



GUIDANCE FROM ELDERS

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 Frierdiker Rebbe pleads with him to *farbrenge* 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 Rebbe 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* (*sheshimshu es ziknei hachassidim*). Their perceptions are distinctively superior. Many think that *Chassidus* is *haskala*, scholarship; that is a mistake! *Chassidus* is recognizing how *Elokus* permeates everything. And this recognition was always brought about through the *eltere chassidim*.'"

(אג"ק מוהרי"צ ח"א ע' תרטו)

The Frierdiker Rebbe related: *Chassidim* would often ask *eltere chassidim* to explain to them the meaning of the words they had heard from the Rebbe at *yechidus*.

Reb Hillel Paritcher writes: Whoever wants to walk in the paths of *Chassidus* must be connected to the *tzaddik* of the generation, such as the Rebbe. In addition, one needs to have an elder *chossid* who will teach him and explain the Rebbe's teachings and *Chassidus*. This will enable the *chossid* to see and hear *Elokus*.

(סה"ש תש"ב ע' 123, מגדל עז ע' שנג)

GUIDED THINKING

The *Tzemach Tzedek* would often direct *yungeleit* to the eminent *chossid*, 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)

The Rebbe Rashab told his son, the Frierdiker Rebbe: One must spend time in the close company of elder *chassidim* (*raibn-zich arum eltere chassidim*). When I was younger I would spend time with Reb Shmuel Ber and Reb Chaim Ber during the few weeks that they spent in Lubavitch. I then spent three-quarters of a year applying what they spoke about.

(רשימות היוגן ע' תסא)

Reb Groinem, the revered *mashpia* in Lubavitch, would invest time and effort to hear what *eltere chassidim* had to say, and would go to wherever he could hear a *gut vort*, an insightful teaching. Whenever an *elterer chossid* visited Lubavitch, Reb Groinem would visit him and listen to what he had to say.

(רשימו"ד חדש ע' 264)

One *Yom-Tov*, at a *seuda* with his *chassidim*, the Frierdiker Rebbe related the following.

When a *chossid* is actively involved in his *shlichus* he is *mekushar* to the Rebbe. His entire being is bound to the Rebbe. He walks like a *chossid*, eats like a *chossid*, and sleeps like a *chossid*. However, this is only true of *chassidim* who have a mentor and accept guidance. If, however, one is his own teacher and guide, the above does not apply.

The Rashbatz would tell the story of a Russian non-Jew who found a pair of *tefillin*. Grabbing them by the straps, he headed for the market to sell his new *metzia*. A *yid* walking by was shocked to see a non-Jew holding *tefillin* by the *retzuos* and dragging the *batim* on the ground.

He asked him in astonishment, "Where did you get those?"

The non-Jew responded arrogantly, *Ya sam sapozhnik!* ("I myself am a cobbler!"), as if to show off his craftsmanship by claiming to have made them himself.

The Frierdiker Rebbe concluded, "The lesson is self understood..."

(סה"ש תרח"צ ע' 264)

CONSIDER THIS!

- Why specifically because *Chassidus* is a 'recognition' does it require guidance from *eltere chassidim*? And had it been scholarship?
- Why is it impossible to be a self-made *chossid*? How is this expressed in the story of the goy – "*sam sapozhnik*"?

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ט"ו כסלו



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, ג'תתקע"ט (218).



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)

לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה

CHURCH CLOCK

Is it permissible to tell the time by looking at a clock on a steeple of a church?

- The Torah prohibits deriving benefit from *avoda zara*. Having enjoyment by looking at the beauty of an *avoda zara* is also prohibited.
- *Poskim*, however, permit telling the time from a clock on a church because the clock was not placed there to beautify the church. It was only placed there because the church was usually the tallest building, and thus the clock would be spotted from a distance.
- It appears to the writer that nowadays (when everyone has their own time telling devices) clocks are placed on churches as a form of decoration.
- There are, however, other reasons mentioned in *poskim* that this is permitted. The main function of a clock is to tell the time; therefore, even if it beautifies the church, that is not its main function, rather an accompanying benefit.
- While some *poskim* forbid looking at the clock, the consensus of *poskim* rule leniently. However, even those who permit it, praise those who are more stringent not to look at the clock.

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A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

ABUNDANCE IN RUCHNIYUS

In the year 5727, a father of a soon to be *bar mitzvah* boy was in *yechidus*. On a note he had written prior to entering, he informed the Rebbe of his upcoming *simchah*. He added as an aside, that since Hashem has blessed him with the means, he plans on celebrating the *bar mitzvah* with great *harchavah* (abundance).



The Rebbe replied that the *harchovah* could, and should be in the *ruchniyus* aspect. The Rebbe's answer made waves, and *anash* throughout the world began being more particular with their spending on *simchas*.

Following this incident, one *bar mitzvah bachur* and his father informed the Rebbe at their *yechidus*, that in light of the Rebbe's directive, to have *harchovah b'ruchniyus*, the *bachur* will be saying two *maamorim*! The Rebbe awarded them with a broad smile of satisfaction.

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לע"נ ר' יצחק ב"ר אליהו ע"ה ור' דובער ב"ר אליהו ע"ה



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