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PRACTICAL HORA'OS

A CLOSER
LOOK AT
SOME OF
THE REBBE'S
HORA'OS

STUDYING NIGLEH ON SHABBOS

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When it comes to structuring the learning schedule of a *tomim*, the Rebbe Rashab writes in *Kuntres Eitz Hachaim*¹ that two-thirds of each weekday should be dedicated to *nigleh*—the revealed parts of Torah, including *gemara* and *halacha*; while one-third should be dedicated to the study of *Chassidus*. Shabbos, however, should be completely dedicated to Chassidus. In a *sicha* on Rosh Chodesh Kislev, 5713, the Rebbe explained the rationale.

“During the weekdays, the spiritual illumination comes through the [lower] worlds of *Asiya* and *Yetzira*—where evil can exist—and this must be purified through the study of *nigleh*, where the focus of study is on purifying worldly matters.

Shabbos, on the other hand, receives its spiritual light emanating from the world of *Beriah*, and so the study that takes place is *pnimiyus haTorah*—the Tree of Life—loftier than involvement with the world.²

Nigleh, the Rebbe says, plays a crucial role in purifying the world. But on Shabbos, the world is so pure that *nigleh* is not necessary, and the focus should be on Chassidus.

SHOULD NIGLEH BE STUDIED ON SHABBOS?

Two months later, the Rebbe again addressed the topic of what to study on Shabbos, bringing up the question of whether we should refrain from studying *nigleh*.

“Regarding what was mentioned previously that Shabbos is the time to study *pnimiyus haTorah*, it is possible that “*shpitz-Chabad-nikes*”³ will come along and explain these words to mean that on Shabbos it is not necessary, or even “forbidden” to study *nigleh*.

Therefore, it must be made clear that it is not so. As explicitly stated in *Kuntres Eitz Chaim*, on Shabbos we should study two-thirds *nistar* [the hidden parts of Torah, including Chassidus] and one-third *nigleh*.

My father-in-law, the [Frieddiker] Rebbe, related what the Rebbe Rashab did—and this tells us that that is what [the Frieddiker Rebbe] himself did, as he rarely spoke about himself, and when he wished to speak about himself, he would relate it about his father—that on Shabbos, and even on Yom Kippur, he would study his daily *shiurim*, including the *shiurim* in *nigleh*.

Hence, even on Yom Kippur, “*Shabbas Shabboson*,” *nigleh* was studied. It is therefore certain, that on Shabbos we must learn *nigleh*, and proof can be brought from the fact that we recite *Eizehu Mekoman*⁴ on Shabbos as well.⁵

The Rebbe later clarified that when he had said that learning on Shabbos should be two-thirds Chassidus and one-third *nigleh*, he had been under the impression that this was what was written in *Kuntres Eitz Hachaim*. After looking



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it up, he saw that it says that Shabbos should be completely focused on Chassidus.

“I began to search for the source of what I had had in mind, that on Shabbos we should learn two-thirds Chassidus and one-third *nigleh*, and I found that that is what it says in the Rebbe Maharash’s will to his sons⁶.

I keep to the general principle—which is also logical—that anything revealed to others, must have a practical application for them.

So to the *temimim* who keep what the Rebbe Rashab established in *Kuntres Eitz Hachaim*—may they be blessed. But in general, the proper conduct is to follow what was stated above (two-thirds Chassidus and one-third *nigleh*).

And with that in mind, I will now discuss an idea in *nigleh*...”⁷

Even so, apparently some continued to argue against the study of *nigleh* on Shabbos. The Rebbe addressed them in 5725, in the middle of a *sicha*:

“Parenthetically, there are those who complain about my speaking *nigleh* on Shabbos, as they say that Chassidim, especially Chabad Chassidim, were not accustomed to studying *nigleh* on Shabbos.

The answer to this is based on a story that my father-in-law, the [Friediker] Rebbe, said in the name of his father, the Rebbe Rashab, who related that it once happened that the Rebbe Maharash sang *zemiros* on Shabbos. They asked him: ‘Chabad Chassidim don’t sing *zemiros*...’ and he answered that the intention was that instead of *zemiros*, there should be wordless melody (*shirah*) that is higher than *zemiros*. But if there is no singing, there can at least be the recital of the *zemiros*.

The same applies here. If people were learning Chassidus throughout Shabbos, all the better. But the reality is that besides learning Chassidus, people are

involved in other things, like sleeping or sitting idly. Therefore, I rule on the lenient side and allow myself to speak *nigleh* on Shabbos.”⁸

It should be noted that in subsequent years, the Rebbe mentioned the question of learning *nigleh* on Shabbos a number of times, addressing what he referred to as “the people who are always looking to complain...” who are unhappy that *nigleh* is discussed openly at a Shabbos farbrengen. On those occasions, the Rebbe mentioned many of the arguments mentioned above, with some additions:

At one such instance in 5737, the first point the Rebbe mentioned was that “It is necessary to know that what was said that on Shabbos one should only study Chassidus, does not affect the regular *shiurim* [that each person has], as was seen in practice.”⁹

The Rebbe also mentioned multiple times that we know that during the week, the Arizal used to learn every concept in Torah with six interpretations according to *halacha*, and one interpretation according to *nistar*, corresponding to the six days of the week and Shabbos, from which is understood that on Shabbos he did the opposite: six interpretations of *nistar* and one of *nigleh*.¹⁰ **T**

1. Kuntres Eitz Hachaim par. no. 22, 25.

2. Likkutei Sichos vol. 1 p. 53.

3. Lit. “Those at the ‘peak of Chabad.” A term for people who go to misguided extremes with Chabad customs and observances.

4. Mishnayos (*Zevachim* 5:1-8) that are said each day before beginning Shacharis.

5. Sichos Kodesh 5713 pg. 150.

6. Igros Kodesh Admur Maharash pg. 13.

7. Toras Menachem vol. 12 p. 204-205.

8. Ibid vol. 43 p. 284 note 56, Sichos Kodesh 5725 vol. 2 pg. 93-94.

9. Sichos Kodesh 5737, vol. 2, p. 509.

10. See Hisvaaduyos 5744 vol. 3, p. 2113, Ibid. 5746 vol. 1 pg. 302, Ibid. 5748 vol. 2 pg. 525, Sefer Hasichos 5752 pg. 64, Sichos Kodesh 5752 vol. 1 pg. 264.