

SICHA STORY

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Pirkei Avos, Perek 6 (First Sicha of the week)

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The end of the Sicha discusses how we can be "נהנין ממנו עצה ותושי" from a person who studies Torah Lishmo and, in fact, we ourselves can be עוסק בתורה לשמה

The Torah Lishmo Effect!

Reb Shneur Zalman Fradkin, the author of Toras Chesed, was one of the greatest rabbonim of his generation. He served for twenty years as the rav of Lublin and spent the last ten years of his illustrious life as the leading rabbinic authority of the Chabad community in Yerushalayim. He was a world-renowned Gaon who merited receiving a bracha from the Tzemach Tzedek so that he would not have to search through sefarim to find the sources that he needed. The Rebbe Maharash testified about him that the concept of forgetting didn't exist for him. The Rebbe Rashab said about him, "Even in earlier generations, he would be considered a gaon."

When Reb Shneur Zalman would visit Lubavitch, he would enter the Rebbe's room and he would either share a chidush, an innovative Torah idea, or present a halachic question that he was struggling with. When he came for Shavuos 5614, he prepared a pilpul which he reviewed in his mind before entering for yechidus.

“I was very happy with this pilpul,” he said afterward, “as I wanted to give the Rebbe nachas and by doing so, to be mekushar to him. We know that one who is mekushar to the Rebbe in this world will be mekushar to him in the upper world.”

He shared his chiddush and when he finished, the Rebbe said it was in contradiction to an explicit Mishna. The gaon was taken aback and he asked the Rebbe in which order of the Mishna? The Rebbe told him it was in Kodshim. The gaon asked the Rebbe in which tractate? The Rebbe told him B’choros.

The gaon began reviewing the entire tractate B’choros in his head and did not find the Mishna. The Rebbe then showed him how, from the explanation of a certain Mishna in B’choros, one could conclude the opposite of what the gaon had said. When the gaon shared this story with the Rebbe Rashab he added, “This is when I saw and felt what is meant by learning Torah lishmo.”

If you listen, you only need to ask once!

A Chassid of the Rebbe Maharash came for advice about investing in a particular business. Big investors had been showering him with “proofs” of the tremendous profits he would garner with such an investment, the Rebbe Maharash, however, advised against it in a clear and unequivocal way.

Satisfied with that counsel, the Chassid returned home; his response was eagerly anticipated by his investors. When he related the Rebbe’s advice, the investors were taken aback by the Rebbe’s judgment and nudged the Chassid relentlessly to invest, reminding him of the tremendous loss of an opportunity, were he to follow the Rebbe’s advice.

The Chassid returned to the Rebbe Maharash to get clarification about his answer. Maybe the Rebbe didn’t quite understand the nature of the investment. But the Rebbe remained firm: do not invest in this business. Hoping to get a different response, he visited the Rebbe a third time, but the Rebbe’s answer did not change.

So pressured was he by his business associates that they eventually wore him down and he was unable to withstand the pressure. He invested in the business and a short while later, as the deal turned sour, lost all his money.

The Chassid came running back to the Rebbe Maharash begging his forgiveness for not listening to the Rebbe's clear, prescient words.

The Rebbe Maharash told the Chassid, "There are three types of chassidim who ask my advice: One says, 'The Rebbe receives so many letters and reports from people, that the information he has amassed from them has given him broad knowledge about all areas of life. That's how the Rebbe knows what advice to give.' The second type says, 'No, he's actually brilliant and has such a good head that he knows the right thing to do in any situation, based on all his research about all the different areas he has studied over the years.' Then there's the third group which says the Rebbe has ruach hakodesh.

"You asked me the same question three times. Surely you fit into one of the above categories, so whatever kind of Chassid you are, you should have listened to my advice!"

It's all in the blueprint!

From myencounterblog.com: Dr. Rivkah Blau describes a Yechidus she and another college student had with the Rebbe about Yavneh, an organization that helped college students live Jewishly.

...At the end of the Yechidus the Rebbe said, "I've asked you a lot of questions; would you like to ask me some questions?"

"No, thank you." I declined. It had been a wonderful meeting and I had nothing to ask him. However, the fellow who was with me did have a question. "I have spent a Shabbat or two here in Crown Heights and I hear all kinds of wonderful stories about you. I hear that you know whether a person should have surgery, and you know which way to proceed with a legal case. Do you know more about medicine than doctors? Do you know more about law than lawyers? What is this?"

The Rebbe smiled, apparently unperturbed by the audaciousness of the question. "You know," he replied, "when a house is built, the architect draws up a blueprint. He gives the blueprint to the contractor and then the contractor tells the plumber how to do the

plumbing, the mason how to do the masonry, and the electrician how to do the electrical work. It's not that the contractor can do the tasks better than everybody, but he can read the blueprint, and that's why he can give the instructions."

He then quoted the Zohar which states that the Torah is the blueprint for the world and explained that by understanding Torah, one can determine what should be done in other realms as well. "No, I don't know the law better than the lawyers or medicine better than the doctors but based on what I have learned in the Torah, I can give people advice."

I thought that was a beautiful answer...

Learning Tanya every day – Lishmo!

The previous Rebbe, Sichas Simchas Torah, 5698:

At a certain farbrengen, the Rebbe Rashab related that his father, the Rebbe Maharash, had once told him, "I want to take you along (to heaven) to hear Chassidus from the [Alter] Rebbe," and he brought him to a certain chamber which had no windows, but was flooded with light. There the Rebbe Rashab saw a certain person whom he knew (and here the Rebbe Rayatz mentioned the name of a well-known individual who had been a Chassid of the Mitteler Rebbe).

As this Chassid was not known as a man of such stature that he should be admitted to the chamber of the Alter Rebbe, the Rebbe Rashab asked his father: "What is he doing here?" And he was answered: "A man who knows Tanya by heart, or who studies a chapter of Tanya every day without fail throughout his life, is privileged to ascend to the chamber of the Alter Rebbe and to hear Chassidus from his mouth. However, such people are not enabled to see, but only to hear." (See *Sicha of Mishpatim*, 5754 that this simple Chasid learned Tanya daily Lishmo and without any ulterior motive).
