

BEING CONNECTED

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לימוד הדבר תורה ליכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי ש"י בן רבקה לגאולה קרובה מן המיצר אל המרחב

CONNECTING TO A TZADDIK

The Torah tells us numerous times that there is a mitzvah to connect ourselves to Hashem ("וּבו תדבקו", "ולדבקה בו"). Chazal ask how this is possible, how does one attach himself to Hashem? They explain that this can be accomplished by connecting to true Talmidei Chachomim, who are constantly attached to the shechinam, and when we bond with them, we are thus connected to Hashem.

(כתובות קי"א ע"ב, ס' המצוות להרמב"ם מ"ע ו')

The Medrash says that when a person is connected to a tzaddik, he is helped and saved in the zechus of the tzaddik, like לוט who was saved in the zechus of Avrohom Avinu.

(מדרש תנחומא וירא פ"ט)

Reb Hillel Paritcher writes: One who wants to follow the way of chassidus, must be connected to the tzaddik of the generation, like the Rebbe. In addition, one needs to have an older chossid who will teach him and explain to him the Rebbe's teachings and chassidus. This will bring the chossid to see and hear אלקות.

(מגדל עז' ע' שנג)

At a farbrengen (שבועות תש"י) the Rebbe explained that we connect to a Rebbe only because of his direct connection to Hashem, not because of any other qualities he may have. The Rebbe then told about someone who asked the chossid Rashbatz whether the Rebbe Rashab has ruach hakodesh. The Rashbatz replied, "To me it makes no difference! I know that he is a Rebbe. If a Rebbe needs ruach hakodesh, then he surely has it, and if not, then what is there to be excited about?!"

The Rebbe added, "With much excitement, one person told me that the Frierdiker Rebbe had said to him 'Connect to me, and you will thereby be connected to whom I am connected to.' This person was very excited, thinking that the Rebbe had meant his father, the Rebbe Rashab. I did not want to disappoint him, but in truth, the Rebbe had meant that he will be connected to Hashem. In truth, this is what matters to us."

(תו"מ ח"א ע' 94)

THE WAY TO CONNECT

When asked, "How can one have hiskashrus if he does not know the Rebbe personally?" the Frierdiker Rebbe said, "True hiskashrus is brought about by learning Torah. Learning my chassidus, reading my sichos, joining אנ"ש and the temimim in their learning and farbrenging, fulfilling my request of saying Tehillim and keeping the set times for learning - this is hiskashrus.

(היום יום כ"ד סיון)

The chossid Reb Meir Simcha Chein once went into yechidus with the Rebbe Rashab, and complained that during previous years his hiskashrus to the Rebbe had been much stronger. The Rebbe answered, "The hiskashrus of one neshama to another neshama is through Torah. Learn my chassidus!" When Reb Meir Simcha told the Rebbe that he does not have any of the Rebbe's maamarim, the Rebbe replied, "Amongst the talmidim of Tomchei Temimim, you will be able to get copies of the maamarim for an inexpensive price..."

(לשמע און ע' 104)

The chossid Reb Yankel Landau related: "At the farbrengen of י"ט כסלו תרע"ט, the Rebbe Rashab spoke that in עולם הבא one should also request from the Rebbe. Full of emotion, the chossid Reb Zalman Havlin jumped to his feet, 'Who knows if we will be able to find the Rebbe's door?!' The Rebbe told him not to worry, 'You will find the door...' At this point, I asked the Rebbe what will be when they ask me, 'What connection do you have with the Rebbe? Did you do what the Rebbe told you?' The Rebbe answered, 'Indeed! One must follow directives,' but immediately added, 'Yet, we have a Rebbe. [One can say] I was together with him; I heard Torah from him, and I learned his Chassidus.'"

(שמועות וסיפורים ח"א ע' 184)

In numerous letters to those interested in being connected to them, the Rebbeim emphasized that true hiskashrus must include fulfilling the directives of the Rebbe and learning his Torah.

In one letter to some talmidim the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote: "I was pleased to hear you thanking Hashem regarding your connection to me. However, you must contemplate whether you are truly

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connected to me, whether it is imaginative, or just an empty slogan. True hiskashrus must bring one to action. You know that I demand from all talmidim, especially those connected to me, to bring the light of Torah and mitzvos into the Yiddishe homes and to create an atmosphere of Torah and yiras shomayim. Have you fulfilled this? With what are you connected to me? Until you join one of these activities, your words about hiskashrus are empty slogans."

(אגרות קודש מוהרי"צ ח"ה ע' רכ"ב)

A DEEPER CONNECTION

A chossid once journeyed to his Rebbe and went in for yechidus. He told the Rebbe of his ruchniyus'dike challenges, and also mentioned his business troubles. The Rebbe gave him advice and gave him a brocha, and shortly after, the chossid's business greatly improved. A wife of one of the chossid's neighbors noticed the sudden increase in success, so she nagged her husband, who was not a chossid, to go to the Rebbe. Her husband finally agreed and traveled to the Rebbe to ask for advice and a brocha for success in parnasa. "I have no advice for you," the Rebbe told him. "But you had for my neighbor," complained the simple man. As an explanation, the Rebbe told him a mashal.

A merchant traveled to Leipzig, to buy and sell his merchandise. When it was time to return home, he noticed that the wheels of his carriage needed to be oiled, but all the shops were closed. Walking around in an anxious search, he finally met a fellow businessman who offered to sell him some of his oil. Seeing this, another wagon driver, asked to buy oil as well. "I do not sell oil; I deal with precious stones and diamonds," the businessman replied. "But you gave the other man," the driver protested. The businessman said, "How can you compare? We do business together, and I am always ready to do him an extra favor, but in general, I do not sell oil."

Finishing the mashal, the Rebbe continued, "Your neighbor, the chossid, has always come to me for guidance in his Avodas Hashem. His gashmiyus'dike needs only come up while we discuss his ruchniyus'dike needs, and sensing his difficulties, I try to help him. However, you have approached me only for your gashmiyus'dike needs, and this is not my 'business'."

(רשימות דברים לר"י חסידים)

After the Mittlerer Rebbe's histalkus on ט' כסלו תקפ"ח, the Tzemach Tzeddek did not want to accept the nesius, preferring to earn a parnassa by teaching young children. In due course, however, the Tzemach Tzeddek was enlisted to learn with the 'Yoshvim' (full time learners) in Lubavitch. At that time, the yoshvim numbered more than one hundred chassidim, who spent their time learning and davening in the Mittlerer Rebbe's large Beis Medrash.

Six months later, many of the חסידים, as well as representatives from the colonies founded by the Mittlerer Rebbe, traveled to Lubavitch for Shavuos. After much entreating, the Tzemach Tzeddek finally agreed to accept the nesius on Erev Shavuos, causing great rejoicing in the city of Lubavitch.

At that time, though the חסידים of the Alter Rebbe and the Mittlerer Rebbe treated the Tzemach Tzeddek with the respect of

a Rebbe, they were not yet connected to the Tzemach Tzeddek with the inner connection that hiskashrus entails. Regardless, they wholeheartedly advised the younger chassidim to connect to the Tzemach Tzeddek with a strong inner hiskashrus. They also divided the country amongst them, each taking responsibility to travel around a specific area, to arouse אנ"ש to follow the Tzemach Tzeddek.

Some years passed, and for the Yom Tov of שבועות תקצ"א, many Chassidim traveled to Lubavitch, amongst them Rabbonim, melamdim and many חסידים of the Alter Rebbe. On their return journey, some of them passed through Dubrovno, where the gaon Reb Nechemia lived. Reb Nechemia, had been a תלמיד מובהק (singular student) of the Alter Rebbe and a chavrusa of the Tzemach Tzeddek, and did not travel to Lubavitch. When the great chassidim, Reb Aizik Homiler, Reb Moshe Vilenker with his brother Reb Zev, Reb Zalman Zezmer, Reb Pesach Molostovker, and Reb Yekusiel Lepiler arrived in Dubrovno they went to visit Reb Nechemia.

Meeting them, Reb Nechemia related a dream he had recently dreamt. "The Alter Rebbe appeared to me and asked: "Why do you not have a rav? ועשה לך רב". When I asked who I should take as a rav, the Alter Rebbe gave a deep explanation, indicating that I should go to the Tzemach Tzeddek. Therefore, for this coming Shabbos, I will be traveling to Lubavitch to the Tzemach Tzeddek."

His words made a tremendous impression on all those present, and after some discussion they decided to join him and travel back to Lubavitch. That Shabbos, the Rebbe said three maamarim, and those חסידים who had not yet accepted the Tzemach Tzeddek as Rebbe, now accepted him.

The Rebbe Rashab, when telling this story, would conclude, "Old-time chassidim had an inner feeling in Chassidus and avoda, and were able to properly recognize the truth. For three years, these great chassidim worked on an essential matter (ענין פנימי) with literal mesiras nefesh, spoke from their heart (דברים היוצאים מן הלב) about connecting to the Rebbe, and yet understood that they do not yet have the true connection to the Rebbe. They reached this level through their avoda in learning and davening. Only after three years did they reach a real connection to the Rebbe. That is a chossid and that is chassidus!"

(ספר השיחות תרצ"א ע' 245)

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