

SICHA STORY

PROJECT LIKKUTEI SICHOS | 5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL



Likkutei Sichos, Volume 21

Parshas Zachor (*First Sicha of the week*)

- Rabbi Yossi Nemes, Metairie, Louisiana

Amalek is ok with a Yid having Mochin, understanding, and knowing G-dliness, as long as this understanding does not affect our Middos or lead to refining our character traits. Knowledge of Hashem should bring us to Kabbalas Ol and proper Middos, which necessitate doing, saying, and thinking what we are supposed to. Here is a selection of stories related to the theme and about being Chayolim.

The purpose of study!

From Sefer Hasichos 5700, Shabbos Parshas Kedoshim:

One day in the year 5638 (1878), a group of Rebbe Mahrash's chassidim together reviewed the mamar LeHavin Or Ein-Sof ("To understand the infinite Ein-Sof light").

In the course of their erudite discussion, they analyzed twenty-one analogies for this light – a torrent of haskalah, the cerebral scholarship of Chassidus.

One of the Chasidim present was the eminent, R. Chaim Ber [Vilensky] from Kremenchug. After the discussion subsided, he asked: "But how does one become a chassid...?"

When this was shared with my father (The Rebbe Rashab) he said: "this kind of perception came to R. Chaim Ber in the course of avodas hatefillah – that the smallest endeavor in correcting and refining one's middos, is superior to the loftiest and most profound intellectual exercises.

Naaseh Before Nishma of a first-generation Chasid!

As told by Rabbi SB Avtzon (some say the story was with the Rebbe Maharash):

The Alter Rebbe once sent a messenger to two devoted chassidim living in the same town. The Shliach met with the first chassid. "The Rebbe sent me to tell you that he needs funds [for one of his activities]," he explained.

"How much does the Rebbe need?" asked the man. "He didn't specify an amount," the messenger replied. "He simply instructed me to give you this message."

"If that is the case," he replied, "please wait a few moments, and I will put something together immediately."

The Chasid searched through his house and collected all the money he had available. Handing it to the messenger, he said, "This is all I have in my possession now. Please bring it to the Rebbe, and I will see what else I can do."

The messenger accepted the money and made his way to the second Chasid. Once again he was greeted with the utmost respect, and he repeated the Rebbe's message, receiving the same response: "How much money does the Rebbe need?"

"He didn't specify an amount," the messenger replied. "He just instructed me to give you this message." "In that case," the man decided, "I will travel to the Rebbe tomorrow and ask him how much he needs, and I will give him whatever he requests."

When the messenger returned to the Alter Rebbe, he handed the Rebbe a single envelope, identifying the person who had given it to him. "And what about the second individual?" inquired the Alter Rebbe. "Did you visit him as well and relay the message?" "I did," explained the messenger. "But since he did not know how much money the Rebbe needs, he said he will come here tomorrow and ask the Rebbe directly. He is prepared to give whatever amount the Rebbe specifies."

"I hope," the Alter Rebbe murmured, "that it will be before an incident!"

The following morning, the first chassid awoke and traveled to the Rebbe at once to ask him if there was anything else he should do. As soon as he entered, the Alter Rebbe told him: "You should leave your town for a new location." Hearing these words, he immediately returned home and sold or gave away most of his belongings. He loaded his wagon with a few essentials and began to travel, not knowing where to go or what to do. "We will certainly receive some kind of sign that will show us where to settle," he reassured his family. "In the meantime, we must obey the Rebbe's instructions and leave."

The second student also woke early that morning with plans to travel to the Rebbe. Reasoning that it was not proper to travel before praying, he first went to shul. Then he went home, ate breakfast, instructed his employees what to do in his absence, and prepared to depart.

He was just about to board his wagon when a storm broke out, and lightning struck a nearby house. It took only moments for the entire town to become a raging inferno. He barely managed to save himself and his family but lost his possessions.

When the Rebbe Maharash told this story, he concluded:

“Both men were eager to fulfill the Alter Rebbe’s request but with a significant difference. The first chassid understood that obedience is paramount, and one must listen to the Rebbe’s words even if he doesn’t understand them. The second chassid also knew that one must listen. His listening, however, followed his understanding. Once he knew exactly what the Rebbe wanted, he was prepared to fulfill the request in its entirety, but his commitment was limited by his own understanding.”

What is the point of studying Chasidus without Avodah?

From the Chapter titled Iskafya, in the book “A Life Changing Mashpia!”, page 259:

Reb Shloma Chaim would say “The entire goal of studying and immersing oneself in Chasidus before Davening, is the Davening-with-Avodah that follows it, and the entire of Avoda’dike Davening is the practical conduct that follows it. To drive the point home he would ask, “What is the point of cooking a succulent delicacy in a pot with a hole in it?”

The Rebbe has soldiers!

It is told that Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka once commented to Rabbi Yochanan Gordon that her father, the (Freidiker) Rebbe, had Chassidim, while her husband, the Rebbe, does not have the same caliber Chassidim. Rabbi Gordon responded, 'True, the Rebbe does not have Chassidim like the (Freidiker) Rebbe, but the Rebbe has -יִטְלָאֵן - soldiers!’

Later, when Rabbi Gordon passed in front of the Rebbe, the Rebbe said to him, “may your mind be at ease, like you put the Rebbetzin’s mind at ease!”

Don't we have an agreement?

I heard this from Reb Notke Bar Kahan's grandson, who also showed me a letter from Reb Notke writing to all his descendants, that began with this story:

Living in Stalin's Russia during the dark years of the early 1950s, we were cut off from the Western world and Chabad Chassidim, in and outside of the country, to the extent that we did not know about the Histalkus of the Rebbe Rayatz.

Anash in Riga heard the news on a short-wave radio broadcast from Israel at a clandestine Yud Tes Kislev Farbrengen, in 1952, almost three years after the Rebbe's passing!

The Chasidim who were there, including R' Shlomo Feigin, R' Yisroel Konson, R' Mulle Pruss, his son Zushe and myself, cried and cried and the mashke flowed. We found it so painful to digest this and for a long while, nobody could speak. Each of us was immersed in our thoughts and pondering the bond we had with the Rebbe.

"The hours passed, and the silence continued. Eventually, we realized we had to farbreng and accept the new Rebbe's leadership."

"Those present began to imagine what it would be like to have yechidus with the Rebbe for the first time. There we were, behind the Iron Curtain, picturing what it would be like to get out, have a yechidus, and what we would say to the Rebbe. One Chasid said he would ask for Moshiach, another that all Russian Jews be freed.

Then it was my turn and I said, "I will come to the Rebbe, and say, Rebbe I am your soldier! Whatever you ask of me, וועל איך פאלגען, I will comply!"

17 years later, I finally was able to leave the Soviet Union and move to Israel. The next Tishrei I traveled to the Rebbe and by my first Yechidus I shared with the Rebbe my anxiety about starting over in a new country and some of the difficulties I was facing. I wrote in my Tzetel that I was feeling down. The Rebbe told me "מען האט אפ גערעדט אז דו" ביסט א סאלדאט we have an agreement that you are a soldier and whatever I ask of you, you will comply! What I am asking from you is to be B'Simcha and that you should serve Hashem with joy!"

As the Rebbe was saying these words, almost verbatim what I had said 17 years earlier, I had a flashback to that night. It seemed like the Rebbe was continuing that conversation!
