



לזכות  
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל ומרת שושנה  
ומשפחתם שיחיו שיינער  
ולזכות  
ר' ברוך ומרת רחל אהבה ומשפחתם  
שיחיו ולדמן  
נדפס ע"י הוריהם  
ר' צבי וחנה שיחיו מאראנץ



# Is it Befitting?

*Proper conduct of a Chossid -*  
**וואס פאסט; וואס פאסט נישט**

מ'דארף אלעמאל געדיינקען, אז מען איז דעם רבינ'ס  
מענטשן, און שטעלן זיך אליין די פראגע: איז דער  
רבי צופרידן מיט מיר וואס איך טו אזוי? האב איך  
גענוג אתכפא און אתהפא ווי עס פאסט פאר דעם  
רבי'נס א מענטש?

We must always remember that we are the Rebbe's  
people, and ask ourselves the question: "Is the Rebbe  
happy with what I am doing now? Do I have sufficient  
*iskafya* and *is'hapcha* as befitting the Rebbe's person?"

## Befitting for a Chossid

The Frieddiker Rebbe relates that once while  
visiting in Vitebsk, his grandfather, the Rebbe  
Maharash, was asked to say Chassidus. Instead, he  
came out to the courtyard where the Chassidim had  
assembled and began addressing them:

"In worldly matters, the expression is often used,  
'This is befitting and this is unfitting' (דאס פאסט  
(און דאס פאסט ניט). For a certain type of person such  
behavior is befitting; for another type of person  
such conduct is unfitting.

"For Yidden, and especially for Chassidim, there  
are things which are spiritually fitting and those  
which are unfitting:

For a Chossid it is befitting to learn a bit of  
Chassidus every day;

For a Chossid it is befitting to occupy himself with helping another;

For a Chossid it is befitting to be joyful, and express gladness to others;

For a Chossid it is befitting to examine his own shortcomings while seeing his fellow's virtues;

For a Chossid it is befitting to view even the most simple Jew as being at higher standing than himself;

For a Chossid it is befitting to learn good character from everyone else;

For a Chossid it is befitting to have love and brotherhood with others.

On the other hand:

For a Chossid it is unfitting not to learn Chassidus;

For a Chossid it is unfitting not to occupy himself with helping another;

For a Chossid it is unfitting to be depressed;

For a Chossid it is unfitting to overlook his own shortcomings;

For a Chossid it is unfitting to see himself higher than the greatest;

For a Chossid it is unfitting not to learn anything from another;

For a Chossid it is unfitting to bring about strife and conflict, even if it is [supposedly] for the sake of strengthening *darkei haChassidus*.

"When my grandfather concluded his holy words, he stood up and returned to his room. The words had such a strong impact on the crowd that most of them broke out in a soft cry..."<sup>1</sup>

## WHO, ME?!

The story is told about a Chossid of the Alter Rebbe, Reb Mordechi of Lepiel, who successfully refrained from transgressing an *aveirah* by using the trait of *ga'avah*.

When the *yetzer hara* nagged at him and said, "Listen here, Mottel! Do it!" he would stand up tall and straight and scream, "Who me?! A Chossid of the Alter Rebbe, a wealthy man, a *maskil* and *lamdan*; I should transgress this *aveirah*?! No way! It does not befit my character (עס פאסט נישט)." (Sichas Simchas Beis Hashoeiva 5714)

## Made of Different Stuff

With *toras haChassidus*, our Rabbeim wished to mold a Chossid that would be of an entirely different caliber. A Chossid's makeup is of refined character; his very being lives the ways of Chassidus and he acts accordingly.

To this effect, we find so many descriptions in the *sichos* and writings of our Rabbeim, expounding on the virtues of a Chossid. It is almost as if a Chossid naturally possesses these traits.

"Chassidim are by nature altogether different," the Rebbe Rashab said.

א חסיד איז בטבע א קלוגער, איז בטבע א תקיף בדעתו, א חסיד האט א ברען, א חסיד האט דעם כח הביטול, א חסיד האט חוש הריח...

"A Chossid is clever by nature; he is by nature a determined individual; a Chossid has passion; a Chossid possesses humility; a Chossid has a good 'sixth sense' [lit. a sense of smell]."<sup>2</sup>

In a *sicha* said shortly after arriving in America, the Frierdiker Rebbe relates how in his childhood, the question "What is a Chossid?" always occupied his mind. From speaking with elder Chassidim, the image of a "Chossid" finally began formulating in his mind. "A thinker, a davener, a person of good *middos*, a faster, a person who remains silent..."<sup>3</sup>

"A Chossid is always happy. If things are going well, he is happy. And if things are not going so well, he's still happy."<sup>4</sup>

The Rebbe Rashab related that in his youth, he also pondered upon the question "What is a Chossid?" along with his *chavrusa*, Reb Yaakov Mordechai [later the rav of Poltava]. His friend suggested that a Chossid is someone who is devoted to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe Rashab concluded: "Being *mekushar* to the Rebbe with the greatest sense of *hiskashrus* is still not enough. A Chossid needs to be devoted to carrying out the Rebbe's affairs..."<sup>5</sup>

## Responsibility Included

With all these traits innately, almost naturally, in a Chossid's soul, we have a much higher standard to live up to.

"A Chossid must always feel the truth," the Rebbe writes in a letter. "Every Yid knows the truth, but a Chossid also *feels* it in his heart. This is the 'ונפלינו' of Chassidim..."<sup>6</sup>





Being a Chossid bears a major responsibility. As the Rebbe once explained to a group of *bochurim* leaving for Merkos Shlichus with the following story:

Reb Shmuel Munkes was once returning from a *farbrengen* with Chassidim, and they passed by the Alter Rebbe's courtyard. Reb Shmuel suddenly climbed upon the fence and hung himself from the gate of the courtyard. The Chassidim, who knew of Reb Shmuel's mischievous conduct, asked for an explanation of this strange behavior, and Reb Shmuel replied: "When you pass by a shoemaker's home, you'll see a shoe hanging. When you pass by a

glassblower's home, you'll see a piece of glass hanging on display. So when you walk past the Rebbe's house, there needs to be a Chossid on display! With that everyone will know that it's the Rebbe's home..."

Similarly, the Rebbe concluded, when you go as the Rebbe's *shluchim*, everyone will look at you as exemplary Lubavitcher Chassidim, "Chabadniks," *temimim*, *yeshivah bochurim*, *yirei Shamayim*. The way you act will set the tone for how a Chossid, a *tomim*, a *mekushar* should act. Remember that you carry an enormous responsibility!

A Chossid is expected to listen when he is spoken to, and have *kabolas ol*. "This necessity to understand



everything rationally is a fairly new phenomenon, completely foreign to Chassidim,” the Rebbe writes in a letter. “The *seder* always was: first they listened and only then did they try to understand as much as was allowed. And even if they didn’t understand, they still managed to sleep peacefully...”<sup>8</sup>

## Get Out There

Last but certainly not least: a Chossid is charged with impacting his surroundings and spreading Torah and Chassidus to the world. The Rebbe writes in Hayom Yom (30 Adar I) “If a Chossid is not creating a positive atmosphere in his surroundings,

it’s time for him to check his own ‘baggage’ very carefully...”

As the Rebbe Rashab famously responded to someone who asked “What is a Chossid?”

“A Chossid is a lamplighter, he goes around with a long stick with a fire at its end. He knows that the fire is not his; it is his job only to kindle all the lamps with this fire...”

With that, concludes the Rebbe, we will succeed in lighting all the lamps, illuminating the darkness of *galus* and finally transforming the world into a *dira betachtonim*.<sup>9</sup> ⑦

1. Sefer Hasichos 5700 p. 140
2. Sefer Hasichos 5687 p. 157
3. Sefer Hasichos summer 5700 p. 29
4. Ibid. p. 135
5. Ibid. p. 31
6. Igros Kodesh vol. 3 p. 419
7. Toras Menachem vol. 3 p. 224
8. Igros Kodesh vol. 5 p. 194
9. Sefer Hasichos 5701 p. 136; see also Sichas Yud-Gimmel Tammuz 5752

## A STUDENT OF THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Whoever carries the title of a “Lubavitcher Chossid,” whether an elderly Jew, a young man, or even a small girl, is responsible for upholding the integrity of all of Lubavitch. The outsiders look at him, not as a single individual, but as a member of the broader Lubavitch community. If he does something inappropriate, he causes a *chilul shem Lubavitch*, and a desecration to the name of the Lubavitcher Rebbe! Everyone will say, “Look at how a student of the Lubavitcher Rebbe acts!”

When the [Friediker] Rebbe came here to the United States, he began rebuilding the Lubavitch community because he trusted and believed that here too he’d succeed at educating a generation of true Lubavitcher Chassidim. So when a Chossid does something wrong, even with every excuse possible, the *chilul Hashem* is inevitable. All the other person sees is that a student of the Lubavitcher Rebbe behaves in this manner!

(Shabbos parshas Tetzaveh 5747)