

לזכות
 התנמים חיים לוי יצחק שיחי'
 לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות
 ט"ז אדר ראשון
 יה"ר שיגדל לתורה לחופה ולמעשים
 טובים מתוך בריאות נכונה ושפע בגו"ר
 לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר והוריו הי"ו

PRACTICAL
 HOR'A'OS
 A CLOSER
 LOOK AT
 SOME OF
 THE REBBE'S
 HOR'A'OS

TESTS IN YESHIVOS

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As Rosh Hashanah of 5725 approached, the Rebbe spoke about the necessity of making a *cheshbon hanefesh*—a personal reckoning of how the year’s learning went:

“Therefore, as we are at the end of the year, tests should be given to the *talmidim* in *yeshiva*—both on *nigleh* and on *Chassidus*.

We spoke years ago about giving tests to the *talmidim* at the end of the *zman halimudim* (semester), and since “I made a decree,” they gave tests for the first year, but no more.

What’s more, some came to me with complaints: how is it possible that we are setting up *bechinos*—and they made a point of calling them, in English, “exams”—in subjects of Chassidus?

And then something became clear to me:

My father-in-law, the [Frierdiker] Rebbe once told me about the establishment of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim by his father, the Rebbe Rashab, in 5657. Before this took place, one of the Chassidim—who was great in *nigleh*, Chassidus, and *avoda*—complained, ‘How can it be that you’re going to bring “Volozhin” into Chassidus?’

After returning from the Ohel of his father, the Rebbe Maharash, [the Rebbe Rashab] announced that he had resolved to establish the *yeshiva*—and did not take the complaint into account.

At the time, I didn’t understand why my father-in-law, the [Frierdiker] Rebbe told me this story—what does this have to do with me? But when people came to me with complaints about the tests, it became clear to me.

Just as then, they were not affected by the complaints, and they established the *yeshiva*, and later on, they saw the great benefit and success of the *yeshiva*, so too with regards to the above-mentioned about the tests.

I’m not the *baal habayis* to compel someone to do something against his will. However, with regard to everything connected to me, such as entering for *yechidus* or receiving a written response, it is within my authority to make these conditional on the setting up of tests.”²

THE VERY FACT THAT THERE’S A TEST WILL HELP

In the summer of 5746, amid a call for *talmidim* to increase in their learning, the Rebbe said that it would be proper that every so often, tests should be administered to determine the level of each *talmid’s* knowledge, both in quantity and quality. The Rebbe also explained that the fact that tests were taking place would itself improve the learning.



“The very fact that the *talmid* knows that from time to time they will be testing him on his learning — will increase his alacrity and energy for learning Torah.”³

It would be even better—the Rebbe went on to say—if the test scores were returned in writing, which would encourage the students to strive for higher marks.

CHANNELING DIDAN NOTZACH INTO PRACTICAL STUDY

After the weeklong celebration following the verdict on Hei Teves, 5747, the Rebbe famously called for an increase in Torah-study by working people and—especially—by *yoshvei ohel*, those whose whole being is about learning Torah, in the 30 days leading up to Yud Shevat. The Rebbe said that they should increase in learning *nigleh* and Chassidus, and in giving *tzedakah*, specifying that each person should consult with their *mashpia* to determine the proper amount of studying.

The Rebbe said that each person should be tested by their *rav*—*mashpia*—during these 30 days. This meant that *talmidei hayeshivos* should be tested by their *rosh yeshiva* or the like, working people should be tested by the *rav* they have appointed, women should be tested by their *mashpios*, and children should be tested by their parents, teachers or counselors.

There would be three tests during this period; one every ten days. As further motivation, each testee was to permit the

tester to share the results with the Rebbe. The Rebbe made clear that if one’s name did not appear on the list of those tested after 10, 20, and 30 days—this would make clear that they did not fulfill the *hora’ah*.⁴

The Rebbe also addressed those who had shirked previous tests:

“Once, when a list of test scores of a class was seen a while back, alongside the scores of ‘especially excellent,’ ‘excellent,’ ‘good,’ and so on, each according to their capability, there was also a new type [of ‘score’], that our forefathers never envisioned: ‘Was Not Prepared for the Test.’

“It is unheard of that a *yeshiva* student should not be prepared for a test! You’re learning in *yeshiva* — how could you not be ready for a test to determine whether you learned or not?!

“It was explained to me—since everyone judges each Jew favorably—that this meant that the student was not ready for a test on *the particular topic* that the test was on, since the student is such a ‘deep learner’ and was entirely immersed in another part of Torah.

“As a way of judging favorably, this is great, and certainly, it was in keeping with the truth. But nevertheless, since we’re talking about a unique situation, we’re asking of those ‘deep learners’ who are immersed in a particular part of the Torah, that they should set aside time to learn another specific part of Torah, as a preparation for the *yom hilula* of Yud Shevat ... so that



they will be prepared for the first test after ten days ... the second test after 20 days ... and the completion of the 30 days of *hachana* on Erev Yud Shevat.”⁵

PARSHA QUESTIONS ON SHABBOS

In 5750, the Rebbe mentioned that it has been a *minhag Yisroel* from previous generations that the father tests his children on what they have learned that week.⁶

PLEASE TEST

From a letter to Reb Eliezer Karasik, rav of the Chabad community in Tel Aviv:

“Thank you for the good news that you have started testing the *talmidim* of the *yeshiva* in Lod. ... I suggest that perhaps it is possible that you, or someone else whom you find fitting, should also test the *talmidim* of Yeshivas Toras Emes, both the *bochurim* and the *yungeleit*. If you feel that I need to write from here about this [to ask someone to take this on], let me know that, along with the identity of the person suggested to give the tests (this should be done in such a way so as not to lessen the prestige of the teachers in Toras Emes).”⁷

I WANT TO KNOW THE TALENTS OF THE BOCHURIM

From a letter dated 27 Elul, 5712, to the hanhala of Yeshivas Lod and Yeshivas Toras Emes:

“... It has long been my wish to make clear what are the talents and capabilities, both in *nigleh* and in

Chassidus, of the *talmidim* of the *yeshivos*. This has long been part of the *sefer* of all the *yeshivos* of Lubavitch: every so often they set up tests for the *talmidim*...

Therefore, I’m suggesting and requesting that such tests be set up also in the *yeshivos* in Eretz Yisroel.

It’s self-understood that these tests should be confidential, i.e. without inviting outside people.

The testers should comprise two committees: one for testing on *nigleh* and one for testing on Chassidus. Each of these committees should include the *rosh mesivta* of *nigleh* or Chassidus of Yeshivas Lod and Yeshivas Toras Emes, as well as a third person on whom the first two members agree.

It is obvious that this test should be only for students of the higher grades and those who study on their own.

This test does not replace the tests required to promote students from one class to the next, for it is only for the higher grades, and as mentioned, serves to ascertain the true situation of the *talmidim* and their talents in *nigleh* and Chassidus.⁸ **T**

1. A reference to the Volozhin Yeshiva, a prominent *non-Chassidische yeshiva*.
2. Toras Menachem vol. 40 p. 359-360.
3. Likkutei Sichos vol. 29 p. 245.
4. Sefer Hasichos 5747 vol. 1 p. 244-246.
5. Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5747 vol. 2 p. 245.
6. Ibid 5750 vol. 3 p. 364.
7. Igros Kodesh vol. 6 p. 283.
8. Ibid p. 360-361.