


לזכות הילד מצעירי השלוחים חייל
בצבאות ה'
מנחם מענדל הכהן שי' דערען
לרגל יום הולדתו ח"י תמוז
נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' אשר לייב הכהן
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דערען



CARRY ON!

Rabbi Shlomo Cunin
Los Angeles, CA





**WORKING
TOWARDS
TRUE
HISKASHRUS**

Rabbi Sholom
Ber Lipskar
Bal Harbor, FL

HISVAADUS CHASSIDIM

In connection with
Gimmel Tammuz

WORKING TOWARDS TRUE HISKASHRUS

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SKATING ON THIN ICE

There are two ways in which a Chassid is unique and stands out in his environment: First is by learning and following *Toras Hachassidus*, and the second—*hiskashrus* to the Rebbe. The two are not necessarily independent of one another, as they are both necessary components.

The topics discussed by *Toras Hachassidus* are vital for every person living today:

In the past, Yidden had studied various *sefarim* that discuss *musar*, self-refinement, and topics that relate to the *'avadah'* part of Yiddishkeit. Yet none of these *sefarim* dealt with the concept of the *Aibershter* himself. None of them provide *osiyos* explaining the purpose of our entire *avadah*, the focal point of all of our efforts.

Thus, there are often people that are fully observant and totally absorbed in a Yiddishe life, but as soon as they leave their environment, or they are

exposed to other ideologies, they lose their enthusiasm for Torah and mitzvos.

This is because their whole connection to Yiddishkeit, while seemingly robust and healthy, was in essence lying on a thin layer of ice; its foundation was merely cultural—"My father put on tefillin, so I do so too; my grandfather davened, so I do as well..." With all of their pious trappings, they were never able to really connect. They may proclaim "*Hodu laHashem kiru vishmo*," but who is this Hashem that I am talking to?

These questions were amplified in our generation, when people ask



questions that are unanswerable; questions about the Holocaust, and other issues of faith. Without a proper perspective of the *Aibershter*, these questions could become validated, and can easily lead to a crisis of faith.

This is where Chassidus is extremely relevant. It gives us the ability to tap into a concept that we cannot truly understand, but that can give us an intellectual base with which to deal with all of those issues. It explains you who the *Aibershter* is, and how He relates to you and your actions.

Understanding Chassidus gives us the ability to reach a step higher in our

avodas Hashem. Instead of imagining Hashem in a scary sense, as One who will strike if you will transgress one of His laws, we receive an entirely new appreciation for *Elokus*, one that allows us to develop *ahavas Hashem*, (true) *yiras Hashem*, and perhaps most importantly, it gives a person a foundation for *kabbolas ol*.

This is an entirely new outlook; a dimensional move, both intellectually and emotionally.

FROM THOUGHT TO ACTION

Upon learning Chassidus and meditating on its lessons, the core values of a person are set straight. However, from idealism to implementation is a very long journey.

Our idealism may be wonderful, but it is of vital importance, that our knowledge be accompanied by a concept called *moach shalit al halev*; in the intellectual world today, they call it “mindfulness.”

Mindfulness does not mean meditation. Meditation is a means to allow an idea to infiltrate your entire being. When we think Chassidus before davening or at any other time, it is meditation; to allow its ideas to affect our core.

Mindfulness is the next step.

One of the most difficult things for a person to do is to constantly be mindful. To consistently think to himself, is my conduct right or wrong; what are the consequences going to be, and so on. This is one of the most difficult things in the world, because our *nefesh habehamis* is too much of an obstacle for us to constantly keep these concepts in mind.

Therefore, notwithstanding all of our *hisbonenus*, and all of our learning Chassidus, it is still impossible—in the words of Tanya, “*lo yuchal lo*”—to remain constantly astute and aware of the consequences of one’s actions.

So without the proper attitude, such awareness can even feel oppressing, and then a person might even feel a greater urge to break out of those constraints.

Yet, this awareness and mindfulness is critical to a Yid in any generation, and most certainly for one living with all of the distractions that surround us today...

And therefore we have a Rebbe. A person, a soul in a body, who is perfect in this area. And his perfection is displayed with the biggest *ahavas Yisrael*, relating to each person on his own level; it evokes a message that you too, can achieve this goal, and you too, can reach higher.

In 5746, I brought a group of Yidden who were serving prison sentences to the Rebbe for a Shabbos. During the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe gave an explanation in *maase merkavah*, a very profound *sicha*; and then the Rebbe spoke to the prisoners. He told them about the *avodah* that they could accomplish while in a situation which the Gemara describes as “worse than death,” a situation that Torah doesn’t sanction at all.

The Rebbe said that there are numerous levels of exile. The first is the exile of the *neshamah* in the body, all the way to the lowest form of exile—prison. But the Rebbe then said, that when a person is put into an intense darkness, it is because that person has much stronger abilities than most people, and Hashem definitely gave him the strength to overcome it.

The Rebbe explained that same idea; that if Hashem placed them in this “exile within exile,” then they surely have the abilities to overcome it and fulfill their mission through it.

Then, during that same *farbrengen*, the Rebbe spoke another *sicha*, this one to the rabbonim.

The Rebbe said that they cannot be satisfied by the fact that they





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RABBI SHOLOM BER LIPSKAR AT DOLLARS, 25 IYAR 5750.

once learned in yeshiva; they must constantly review their studies and ensure that they are always fresh in their minds.

The prisoners went out of their minds; here the Rebbe had uplifted and encouraged the prisoners, while chastising the prominent rabbonim and telling them that they could do better.

In other words, at that farbrengen the Rebbe brought them to understand and appreciate their place in Yiddishkeit; if beforehand, their mindfulness of their sad state would have lead them to depression, now their mindfulness gave them inspiration and encouragement.

The concept of a *neshamah klolis* is not merely a spiritual concept, intangible and unseen. It means a real

connection that inspires and raises a person higher.

On a similar note, just being in the Rebbe's presence gave us the feeling that we were in the presence of *Elokus*—this gave us immense trepidation; upon leaving *yechidus* one's mood would undergo a transformation.

The first time I entered the Rebbe's room after Gimmel Tammuz, I was shocked by something, which I had never noticed before. When I used to enter the room for *yechidus*, the walk from the door to the Rebbe's desk felt a mile long. It was only when I entered after Gimmel Tammuz that I noticed that physical smallness of the room.

Whenever I would go for dollars, the feeling during the wait would be one of intense nervousness. But once

I would pass the Rebbe and receive a dollar, my mood would go through a drastic change. I would leave the Rebbe's presence literally on a high.

That's what the Rebbe did to you...

IN TIMES LIKE NOW

Someone I am close with once told the Rebbe that he feels that his *hiskashrus* is 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 fanciful proposal; perhaps to say some *l'chaim* and become inspired, or some similar instant formula.

That attitude was very distant from reality. Instant inspiration will dissipate within a short time. To be

truly connected to the Rebbe, a much longer process is needed.

Through studying the Rebbe's *sichos* and *maamarim*, one's mind process becomes 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 *avodah*, 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 actions. Understanding the schematics and the map of the *olamos* are only a precursor to making Chassidus part of our life.

It goes without saying, that this *hiskashrus* will not be born from quick study sessions where a *sicha* is looked at once and forgotten within moments.

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.

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; and if we will 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* to 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 around 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!

There are those who 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 on a constant, consistent basis. However, we never imagined that to mean that we no longer need to go to the Rebbe, to be at *fabrengens*, *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.

טעמו וראו כי טוב הוי'.

CARRY ON!

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HARD TIMES

On the night of Gimmel Tammuz I was in Moscow, where the Rebbe had sent us to bring back the *sefarim*. When we heard that the situation wasn't good, I went to the shul and took out the *sifrei Torah*; I said that through *simcha* we will surely be *poel*. Suddenly the lights went out. I understood that this was the end of life the way we knew it.

On the plane, the pilot wanted to divert the flight to a different location. I went up to him and explained to him where we were going, and a few minutes later he announced that he had received new orders; the flight would continue as scheduled. I knew whom he had received the orders from.

We arrived in New York, and I was the last one to enter the Rebbe's room. Later, at the Ohel, I declared that we would not allow the Rebbe's institutions to close; we would see to it that they develop and continue to grow.

The next morning I gathered my children, and I told them that we

need to return to our shlichus. Our activities must grow.

Back in California, I got into a car with my son Levi, who was a *bochur* at the time, and we went to open a new institution. We had no idea where we were going. We ended up in Malibu, California, where we came across a building with a "For Sale" sign; I recognized the number—it was a *baal habos* of mine. He gave us permission to use the location, and that Shabbos, Chabad of Malibu opened its doors. It was the first new institution to open after Gimmel Tammuz.

Why is this important?



THE REBBE GIVES A BOTTLE OF MASHKE TO RABBI SHLOMO CUNIN AT KOS SHEL BROCHO, MOTZOEI SIMCHAS TORAH 5747.

A quick look at the world around us shows that it is going in a certain direction.

Wherever a person turns, he can find the Rebbe's influence; every Jew you meet will tell you about his Chabad experience or his encounter with the Rebbe.

The situation that we are in today is inherently unacceptable. In fact, even the *Aibershter* Himself is bothered by it; the Rebbe would always quote the *possuk* “בכל צרתם לו צר”—that whenever the Yidden are in distress, Hashem Himself is as well.

Every time we recite “את צמח דוד” “עבדך מהרהר תצמיח” and the *Aibershter* doesn't answer our prayers, it demands an explanation. How could the Yidden be saying a *bracha* with Hashem's name for so long and yet He still does not fulfill it?

Our answer must be to continue growing our efforts and activities.

A Chossid's activities begin with himself: thinking Chassidus before davening, davening *b'avodah* to the best of his abilities, and doing *hafatzas hamaayanos* with *chayus* and perseverance.

At night, a Chossid should be able to recite *krias shema* and say to the *Aibershter*, “I did my part, now You have to do Yours.”

Personal *avodah* is important for shluchim as well. If he has a shul, he could slow the davening by ten minutes; if he doesn't have a shul, he can daven for even longer. This is the fuel for our tanks; a Chossid cannot truly live without it. Obviously, one is responsible for his shlichus, and his shlichus takes priority over everything else. However, sometimes a shliach can find time for himself; if so, he can surely find time to daven *b'avodah* as

well. In truth, even at times when a shliach is very occupied, he can take one *possuk*, one piece to focus on and say with extra *kavanah*.

HISKASHRUS

For a *bochur*, or any Chossid for that matter, to have a true *hiskashrus* with the Rebbe, there is one clear and open path: to fulfill the Rebbe's *horaos*.

The Rebbe's directives are well-known; they are printed and readily available. We need to keep to them on a constant basis, and with that, to keep the Rebbe's image in our minds. From our eyes, the Rebbe's image will trickle into our *neshamos* and into our entire beings.

A *maamar* from the Rebbe should always be ready at the tip of our tongue. Whenever we have a free moment, review the *maamar*; envision it paragraph by paragraph, and think about each word: “What does it mean? How does it apply to me?” If there is no one to listen to you say over the *maamar*, say it to yourself, and say to the Rebbe; “Rebbe, these are your words; I'm learning them because I want to be connected to you...”

At night, when reciting *krias shema*, you should ask yourself, “What did I do today to make the Rebbe proud of me?”

“I learned a *maamar* Chassidus in the morning, I davened, I learned *nigleh*, I reached out to another *talmid* in yeshiva who was having a hard time, and during my lunch break I

went out and found a Jew to put on tefillin with. When I came back, I learned *girsas*, and then Chassidus once more. And now I am conducting a serious *cheshbon hanefesh* to see what I could do better tomorrow;

“In truth, my learning could have been much better; my head wasn't really at it. My davening began on a high note, but suddenly the *yetzer horah* came and wacked me, and it was very hard to fight him back...”

And then, upon going to sleep after this *cheshbon hanefesh*, you keep in mind the Rebbe's image and the Rebbe's Chassidus; with this sort of attitude, the next morning starts off on a whole new level. You wake up and recite *Modeh Ani*, and tell the Rebbe, “I am going to make you proud...”

When we recite *brachos*, and say “*Elokai, neshama shenasata bi*, the soul that you gave to me,” it takes on a whole new meaning. You thank the *Aibershter* for putting your *neshamah* in our blessed generation, *dor hashvi'i*, the *dor* of the *geulah*; the generation in which Chassidim—although we do not have our Rebbe physically—persevere and put other generations to shame. Even Moshe Rabbeinu is humbled by the attitude of today's *bochurim*...


FATHER AND SON

A *bochur* might wake up one morning with a weakness. He may ask himself, “Why do I need all of this hard work? It would be easier to be a regular good Jew, get a job, work out a nice retirement plan. Why do I need all of this hassle?”

In such a situation, all you need to do is to put on your thinking cap:

A quick look at the world around us shows that it is going in a certain direction. Wherever a person turns, he can find the Rebbe's influence; every Jew you meet will tell you about his Chabad experience or his encounter with the Rebbe. Shluchim continue to





go out to the most distant and remote places, and the worst tragedies haven't deterred them. Although an entire generation has not seen the Rebbe in a physical body, they continue to show a profound love for the Rebbe; even babies from their cribs do so.

The facts on the ground show that the *Aibershter* put us in a unique generation with an enormous mission; it would be ludicrous to ignore this sublime calling.

On the same note, a person cannot choose to place himself in a different generation of Chassidus. In order to go in the ways of the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe, a Chossid must follow the Rebbe of the seventh generation.

This is because, as the Rebbe explained, the Rebbe of every generation is the full *memaleh makom* of the Rabbeim of previous generations. This does not merely mean successor; it means that he encompasses everything that his predecessors represented. He fills their shoes entirely. In other words, the Rebbe is the Baal Shem Tov, the Alter Rebbe, the Rebbe Rashab—all the Rabbeim in one; the path to connect with any of the Rabbeim is through connecting with our Rebbe.

Additionally, young people today might not realize that they owe their entire existence to the Rebbe. America used to be described as the graveyard of Judaism and everyone was assimilating in droves. I can say on a personal level, that my entire family—brothers cousins, etc.—are *frumme Yidden* only because the Friediker Rebbe and the Rebbe came to America and turned the entire situation around. I owe my entire identity to the Rebbe; without the Rebbe, I don't know where I would be today.

But all these explanations are unnecessary. The Rebbe is our father, and we are inherently connected to him. Would you ever tell a person,

“Oh, your father is gone; why don't you find a new one?”

The Rebbe is our father, and we are his children. Period.

These are not my own statements; this is all discussed in the Rebbe's *sichos*.

AFTER GIMMEL TAMMUZ

This past Purim, I was sitting at the Ohel near the video of the Rebbe, and I was writing a *pan*. In the spirit of Purim, I did not plan to mention a specific issue that I actually needed a *bracha* for. Yet suddenly, in the *sicha* that was playing, I hear the Rebbe talking about the exact issue that I had. Without mentioning anything, I had already received an answer.

Some people feel that today, the Rebbe doesn't answer them as he did before. From my own experience, I can say that this is entirely untrue. The Rebbe answers questions just as he did before; I have been witness to hundreds of miracles which occurred after writing to the Rebbe.

In general, if someone wishes to receive an answer from the Rebbe, there is only one condition which he must fulfill. He must be sincere. There were insincere people before Gimmel Tammuz as well; to receive an answer from the Rebbe, a Chossid must write a sincere letter, from the depths of his heart. If you do so, the Rebbe is sure to find a way to answer you, in some way. Through a video, through a *sicha* or through a letter—in whatever manner the Rebbe chooses.

IN CONCLUSION

It goes without saying that until our mission is completed, we do not have permission to rest. We can never know which tefillin or which mitzvah we do with another Jew will be the one to tip the scale; let's keep it going strong, and bring Moshiach very soon. **T**