

ניצוצי אור Sparks of Light

בס"ד



No. 11

פרשת וישב תשע"ה

Rabbi Shimon Hellinger, Editor

Seeking Guidance (2)

Learning from their Ways

Chazal teach that a person should associate himself with *talmidei chachomim* as much as possible, for thus he will learn from their ways.

The author of *Sefer HaChinuch* writes that connecting to *talmidei chachomim* upholds the entire Torah, and is a strong foundation to help the *neshama*. A person who is ordinarily in the company of *talmidei chachomim* will be held back from transgressing, *chas veshalom*. As Shlomo HaMelech writes, "He who goes with *chochma* will become a *chochom*."

(רמב"ם הל' דעות פ"ו ה"ב, ס' החינוך תל"ד)

Surprisingly, the Torah identifies Elisha HaNavi not as the foremost disciple of Eliyahu who received Torah teachings from him, but as "the one who poured water over the hands of Eliyahu." From this we see that serving *talmidei chachomim* is even more valuable than learning from them. Besides the *zechus* of helping them, it is specifically through such contact that one can receive guidance on how to live one's daily life.

(ברכות ז ע"ב, מחזור ויטרי תכט)

During the time of the **Tzemach Tzedek**, one could find *eltere chassidim* visiting Lubavitch year round. The younger *chassidim* would service them ("shimush"), and this enabled them to watch the *eltere chassidim* daven, eat, learn and interact with others.

Very often this would impact the young *chassidim* even more than their own study of *Chassidus*. As Chazal say, "Being of service to Torah sages is superior even to Torah study," for study produces a learned person, whereas *shimush* produces an *oved HaShem* and a *chossid*.

(לקו"ד ח"ד ע' תרפח)

Receiving Hadracha

Chazal say that one who is knowledgeable in Torah but did not receive guidance from *talmidei chachomim* is reckoned an *ignoramus*. Since he

has not been taught the principles according to which one should approach Torah scholarship, he is likely to apply incorrectly that which he has learnt.

(סוטה כב ע"א)

In a letter to a certain *elterer chossid*, the **Rayatz** of Lubavitch pleads with him to farbreng with the younger *chassidim*: "Guidance in *Chassidus* can only be transmitted from one *chossid* to another, just as one candle is lit from another. It has been the practice of *Anash* throughout the generations to devote time to hearing a rich vort from *eltere chassidim*."

"My father, the Rashab, praised this practice and once told me, "This practice has produced true *chassidim*! In whom will you find the meaty essence of *Chassidus*? Only in those who, like humble disciples, cleaved closely to *eltere chassidim*. Their perceptions are distinctively superior. Many think that *Chassidus* is *haskala*, scholarship; that is a mistake! *Chassidus* is recognizing how *Eloku*s permeates everything. And this recognition was always brought about through the *eltere chassidim*."

(אג"ק מוהרי"צ ח"א ע' תרטו)

In discussing the necessity for *chassidishe* guidance, the **Rayatz** once said: "Nowadays, many *chassidim* are completely off track. It is often the loud youngsters, lightheaded and spiritually insensitive, who arrogantly jump to the head table, and thus they remain naked – without a knowledge of *Chassidus*, and even without *middos tovos* and a *geshmak* in davening. For, as the age-old *chassidic* saying goes, 'Everyone needs *chinuch*, even a Rebbe who is the son of a Rebbe and the grandson of a Rebbe.'"

(סה"ש ה'ש"ת ע' 350)

Guided Thinking

The **Tzemach Tzedek** would often direct *yungeleit* to the eminent *chossid* and *rov* of Babroisk, **Reb Hillel Paritcher**, to be guided in the ways of *Chassidus*. Reb Hillel in turn would entrust each newly-arrived *yungerman* to the hands of two elder *yungeleit*, who in addition to

explaining the basics of *Chassidus*, would most importantly tell him *sippurim* about the *Rebbeim* and about *chassidim* of earlier generations. They would retell each story numerous times, until it penetrated the *yungerman* and he knew its details well. They would then ask him what lessons – in refining one's *middos*, in *yiras Shomayim* and *hashgacha protis* – could be learned from the story. They would urge the *yungerman* to toil, as one does in serious study, to find the lessons, and they would help him in his search. Finally, they would tell him what lessons they had been told by their own *madrich*, Reb Hillel.

On the first three Shabbosim of a newly-arrived *yungerman*, Reb Hillel would relate a *sippur* in addition to the teachings of *Chassidus* that he delivered every Shabbos. After the *sippur* they would all sing *niggunim*, and then discuss the lessons to be derived in *avoda* of the heart and the mind.

Reb Hillel explained the reason for this procedure: "The beginning of *avoda* is 'Adam ki yakriv mikem' – a person has to offer of himself to HaShem. Those words appear at the beginning of Sefer Vayikra. However, in order that one should know that he is an adam, and how an adam should conduct himself, the *seforim* of *Bereishis* and *Shmos*, which are mostly *sippurim*, come first."

(אגרות קודש מוהרי"צ ח"ד ע' נ"א)

Consider This



Why is it impossible to be a self-made *talmid chochom* or *chossid*?

Why specifically because *Chassidus* is a 'recognition' does it require guidance from *eltere chassidim*? And had it been scholarship?

Sparks of Greatness

Rebbi Yehuda HaNasi

Rebbi Yehuda HaNasi (also known as Rabeinu Hakadosh, or simply Rebbi) was a fifth generation *Tanna*. He was the *nasi* of the *Sanhedrin* and the author of the *Mishna*. He was born around the year ג'תתצ"ז to Rebbi Shimon ben Gamliel II. He was a descendant of Hillel and learned from Rebbi Shimon bar Yochai, Rebbi Elazar ben Shamua and Rebbi Yehuda bar Ila'i. Rebbi Yehuda HaNasi was very wealthy and greatly revered in Rome. He had a close friendship with the emperor Antoninus. He passed away on the 15th of Kislev, 218 A.D. (ג' תתקע"ט).

For thirteen years, Rebbi Yehuda HaNasi suffered for many years from bodily ailments, due to a the following story. Once as Rebbi was teaching Torah in the *Beis Medrash*, a calf being brought to *shechitah* escaped its master, and cuddled under Rebbi's cloak, begging to be spared. Rebbi said to the calf, "Go! For this you were created." Because of his lack of compassion, he suffered. Thirteen years later, a maidservant

was cleaning Rebbi's property when she came across a nest of weasels. She was about to sweep them away, but Rebbi told her to leave them, just as Hashem has compassion for all his creations. After that, his ailments disappeared.

(בבא מציעא פה ע"א)

Rebbi Yehuda HaNasi held a good relationship with Antoninus, the Caesar of Rome. Once Rebbi hosted Antoninus on Shabbos and served him cold foods, which Antoninus enjoyed. Sometime later, on a weekday, he hosted Antoninus again, this time serving him hot food. Antoninus noted that the food he had eaten the previous time had been tastier. Rebbi attributed this to a special spice that the food was missing. Antoninus was curious what spice could be missing that couldn't be obtained this time. Rebbi explained, "The spice is the kedusha of Shabbos. Do you have some 'Shabbos' to supply?"

(בראשית רבה יא,ד)

Halacha Sparks

The scope of Kibbud Av Vo'eim

Rabbi Chaim Chazan

A man from a non-frum Sephardi family grew up in an Ashkenazi environment and therefore adopted Ashkenazi customs, nussach and pronunciation. When the man was thirty five years old his father became frum in accordance with Sephardic tradition. The father then demanded that the son return to his Sephardic roots. Must he obey his father's demands under the mitzvah of 'kibbud av'?

The obligations of a child towards his parents are twofold: 'kibbud' and 'morah'.

The *mitzvah* of 'kibbud' is defined as caring for one's parents, providing them with all of their needs. Any requested activity does not directly benefit the parent is not required by 'kibbud'.

'Morah' is defined as reverence for parents such as not seating in their place and not contradicting their words. There is a dispute amongst the *poskim* whether 'morah' requires one to fulfill even those requests which bring no direct benefit to the parent.

Even those who include obedience in 'morah', do not require it when it would cause a loss to the child. Since ignoring a parent's request without a good reason constitutes a lack of reverence for the parent; ignoring the request out of concern for loss does not.

In conclusion: Since in this case, it would be very disruptive for the son and his family to change it's *halachic* lifestyle so significantly, therefore the son is not required to honor his father's request that he do so.

רמב"ן יבמות ו ע"א ד"ה מה להנך, רשב"א שם ד"ה מה להנך, ריטב"א שם ד"ה יכול ביאור הגר"א יו"ד ר"מ ס"ק לו, מקנה לא ע"ב ד"ה ת"ר איזהו, קובץ תשובות ח"א סי' יב

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Wednesday, Dec. 10
ד'וישב, אור ליום י"ט כסלו
9:00 p.m.

Topics:
Do the teachings of the Maggid differ from those of the Baal Shem Tov?
Is the derech of the Baal Hatanya different than the Maggid's?
What - if any - changes did Chassidim implement regarding Tefillah?
[Based on excerpts of the Kovetz of the Baal Hatanya, responding to charges against Chassidus at his interrogation by the Czar's government during his imprisonment]

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