

לע"נ
התינוקות חיילת בצבאות ה'
ברכה ע"ה בת הרה"ת ר' חיים
אפרים שליט"א
לרגל יום הולדתה ט' תמוז

נדפס ע"י הוריה
הרה"ת ר' חיים אפרים וזוגתו
מרת ח' מושקא שיחי
גאלדשטיין

LEARNING *the*
REBBE'S TORAH:

a TRANSFORM CONNECTION

The
DEEPEST
& TRUEST
HISKASHRUS

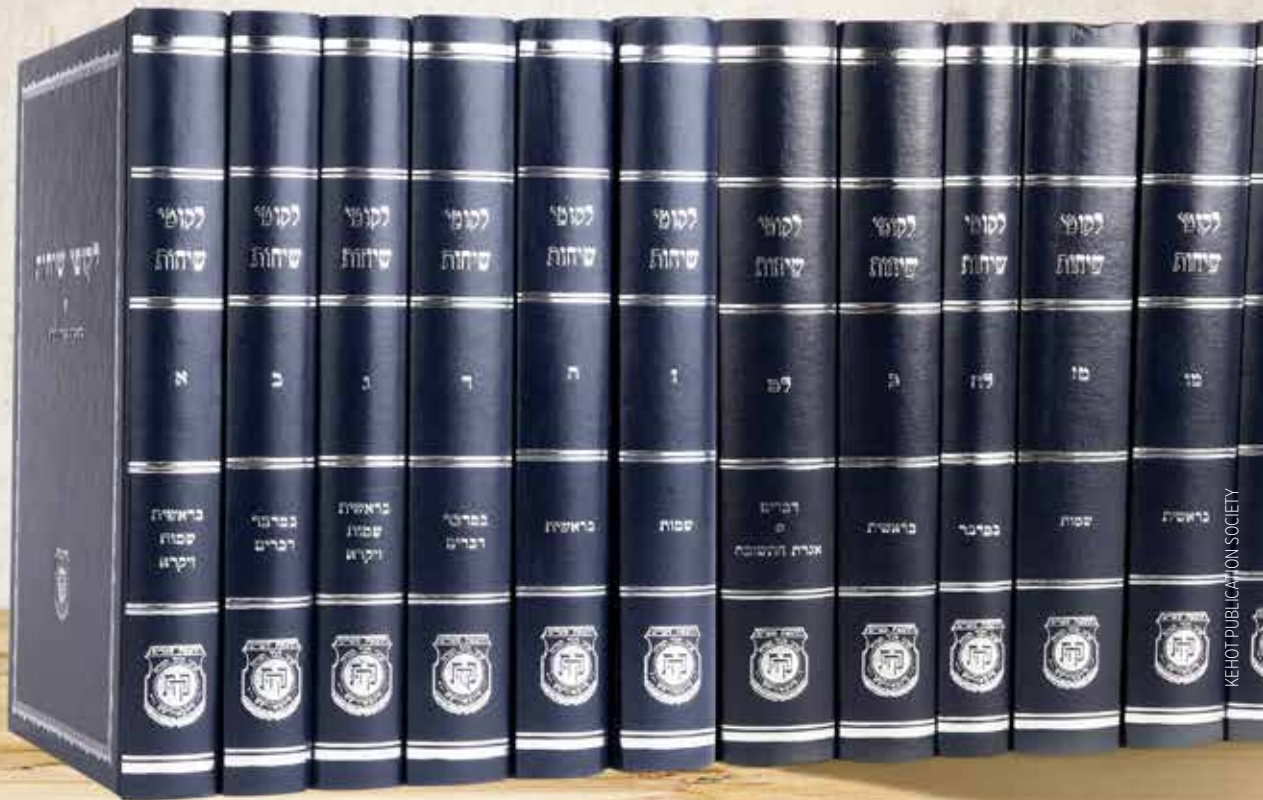
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ATIVE

In honor of Gimmel Tammuz, we present a collection of what the Rebbe says on how to stay focused on our mission as Chassidim in what could sometimes be a confusing world.

We conclude with a special farbrengen with the legendary Shliach, Rabbi Sholom Ber Lipskar of Bal Harbour, Florida, who passed away on 5 Iyar of this year. He shared these words with the Derher in honor of Gimmel Tammuz several years ago, and we felt it appropriate to publish them again this year, along with some other stories and anecdotes that he shared over the years, for the benefit of our readership. Yehei Zichro Baruch.



Seeing It Like the Rebbe

The Rebbe once explained the difference between the connection to a Rebbe based solely on emuna, and a connection based on learning, understanding, and internalizing the Rebbe's teachings:

Chassidus explains the difference between the two levels of submission and negation of the ego before Hashem, *bittul b'metzius* and *bittul hayesh*, as follows:

Bittul b'metzius means that Hashem's infinite light shines so strongly that it leaves no room for the individual. Overwhelmed by its immensity, the person naturally does not feel "self"

Bittul hayesh, on the other hand, is when a person *does* feel themselves as a real entity, but they submit that self to Hashem of their own accord.

Generally speaking, *bittul b'metzius* is considered a more complete level of submission to Hashem, since the individual is non-existent before Hashem. There is, however, a great advantage to *bittul hayesh*:

When it comes to *bittul b'metzius*, the reason the person completely submitted is only due to the great divine energy that *he personally* feels. On the other hand, *bittul hayesh* means that the person is actively working to *negate* the self, to subdue their own existence before Hashem. With this route, it may take longer to reach total *bittul*, but as a person works on themselves towards greater *bittul*, their submission before Hashem runs far deeper and truer than it would with *bittul b'metzius*.

The same is true of the relationship between a Chossid and his Rebbe:

In the Polish Chassidus tradition, the Rebbe himself, in his saintliness and holiness, gives life and vitality to his Chassidim. The *possuk* says, "*V'tzaddik be'emunaso yichyeh*," a tzaddik lives with his faith; it is interpreted as "*Yechayeh*"—he enlivens *others* with his faith, with his *avoda*. A Chossid is expected to completely submit himself to his Rebbe, based on intense emotional inspiration.

The Chabad approach is different. "Chabad demands *pnimiyus*," as the Frierdiker Rebbe put it. *Hiskashrus* to a Rebbe must be based on intellectual appreciation, by studying and internalizing the Rebbe's Torah.

For this reason, we find that the Polish Chassidim had the custom to give "Shalom" to their Rebbes, shaking their hand, and so on. The *bittul* to their Rebbe was so overbearing and intense, a "*bittul b'metzius*," that they were not afraid to approach their Rebbe. There was no fear that the closeness might lead to becoming too familiar

or comfortable with the Rebbe.

For Chabad Chassidim, however, there is no practice of giving "Shalom" to a Rebbe. The intellectual appreciation for the Rebbe's Torah could lead a person to come too close, and this practice was therefore discouraged.

But when all is said and done, the *bittul* that emerges with the Chabad approach runs truer and deeper. If a person only relies on emotion to connect with a Rebbe, they never really change who they are inside. Their mind and intellect remain unaffected.

Submitting oneself with an intellectual approach ensures that the person is deeply *permeated* with *bittul*. Ultimately, little by little, the Chossid will become completely *bittul* to the Rebbe, to the point that everything he says is in sync with what the Rebbe would say. The Chossid's mind becomes reconditioned to understand and see things the way the Rebbe does.¹

Staying Current

In the following letter, the Rebbe writes to a mashpia about the importance of learning the maamarim of one's own Rebbe specifically, in addition to learning Chassidus in general:





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Regarding what you write about learning the Torah of *nessi doreinu*, my father-in-law, the Rebbe: My intention was obviously not to exclude studying the *maamarim* of the previous Rabbeim. It's only that each student must have *hiskashrus* in a manner that is befitting for the time and generation in which he lives. *Hiskashrus* is [primarily] through studying the Torah of one's Rebbe, as [the Frierdiker Rebbe] explains in many letters, also cited in Hayom Yom. I therefore expressed my opinion that this study is of utmost importance...²

Guidance in the Desert

The Rebbe teaches us how to stay connected in a chaotic world, especially after the histalkus:

When a Yid finds himself in a deep dark *galus*, in a spiritual desert, he may ask: How is it possible for me to serve Hashem in such a state?

In days gone by, he continues, when we had true *Nesi'im*, Rabbeim, who could show us the way and guide us through any difficult circumstance, we relied on them. Even if we ourselves were in the dark, we could connect ourselves with someone who saw Elokus, and we walked the world with stability.

In our time, however, we live in an orphaned generation, right before Moshiach's arrival. We don't see our

Nesi'im with our physical eyes. How can we find the true path, Hashem's path?

The answer to this issue is based on the words of Chazal, "Tzaddikim are likened to their Creator":

Hashem created the world in a manner that His presence is concealed. He sends the *neshama* down to this physical world, clothing it in a physical body, and yet He expects a person to fulfill his mission in this world without being distracted by a raging world outside! How is this possible?

For this reason, Hashem gave us the Torah. As long as we have the Torah with us, we have access to Hashem Himself; no matter where in the world we may be. Hashem put His very essence within the Torah.

The same is true of the tzaddikim, leaders of the Jewish people, whose job is to show them how to serve Hashem. They continue to do so even after their passing, for the shepherds of the Jewish people do not forsake their flock through their Torah. Tzaddikim who toiled to the point of *mesirus nefesh* and taught innovative Torah ideas thereby invested their very being within the Torah they taught. When we, in turn, toil to learn and understand their Torah, we connect with the very essence of the tzaddik, receiving all the necessary energy from and through the tzaddik.³



Making It Yours

A FARBRENGEN WITH RABBI SHOLOM BER LIPSKARA”H

Someone I am close with once told the Rebbe that he felt his *hiskashrus* was lacking. The Rebbe told him that if he wants to be *mekushar*, he should learn the Rebbe’s *sichos* and *maamarim*.

This person might have been looking for a more “fan-*ciful*” proposal; perhaps to say some *l’chaim* and become inspired, or another “instant” formula. That attitude was very distant from reality. Instant inspiration quickly dissipates. To be truly connected to the Rebbe, a much longer process is needed.

Through studying the Rebbe’s *sichos* and *maamarim*, one’s thought patterns one with the Rebbe’s. Through imbibing the Rebbe’s talks, our brains begin to automatically think in the Rebbe’s fashion; that is true *hiskashrus* with the Rebbe.

When I was a young yeshiva *bochur*, we used to learn *maamarim* with our teacher, and when we would reach the last few paragraphs, which discuss *avoda*, we would read through them quickly. This was a terrible mistake; the whole point of the *maamar* was those last paragraphs, where the Rabbeim show us how we must implement the ideas in our behavior. Understanding the schematics and the “map” of the *olamos* is only a precursor to making Chassidus part of our life.

It goes without saying that this *hiskashrus* will not be created by quick study sessions where a *sicha* is looked at once and forgotten within moments. I once decided to do a poll: I walked around 770 asking *bochurim* what was written in that day’s Tanya. *Yadah inish b’nafshei*, we all know whether we will have the ability to answer that question without being a tad embarrassed.

To become *mekushar* to the Rebbe, it is imperative that we apply ourselves with true dedication to studying the Rebbe’s Torah, and then—trust me—when we do so, new doors of opportunity and *hatzlacha* are opened before a person.

On a Personal Note

Beyond learning the Rebbe’s Torah, there is a specific directive from the Rebbe about what to do when dealing

with a personal dilemma. Even if one is knowledgeable in the Rebbe’s Torah, he must still appoint a *rav*, a *mashpia*, to assist him with his personal decisions. The Rebbe explained that this person must be someone who is dedicated to Torah and mitzvos and has a comprehension of Chassidus; if we do so, the Rebbe said, the Rebbe will make sure that you receive the correct answer.

In truth, finding the Rebbe’s answer is quite simple in our generation. We have merited to receive a veritable ocean of directives from the Rebbe, and with the proper application, with the help of a *mashpia*, one can easily find the Rebbe’s instructions for his personal situation.

The Doorknob

There is one more imperative to *hiskashrus* with the Rebbe. To remain connected and to ensure that one does not veer one iota from the Rebbe’s path, a Chossid must visit the Ohel.

When we look back at the Rebbe’s own conduct, we find something very interesting. The Rebbe spent every day in 770, which the Rebbe described as *Beis Rabbeinu Sheb’bavel*, the *daled amos* of the Frierdiker Rebbe, and so on.

The Rebbe often cited the letter of the Alter Rebbe, where he explains that *tzaddikim* live on after their passing, and have even more influence in the world than before.

Yet, the Rebbe still chose to spend countless hours at the Ohel.

These were not perfunctory *yahrtzeit* visits; we saw a living, breathing connection. Before the Rebbe announced a new mitzvah campaign, he would visit the Ohel. *Sichos*, dollars after *maariv*, and *kuntreisim* distributions usually took place following a visit to the Ohel. And when hard times came and special *yeshuos* were needed, there was one place—the Ohel. In fact, during the Hei Teves court proceedings, the Rebbe went to the Ohel every single day, for hours on end!

Some maintain that since the Rebbe’s presence is felt in other locations, they do not need to visit the Ohel.

The thought is ludicrous. Before we moved on shlichus to Florida, the Rebbe told us, “*Ich for mit eich*, I am going together with you.” And needless to say, we truly see and feel the Rebbe’s presence here in our work constantly and consistently. However, we never imagined this to mean that we no longer need to go to the Rebbe, to be at farbrengens, *yechidus*, and dollars... And with a mere glance at the Rebbe’s own conduct, we can understand that the same attitude applies to us today as well.

I can only point to my own experiences; coming to the Rebbe’s Ohel for me is always a source of inspiration, guidance, and open miracles.

“*Taamu ure’u ki tov*”—try it and you’ll see!

Wake Up!

I’d like to conclude with the following personal story that has a deep and profound lesson for all of us:

In the early 5730s, the esteemed academic and famous refusenik, Professor Yirmiya Branover, was able to leave the Soviet Union. The Rebbe showed him incredible *kiruvim*, as we will see.

At the time, I was experiencing a serious medical issue, and I went to the hospital, where I underwent a very difficult test. This test was still undeveloped, and the risks were high. As it turned out, the morning after the test, my wife called the hospital to talk to me, and I didn’t answer the phone. There was another man in the room with me, and finally, after many rings, he answered the phone and told her: “He’s sleeping, and I can’t wake him up.”

To make a long story short, I was in a coma. They couldn’t wake me up and they didn’t know why. Maybe the anesthesia was too strong, or maybe the test didn’t work. Whatever the case, I could not be revived.

My wife rushed to the hospital, and by the time she got there, she saw a whole team of doctors in my room. They had sealed it and wouldn’t let her in. They called it a “code blue,” a serious emergency. Of course, the first thing she did was run to the nurses’ station and call 770. Rabbi Binyomin Klein answered the phone, and my wife explained the situation. He asked her to leave a callback number and to wait for his call. A few minutes later, Rabbi Hodakov called the hospital, telling my wife that he wanted to speak to me.

My wife said, “He’s in a coma.” But Rabbi Hodakov didn’t pay attention. “I have a message for him,” he said. “I need to speak with him.”

My wife came to my room and forced herself in. She knew there was a message for me from the Rebbe, and

nothing would stop her. She came into my room and handed me the phone (they had connected it from the nurse’s station to my room), telling me it was an emergency; Rabbi Hodakov was on the line!

She put the phone next to my ear, and the next thing I remember is hearing the Rebbe’s voice in the background. Rabbi Hodakov then told me that Professor Branover was scheduled to come to Miami, and the Rebbe wanted me to introduce him to the other professors at the University here.

The doctors were stunned. “He’s talking! He’s awake!” But that’s not what I want to bring out from this story.

What’s the real point here?

Think about it: when Rabbi Hodakov called me, he knew my situation. He didn’t ask “How are you feeling?” “What do the doctors say?” or anything like that.

He called to say what I needed to do.

Get out of your stupor! Get out of your coma! Get out of your *narishkeit*!

You have a job to do!

That’s what the Rebbe wants from each and every one of us. We are living today in a time that can sometimes feel very difficult.

We want to see the Rebbe physically. We want to be at a farbrengen or get a dollar. We miss the Rebbe, and it’s painful that we have to suffice with the spiritual side.

But the truth is that we really do have the Rebbe, even on a very practical level. Practically speaking, the Rebbe is here with each and every one of us. And I can tell you for a fact that it’s so. I know it in my own life. And I’m sure that half or three-quarters of anyone reading this can tell you the same thing. The Rebbe is with each and every one of us.

More importantly, the Rebbe expects us to fulfill the vital mission that he gave us. There’s nothing that the Rebbe said that didn’t come to pass. And he said that this is the generation of Moshiach, that we’re in the *dor hashvi’i* and will see the coming of Moshiach. It means it’s happening.

It’s up to us to do what we have to do to make it happen sooner. We all have our work cut out for us.

Ask yourself: What does the Rebbe want from me right now?

If we all do our part, we will be *zoche*, and the Rebbe will lead us out of *galus*, *teikef umiyad mamash!* **T**

1. Shabbos Parshas Re’eh 5713; Toras Menachem vol. 9, p. 146.

2. Igros Kodesh vol. 8, p. 153.

3. Acharon Shel Pesach 5717; Toras Menachem vol. 19, p. 303.