materially or spiritually..."⁵

Reb Zalman Duchman records in his *sefer*, *L'Sheima Oizen*, how the Frierdiker Rebbe once instructed Chassidim that when something [undesirable] happens, they should envision his father's face. The Frierdiker Rebbe then added: "One who never had a chance to see him [the Rebbe Rashab] could envision my face; for I have a similar bearing."⁶

The Gesture of a Tzaddik

The positive effect of seeing a tzaddik is recorded by the Rebbe in Hayom Yom 14 Teves:

The Shpuler Zeide was a man of intense fervor, far more than any of his colleagues—the Maggid's other talmidim. When he visited the Alter Rebbe in Liadi in 5569 or 5570 he related that when he was a child of three he saw the Baal Shem Tov. "He placed his holy hand on my heart and ever since I have felt warm."

A gesture of a tzaddik, certainly seeing him and hearing his voice, must make an impression never to be forgotten.

This *vort* appears in a letter by the Frierdiker Rebbe from the year 5685, where he calls on the recipient to contemplate on the time he was in Lubavitch as a youngster: "True, you are from the younger *talmidim*, but your eyes have seen the crystal-clear shining light [of the Rebbe Rashab] and the holy words of his voice... This has the capacity of inspiring, awakening, and illuminating..."⁷

In our time, the Rebbe spoke time and again of the profound impact that the image of the Rebbe has on a Chossid.

On a number of occasions, the Rebbe related a story of a Chossid of the Rebbe Maharash in this



regard, and almost every time he spoke, the Rebbe's voice choked up with tears:

When the Frierdiker Rebbe visited Eretz Yisrael in 5689, he received a Chossid for *yechidus*, who, upon entering the Frierdiker Rebbe's room, immediately fainted. When he regained consciousness he was asked, "Why did you faint?" He explained: He had been by the Frierdiker Rebbe's grandfather, the Rebbe Maharash. Walking into the Frierdiker Rebbe's chamber, he was struck by the similarity that his face bore to that of his grandfather. Although this took place decades after the Rebbe Maharash's *histalkus*, the impact of seeing his Rebbe's face again struck him so deeply that he fell into a faint!

TEKIAS SHOFAR

On the two days of Rosh Hashanah, before *tekias*, you should envision my face before you, as well as the face of my teacher whom you merited seeing...

(Letter from the Baal Shem Tov to the Mezritcher Maagid; Hatomim vol. 2)

The Way Out

The Rebbe once quoted the Frierdiker Rebbe's *reshimas hamaasar*—the diary he wrote while in prison—and drew a powerful lesson on how important it is to envision the Rebbe's face:

The Frieddiker Rebbe describes the thoughts racing through his mind, and how as he thought of his family, he began feeling down. But then suddenly he stopped himself. “I am not allowed to think such thoughts that make me feel dejected...” he told himself. At that moment, the Frieddiker Rebbe brought to mind the image of his father—ציור פני קדש—הקדשים, and thought of his father; his holy father - אבא, אבא קדישא.

When relating this story, the Rebbe concluded with a practical lesson:

The Frieddiker Rebbe is teaching us that when one feels himself ‘imprisoned’ and dejected, the way out of this predicament is by connecting with the Rebbe through envisioning his holy face.

“From time to time, each person must envision the Rebbe’s holy face and remind himself of the words he heard from the Rebbe. Those who did not see the Rebbe can envision his face by gazing at his picture and learning his Torah. We all must know that we have an אבא קדישא—a holy father, and we therefore have no need to worry!”⁸

Growth is Now

In 5727 the Rebbe sent a group of *bochurim* on a two year shlichus to Melbourne, Australia. One can only imagine how hard it was for these *bochurim* to be physically so distant from the Rebbe through such a long period of time.

On Shabbos parshas Tetzaveh the Rebbe addressed this issue, explaining to the shluchim that by learning

the Rebbe’s Torah and envisioning his holy face, the physical barrier is of no significance.

The Rebbe related a story of the Mittlerer Rebbe: When he sent Chassidim to establish a settlement in Eretz Yisrael, he promised to send them writings of Chassidus so that they would remain connected.

And although this may seem insignificant, as in the meantime, they are missing out on the great advantages of actually seeing the Rebbe. So how could reading the Chassidus sent by the Rebbe substitute for that?

The Rebbe explained that through remembering and picturing the time that one saw his Rebbe, the desired effect will materialize. This can be compared to the “*sefichim*,” plants that grow from a sowing that happened much before the time of the growth. Similarly, the Chossid can have all the advantages of seeing his Rebbe by remembering and envisioning the time when he actually saw the Rebbe.

LEARN WITH THE REBBE

Learning this letter from the Rebbe (or any other letter) needs to be done in a manner just as if the Rebbe is standing before him—בעל השמועה עומד לנגדו. When one learns a *maamar*, a *sicha*, a *reshima*, or a letter from the Rebbe, he should contemplate upon and remember the Rebbe’s face. Those who did not see the Rebbe should do so by looking at his picture.

(*Sichas Shavuos* 5710)

The Rebbe is Looking at You

In response to many of the people who turned to him with challenges, both physical as well as challenges in *avodas Hashem*, the Rebbe proposed that by gazing at the [Frieddiker] Rebbe’s picture, the challenges would be less trying.

Many times, *bochurim* complained to the Rebbe in *yechidus* that going out in the street and encountering the tests of *olam hazeh* would bring about *machshavos zaros*. The Rebbe told them to always carry along a picture of the Rebbe with them as a means to ease the struggle.

In one *yechidus* the Rebbe also explained: “Carry a picture of the Rebbe and when these thoughts haunt you, you should look at the picture and remember that he is looking at you...”⁹



JEW/THE LIVING ARCHIVE ID: 108322.4 SHEVAT, 5733



TV CREW CAPTURE THE REBBE'S FARBRENGEN.

When a *bochur* asked the Rebbe how to stop himself from getting carried away in delight while eating, the Rebbe said, “During the meal, keep a picture of the [Frierdiker] Rebbe in front of you.”¹⁰

When hearing of someone who had trouble sleeping at night, the Rebbe advised: “Check the mezuzos in your home. Before you go to sleep, read at least a few lines from the [Frierdiker] Rebbe’s *sichos*, and envision, to the best of your memory, his holy face. With Hashem’s help you will notify me that your sleep has improved...”¹¹

But perhaps the most powerful words on this subject are in the Rebbe’s response to a woman who wrote about the challenges she faces, and how they make her lose her determination and ambition:

“תסתכל בתמונתו של כ”ק מו”ח אדמו”ר בעת שמרגישה חלישות רצונה הטוב ותזכור אשר גם הוא בהיותו רועה אמיתי של ישראל, מסתכל בה בשעה זו. ויועיל להנ”ל.”

“Look at the photograph of the Rebbe when you feel that your positive willpower is weakening, and remember that the Rebbe too, as a true shepherd [leader] of *b’nei Yisrael*, is looking at you at the same time, and this will help you with the above mentioned [challenges].”

“Lebedike Pictures”

From all of the above we discern how important it is for us as Chassidim, especially in times like ours—when we don’t see the Rebbe in the physical sense—to envision and picture the Rebbe’s holy face. Both

by thinking about the Rebbe in our minds, as well as looking at his picture.

In our time especially, technology gives us the ability to see the Rebbe not only by way of photograph, but also with video. The hundreds of hours of videotape of the Rebbe allow us to relive the moments with the Rebbe exactly in the manner they occurred, and to learn Torah from the Rebbe himself by watching the hours upon hours of recorded *farbrengens* with the Rebbe.

Perhaps it was our situation that the Rebbe was referring to when he spoke of the “*lebedike pictures*” at a children’s rally in 5751.

The rally of 13 Menachem-Av 5751 took place shortly after the fall of Communism in Russia. Speaking to the children from the local day-camps, the Rebbe said that they should serve as a living example for other children who unfortunately never had a chance to learn about Yiddishkeit, by excitedly reciting the *pesukim*, and then showing the pictures of this rally to the children in faraway places. “Real, live pictures,” the Rebbe said.

Later, while leaving the shul, the Rebbe met a member of *anash* who was leaving on a trip for Russia and asked for the Rebbe’s *brocha*. The Rebbe instructed him to take along with him a video of today’s rally and show it to the people there!¹²

Today as well, we may seem far away from the Rebbe in a physical sense and far from *beis chayeinu*—the source of our life as Chassidim.

But the Rebbe is essentially giving us practical advice: use the pictures and videos—the *lebedike pictures*—to enliven even those who are physically distant, until we will be able to see the Rebbe again. May it be *bekarov mammash!* **🕒**

1. Sichas Shabbos parshas Re'eh, 5746
2. Igros Kodesh vol. 3 p. 255
3. Eiruvim 13b
4. Bereishis 39:11. See the Rebbe’s letter, Igros Kodesh vol. 3 p. 81
5. Sefer Hasichos 5682 p. 30
6. P. 145
7. Igros Kodesh RaYYaTZ vol. 1 p. 447
8. Toras Menachem vol. 1 p. 67
9. Teshura Slonim-Stein 5768
10. Dem Rebbe’s Kinder p. 372
11. Igros Kodesh vol. 4 p. 206
12. Hisvaaduyos 5751 vol. 4 p. 108, 114