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SHAVUOS חג השבועות

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LIKKUTEI SICHOS

INSIGHTS INTO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Dedicated to

Emmanuel (Mendel) Karp

1905 - 1989

son of Bernard (Berl) and Rose (Rezele)

Manny Karp was born in the United States in 1905. His first language was Yiddish. Losing his mother to the Spanish Flu shaped his resilience and commitment to helping others, ultimately leading to a career as a guidance counselor in Philadelphia public schools. He also served as the director of Camp Akiba in the Poconos for many years.

Karp's legacy is characterized by his optimism and unwavering dedication to learning and mentorship. Emmanuel Karp died in 1989.

SHAVUOS I | חג השבועות א

Adapted from a *sichah* delivered on *Shabbos Parshas Behar-Bechukosai,* 5718 (1958)

Introduction

In this *sichah*, the Rebbe teaches us mystical arithmetic. He shows us how to count in the language of the soul, where each number represents fundamental spiritual realities.

One represents G-d in His transcendent simplicity. In this perfect unity, there is nothing else – no world, no complexity – just pure Divine oneness.

Two introduces the challenge of duality – G-d and the world existing as separate realities. This creates profound spiritual tension: How can there be anything other than G-d? How can the finite coexist with the infinite?

Three represents the ultimate resolution: The world becomes fused with G-d to the extent that it does not have an independent identity. Nevertheless, this is not a return to the original oneness of *One*, but a higher unity that encompasses and transforms everything within it. At this level, diversity is not a contradiction to oneness, but rather the most complete extension of it.

This is what makes Shavuos such a unique festival. It celebrates not just the giving of the Torah, but the achievement that the Torah makes possible: the transformation of the world into a medium for the complete expression of Divine unity.

From Nissan to Sivan: A Journey to Complete Unity

Why Three Rather Than One

1. The Giving of the Torah took place in the month of Sivan, the third month (when counting from Nissan). **Since everything – especially matters concerning the Torah and its *mitzvos* – is guided by *Hashgachah Pratis* (Divine Providence), we can infer that the Torah is connected with** the concept of **"three."** Moreover, **the connection between the third month and the Giving of the Torah is explicitly highlighted by our Sages,** who taught,[1] **"A threefold Torah was given to a threefold people in the third month."**

This raises a question: What is the unique quality highlighted by **specifying** that **the** Torah was given in the **"third" month?** That **focus is particularly** puzzling **since the entire purpose of Torah is to draw down into the world** G-d's singular unity – **that "G-d is One"** – which is revealed **through the "one Torah." Thus, the distinctive aspect of the Torah appears to lie in oneness, not in** its **threefold** aspect.

Moreover, the connection to the third month relates primarily to the Torah, as reflected by our Sages' wording: "A threefold Torah... in the third month." However, there were ***mitzvos* even before the Giving of the Torah, for example, the** seven ***mitzvos* commanded to Noach** and **his descendants, the *mitzvah* of circumcision, and the *mitzvos* that were commanded at Marah. True, none of these are equivalent to** the *mitzvos* given at Sinai. Indeed, **even the *mitzvos*** that existed previously **were imbued**

א. מַתַּן תּוֹרָה אִיז גֶעוֶוען אִין חוֹדֶשׁ סִיוָן, חוֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי. דֶערְפוּן אִיז פַארְשְׁטַאנְדִיק אַז תּוֹרָה אִיז פַארְבּוּנְדְן מִיט "שְׁלִישִׁי". וָוארוּם אוֹיסֶער דֶעם וָואס אַלְץ, וּבִפְרַט דִי עִנְיָנִים פוּן תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹות, אִיז בְּהַשְׁגָּחָה פְּרָטִית, גֶעפִינֶען מִיר דֶעם פַארְבּוּנְד פוּן חוֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי מִיט מַתַּן תּוֹרָה מְפוֹרָשׁ אִין דִּבְרֵי רַזַ"ל[א], אוֹרְיַין תְּלִיתָאִי לְעַם תְּלִיתָאִי בְּיַרְחָא תְּלִיתָאִי.

אִיז נִיט פַארְשְׁטַאנְדִיק, וָואס אִיז דִי מַעֲלָה אִין חוֹדֶשׁ "שְׁלִישִׁי" דַוְקָא, וּבִפְרַט אַז דֶער גַאנְצֶער עִנְיָן פוּן תּוֹרָה אִיז דָאךְ צוּ מַמְשִׁיךְ אוּן מְגַלֶּה זַיְין אִין וֶועלְט דֶעם הֲוָיָ' אֶחָד, דוּרְךְ תּוֹרָה אַחַת, אִיז דָאךְ דִי מַעֲלָה פוּן תּוֹרָה אִין אַחְדוּת, נִיט אִין שְׁלֹשָׁה?

נָאךְ מֶער: דִי שַׁיְיכוּת פוּן חוֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי אִיז בְּעִיקָר צוּ תּוֹרָה, וְוִי דֶער לְשׁוֹן רַזַ"ל, אוֹרְיַין תְּלִיתָאִי כו' בְּיַרְחָא תְּלִיתָאִי.

מִצְוֹות זַיְינֶען גֶעוֶוען אוֹיךְ פַאר מַתַּן תּוֹרָה, וְוִי דִי מִצְוֹות בְּנֵי נֹחַ, מִצְוַת מִילָה אוּן דִי מִצְוֹות שֶׁנִּצְטַווּ בְּמָרָה. אוּן כָאטשׁ זֵיי זַיְינֶען אַלֶע נִיט גְלַיְיךְ אֲפִילוּ צוּ דִי זֶעלְבֶּע

1. *Shabbos* 88a. A threefold Torah refers to the Tanach, which includes three parts, Torah, *Neviim* ("Prophets"), and *Kesuvim* ("Scriptures"). A threefold people refers to the Jews who comprise three groupings *Kohanim*, Levites, and Israelites.

with a different distinction **when they were given** again **at Sinai.**[2] **Nevertheless, the concept of *mitzvos*, in general, existed previously. The primary accomplishment of the holiday of Shavuos, which is in the third month, was the Giving of the Torah.**

The superiority of Torah study over *mitzvos* is explained in *Tanya*[3] – that, through *mitzvos*, a person becomes a "chariot" for G-dliness. Now, **while a chariot is** entirely ***batel*** **("subservient and nullified") to its rider, it is not one with the rider. By contrast, the person becomes truly united with G-d through the Torah,** for when he studies Torah, his mind becomes utterly one with the wisdom of G-d that the Torah expresses.

According to this explanation, the original **question becomes even more puzzling: Why was the Torah, through which a person becomes one with G-d, given specifically in the third month?** Why the emphasis on three rather than one?

מִצְווֹת ווִי זֵיי זַיְינֶען גֶעגֶעבְּן גֶעווָארְן בְּסִינַי[ב], אָבֶּער דֶער עִנְיָן פוּן מִצְווֹת בִּכְלַל עַל כָּל פָּנִים אִיז גֶעווֶען אוֹיךְ פְרִיעֶר. דֶער עִיקָר אוֹיפְטוּ פוּן חַג הַשָּׁבוּעוֹת שֶׁבַּחוֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי אִיז גֶעווֶען - מַתַּן תּוֹרָה.

דִי מַעֲלָה פוּן תּוֹרָה אוֹיף מִצְווֹת ווֶערְט דֶערְקְלֶערְט אִין תַּנְיָא[ג], אַז דוּרְךְ מִצְווֹת ווֶערְט מֶען אַ מֶרְכָּבָה צוּ אֱלֹקוּת, ווָאס מֶרְכָּבָה אִיז בָּטֵל צוּם רוֹכֵב, אָבֶּער זִי אִיז נִיט אֵיין זַאךְ מִיטְן רוֹכֵב; דוּרְךְ תּוֹרָה אָבֶּער ווֶערְט מֶען פַארְאֵיינְצִיקְט מַמָּשׁ מִיט דֶעם אוֹיבֶּערְשְׁטְן.

לוֹיט דֶעם אִיז נָאךְ מֶער נִיט פַארְשְׁטַאנְדִיק, ווִי קוּמְט עֶס ווָאס תּוֹרָה דוּרְךְ ווֶעלְכֶער מֶען ווֶערְט אֵיין זַאךְ מִיטְן אוֹיבֶּערְשְׁטְן, אִיז גֶעגֶעבְּן גֶעווָארְן בַּחוֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי דַּוְקָא?

When Unity Encounters Duality

2. To explain the **idea: Unity, not duality, is indeed the ultimate goal. However, when is unity genuine?** When it prevails even in a setting where **it is challenged, when a person is aware of another existence and nevertheless preserves true unity. If he is entirely unaware of any other existence, there is no proof yet that his** commitment to **unity is genuine.** After all, **there is no way to know what will happen when he** is confronted with **the existence of something else.**

ב. דִי דֶערְקְלֶערוּנְג דֶערְפוּן אִיז:

דֶער תַּכְלִית אִיז טַאקֶע אַחְדוּת אוּן נִיט שְׁנִיּוּת חַס וְשָׁלוֹם. ווֶען אָבֶּער אִיז דִי אַחְדוּת אַן אֱמֶת'עֶ אוּן אוֹיסְגֶעפְּרוּאווְטֶע אַחְדוּת, בְּעֵת מֶען ווֵייסְט פוּן נָאךְ אַ מְצִיאוּת אוּן פוּנְדֶעסְטְווֶעגְן הַאלְט מֶען בַּיי אַחְדוּת אֲמִיתִּית. אוֹיבּ מֶען ווֵייסְט אִינְגַאנְצְן נִיט פוּן קֵיין אַנְדֶער מְצִיאוּת - אִיז נָאךְ קֵיין רַאְיָה נִיט אַז דִי אַחְדוּת בַּיי ווֶעלְכֶער מֶען הַאלְט אִיז אַן אֱמֶת'עֶ, מֶען ווֵייסְט נָאךְ נִיט ווָאס ווֶעט מִיט אִים זַיְין ווֶען עֶר ווֶעט זִיךְ דֶערְווִיסְן פוּן אַ צְווֵייטֶער מְצִיאוּת.

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2. **See *Rambam's* Commentary on the Mishnah, *Chulin*, the end of ch. 7: "Pay heartfelt attention to the fundamental principle: ...** Everything that we observe today is being observed only because of the Holy One, blessed be He's commandment to Moshe and not because of what the Holy One, blessed be He, told the Prophets who preceded him."

3. **Tanya, chapter 23;** see **the notes of the *Tzemach Tzedek* to that chapter. See also *Tanya*, chs. 4 and 5.**

This is illustrated by the well-known analogy regarding the descent of the soul into this world:[4] **A king wanted to test the strength of the connection of** his **son,** the prince, to him. The son was **taken from the royal palace and brought to a distant place among lowly people. Conducting himself as a prince even there would demonstrate that he is truly connected to his father, the king.**

This same principle applies concerning the concept mentioned above: True oneness is demonstrated when the person enters a setting characterized by **duality, encounters an opposing force, and despite that, his** consciousness of **unity remains unaffected.**

Within this approach, there are two possible **methods: a) He negates the opposing existence and completely disregards it. b) He transforms that very existence into a conduit for unity.**

The unity achieved through the second method is deeper and more authentic. When he merely negates an opposing entity, the entity that contradicts and opposes unity still exists; it's just that he disregards it. True unity is established **when the oneness penetrates so deeply that every entity itself becomes a conduit for unity.**

ווי עֶס אִיז בַּאווּאוּסְט דֶער מָשָׁל וועגְן עִנְיָן יְרִידַת הַנְּשָׁמָה לְמַטָּה, פוּן אַ בֶּן מֶלֶךְ וָואס מֶען ווִיל אוֹיסְפְּרוּאוּוְן ווִי שְׁטַארְק עֶר אִיז פַארְבּוּנְדְן צוּם מֶלֶךְ, נֶעמְט מֶען אִים צוּ פוּן דֶעם הֵיכַל הַמֶּלֶךְ אוּן מֶען פִירְט אִים אַוועק אִין אַ ווַייטְן אָרְט צְווִישְׁן נִידֶערִיקֶע מֶענְטשְׁן, אוּן ווֶען אוֹיךְ דָארְטְן פִירְט עֶר זִיךְ אוֹיף ווִי אַ בֶּן מֶלֶךְ, זֶעט מֶען, אַז עֶר אִיז בֶּאֱמֶת צוּגֶעבּוּנְדְן צוּ זַיְין טַאטְן, דֶעם מֶלֶךְ.

אוּן אַזוֹי אוֹיךְ בַּיי דֶעם עִנְיָן. ווֶען עֶר קוּמְט אִין אַן אָרְט פוּן שְׁנִיּוּת, עֶר בַּאגֶעגְנְט זִיךְ מִיט אַ פַארְקֶערְטְן עִנְיָן אוּן דָאךְ שְׁטֶערְט דָאס אִים נִיט צוּ אַחְדוּת, דַאן זֶעט מֶען אַז עֶר אִיז בֶּאֱמֶת מְיוּחָד.

אִין דֶעם גוּפָא זַיְינֶען פַאראַן צְווֵיי אוֹפַנִּים: א) עֶר אִיז מְבַטֵּל דִי מְצִיאוּת הַהָפְכִית, עֶר רֶעכְנְט זִיךְ מִיט אִיר לְגַמְרֵי נִיט. ב) עֶר מַאכְט דִי מְצִיאוּת גוּפָא אַ כְּלִי צוּ אַחְדוּת.

דִי אַחְדוּת אִין צְווֵייטְן אוֹפֶן אִיז אַ טִיפֶערֶע, אַן אֱמֶת'עֶרֶע. בְּשַׁעַת מֶען אִיז נָאר מְבַטֵּל דִי מְצִיאוּת הַהָפְכִית, אִיז נָאךְ דָא אַ מְצִיאוּת וָואס אִיז סוֹתֵר אוּן מְנַגֵּד צוּ אַחְדוּת, מֶער נִיט וָואס מֶען רֶעכְנְט זִיךְ נִיט מִיט אִיר. ווֶען אָבֶער דִי אַחְדוּת דְרִינְגְט דוּרְךְ אוֹיף אַזוֹיפִיל אַז יֶעדֶער מְצִיאוּת ווֶערְט אַלֵיין אַ כְּלִי צוּ אַחְדוּת, דַאן אִיז עֶס אֱמֶת'עֶ אַחְדוּת.

Escape, Engagement, and Integration

3. **The three** spiritual dynamics through which oneness encounters diversity **are** paralleled by **the three months: Nissan, Iyar, and Sivan:**[5]

Nissan is the first month, the month marking **the Exodus from Egypt.** At that time, **"the**

ג. דִי אוֹיבְּנְדֶערְמָאנְטֶע דְרַיי תְּנוּעוֹת זַיְינֶען אִין דִי דְרַיי חֳדָשִׁים, נִיסָן, אִיָּיר אוּן סִיוָן[ד].

נִיסָן אִיז חוֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן. אִין נִיסָן אִיז יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם, שֶׁנִּגְלָה עֲלֵיהֶם מֶלֶךְ

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4. See *Likkutei Sichos,* Vol. 14, p. 325, and the sources mentioned there, and see a somewhat similar analogy in *Kesser Shem Tov, Hosafos,* sec. 194.

5. **See also *Likkutei Sichos,* Vol. 1, pp. 265ff.** (translated in *Selections from Likkutei Sichos, Vayikra,* p. 383ff.).

6. The Pesach Hagadah.

King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, was revealed to them."[6] This was **a revelation from Above that had no connection to** the material setting of our world. This explains the Jews' reaction: **"The people fled"**[7] **– they fled from every** foreign influence **and clung to G-dliness.**

Iyar is the second month; we count the *omer* throughout the entire month. This *mitzvah* reflects **the refinement of the** emotional **traits of the animal soul. Here, we engage with** the material plane, a setting where **duality** exists **and** work to **refine it.**[8] **However, the** material **reality remains as it is – it has not** yet been permeated by **G-dliness.**[9]

This idea is also hinted at in the name of the month: Iyar (אייר), an acronym for Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, and Rachel (אברהם, יצחק, יעקב, רחל) – the four supports of the *Merkavah* ("Divine Chariot"). As noted, **a chariot is characterized by *bitul* to the rider;** however, it is **not united** with him.

Sivan is the third month, the month of the Giving of the Torah. It is when the two – the lofty spiritual plane **and the lower** material plane **– are synthesized into a third** and different type of **entity, one that transcends both** others. **This expresses the true unity**; all existence being fully **integrated within G-dliness.**

מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא, אַ גִילוּי מִלְמַעְלָה, וָואס הָאט קֵיין שַׁייְכוּת נִיט צוּ מַטָּה. כִּי בָרַח הָעָם, מֶען אַנְטְלוֹיפְט פוּן אַלְץ אוּן מֶען קְלֶעפְּט זִיךְ צוּ אֱלֹקוּת.

אִיָּיר אִיז חוֹדֶשׁ הַשֵּׁנִי. דֶעם גַאנְצְן חוֹדֶשׁ צֵיילְט מֶען סְפִירַת הָעוֹמֶר, - בֵּירוּר הַמִּדּוֹת דְּנֶפֶשׁ הַבַּהֲמִית. מֶען הָאט צוּ טָאן מִיט מַטָּה - שְׁנִיּוּת - אוּן מֶען אִיז דָאס מְבָרֵר. דִי מְצִיאוּת אִיז אָבֶּער נָאךְ אַלְץ אַ מְצִיאוּת, נִיט אֱלֹקוּת. דָאס אִיז אוֹיךְ דֶער רֶמֶז אִין דֶעם נָאמֶען פוּן חוֹדֶשׁ - אִיָּיר, רָאשֵׁי תֵּיבוֹת: אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק יַעֲקֹב רָחֵל, ד' רַגְלֵי הַמֶּרְכָּבָה, וָואס דֶער עִנְיַן הַמֶּרְכָּבָה אִיז נָאר בִּיטּוּל צוּם רוֹכֵב, נִיט יִחוּד.

סִיוָן אִיז דֶער חוֹדֶשׁ פוּן מַתַּן תּוֹרָה, חוֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי. מֶען נֶעמְט דִי צְווֵיי, מַעְלָה אוּן מַטָּה, אוּן מֶען מַאכְט פוּן זֵיי אַ דְרִיטְן עִנְיָן, וָואס אִיז הֶעכֶער פוּן זֵיי בֵּיידֶע - אֲמִיתִּית הַיִּחוּד וְהַהִתְכַּלְלוּת בֵּאלֹקוּת.

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7. *Shmos* 14:4. See *Tanya,* ch. 31.

8. See *Likkutei Sichos,* Vol. 1, p. 266ff. (translated in *Selections from Likkutei Sichos, Vayikra,* p. 385ff.).

9. To clarify the explanation in the main text which states that the second dynamic – wherein the person negates the opposing existence and completely disregards it – is paralleled by the Divine service of Counting the *Omer* in which one engages with the material plane, a setting where duality exists and works to refine it. On the surface, since the person is refining the material, how can it be said that he is disregarding it?

The resolution of the apparent contradiction depends on the conception that disregarding the world is also a means of relating to it. In other words, the Divine service of Nissan is not involved with the world at all. "The people fled," ignoring any connection to worldly existence. The Divine service of Iyar, by contrast, involves relating to the world and refining it. However, doing so involves a paradoxical state, for the world, as it exists in its own context, does not lend itself to refinement and Divine service; quite the contrary, it invites the pursuit of material pleasures. To refine the world, it is necessary to nullify the tendency towards material desire inherently connected with it and see it solely as a medium for the spiritual. This relates to the concept of a chariot that the Rebbe proceeds to mention, i.e., two entities, the material and spiritual, exist and the material serves the spiritual.

In a deeper sense, relating to material existence in this way can be considered as disregarding it because one is not paying attention to the natural tendency that material existence encourages. By contrast, the third dynamic encompasses the material as it exists within its own context and makes it part of the Divine dwelling. (For this reason, it is possible only after the second dynamic has been completed.)

The Torah: The Achievement of Singularity

4. For this reason, the Torah was given in the third month. The Torah is identified with unity. When a person fulfills a *mitzvah*, he indeed nullifies his own existence for the sake of observing **the *mitzvah* but does not become unified with it.**[10] **However, when studying the Torah, a person's mind becomes unified with the wisdom and will of G-d.**[11] **This is the concept of** the **"third."** The person **brings** together **his mind and the wisdom of the Holy One, blessed be He, as it were, and from these two creates a third entity,** his understanding of the Torah, i.e., the fusion of his mind and G-d's wisdom. "This is a most wondrous unity; in the physical realm, there is no unity similar or parallel to it,"[11] as **"all is one."**

This also explains the precise wording of the teaching,[12] **"Moses received the Torah from Sinai."** ***Mitzvos* were given** not only at Sinai but **also at Marah. By contrast, the Torah** was given specifically on Mount **Sinai. The significance of Sinai is that,** though a mountain, **it was "lower than all mountains,"** representing **the unity of two opposites,** lowliness and height.[13] There, the potential for such **unity was revealed specifically through the Torah.**

ד. אוּן דֶערְפַאר אִיז תּוֹרָה גֶעגֶעבְּן גֶעוואָרְן בַּחוֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי, ווַיְיל דֶער עִנְיָן פוּן תּוֹרָה אִיז יִחוּד. בְּעֵת מֶען אִיז מְקַיֵּים אַ מִצְוָה אִיז מֶען טַאקֶע מְבַטֵּל דִי אֵייגֶענֶע מְצִיאוּת צוּלִיבּ דֶער מִצְוָה, מֶען ווֶערְט אָבֶּער נִיט אֵיין זַאךְ מִיט אִיר. אָבֶּער אִין תּוֹרָה, ווֶערְט דֶער שֵׂכֶל פוּן מֶענְטשְׁן פַארְאֵיינְצִיקְט[ה] מִיט דֶער חָכְמָה אוּן דֶעם רָצוֹן פוּנֶעם אוֹיבֶּערְשְׁטְן. אוּן דָאס אִיז דֶער עִנְיָן פוּן שְׁלִישִׁי, עֶר נֶעמְט זַיְין שֵׂכֶל מִיט חָכְמָתוֹ שֶׁל הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא כִּבְיָכוֹל, אוּן פוּן זֵיי בֵּיידְן מַאכְט עֶר אַ דְרִיטֶע זַאךְ - כּוּלָא חַד.

דָאס אִיז אוֹיךְ וואָס מֹשֶׁה קִבֵּל תּוֹרָה מִסִּינַי. מִצְווֹת זַיְינֶען גֶעגֶעבְּן גֶעוואָרְן אוֹיךְ בְּמָרָה, אָבֶּער תּוֹרָה מִסִּינַי דַוְקָא. ווַיְיל דֶער עִנְיָן פוּן סִינַי אִיז דְמָכִיךְ מִכָּל טוּרַיָּא (וואָס עֶר אִיז נִידֶערִיקֶער פוּן אַלֶע בֶּערְג), יִחוּד ב' הַהֲפָכִים[ו], אוּן דֶער יִחוּד אִיז נִתְגַּלֶּה גֶעוואָרְן אִין תּוֹרָה דַוְקָא.

(משיחת ש"פ בה"ב, תשח"י)

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10. This concept is reflected in the description of the observance of the *mitzvos* as a Divine embrace (*Tanya*, the end of ch. 4). Even though the person bonds with G-d through the observance of the *mitzvah,* there remain three entities: the person, the *mitzvah*, and G-d.

11. See *Tanya*, ch. 5.

12. *Avos* 1:1.

13. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 1, pp. 276ff.

א) שבת פח, א.

ב) זע פירוש המשניות להרמב"ם חולין סוף פרק ז: ושים לבך על העיקר הגדול כו'.

ג) פרק כג ובהערות הצמח צדק שם. און זע אויך דארט פרק ד ופרק ה.

ד) זע אויך לקו"ש ח"א ע' 265.

ה) זע תניא פרק ה: והוא יחוד וכו'.

ו) זע אויך לקו"ש דארט עמוד 276.

SHAVUOS II | חג השבועות ב

Adapted from a *sichah* delivered on *Shavuos,* 5718 (1958)

Introduction

Why do we study Torah? The motivations are many and varied, quite possibly as many and varied as the people asked. Some study for the practical knowledge it provides – to know how to conduct themselves according to Jewish Law. Others are motivated by the spiritual rewards promised for Torah study, or by the obligation to fulfill G-d's command to learn. Still others study because Torah shows them the way to be "the best version of their selves," making them better people and better Jews.

All of these are legitimate and valuable motivations. In this *sichah*, spicing his explanations with the rich mystical terminology of the Kabbalah, the Rebbe goes deeper, clarifying that Torah study is not just about acquiring knowledge or even fulfilling an obligation. When Jews study the Torah, they are bonding directly with G-d's Essence. That understanding changes the entire approach. Like children who run to embrace their father not for any benefit or reward, but simply because of the pure love and bond between them, Jews cling to Torah study because it is the ultimate way to cling to G-d.

This is *Torah lishmah* – studying Torah as an end in itself, for the sake of Torah alone. It represents the highest form of Divine service, where the boundary between the student and the Divine wisdom dissolves, creating a unity that transcends all limitations and transforms both the individual and the world.

Torah Lishmah: the Torah as an End in Itself

At the Heart of Everything

1. **The** ***Zohar***[1] **states that** ***Shavuos*** **is loftier than all the festivals. For this reason, it is positioned in the middle, between Pesach and Sukkos.** This placement in the calendar points to its spiritual significance. In the *Zohar's* words, **it is "the center of everything."** Extending that concept, **the Torah** – the focal point of Shavuos – **is the central point of all matters.**

א. עֶס שְׁטֵייט אִין זֹהַר[1] אַז חַג הַשָּׁבוּעוֹת אִיז הֶעכֶער פוּן אַלֶע יָמִים־טוֹבִים. וָואס דֶערְפַאר אִיז עֶר אִינְמִיטְן, צְווִישְׁן פֶּסַח אוּן סוּכּוֹת, וַוייל עֶר אִיז אֶמְצָעִיתָא דְכוּלָא. תּוֹרָה אִיז דִי נְקוּדָּה הַתִּיכוֹנָה פוּן אַלֶע עִנְיָנִים.

The fact that ***Shavuos*** **is celebrated for only one day, unlike Pesach and Sukkos which are** celebrated for **seven and eight days** respectively, **does not** indicate **that this festival is less** significant. **On the contrary, the single day of Shavuos** expresses the uniqueness of the day, **establishing the** singularity of the Jewish people of whom it is said,[2] **"Who is like Your people Israel, one nation on earth."**

דָאס וָואס שָׁבוּעוֹת אִיז נִיט מֶער ווִי אֵיין טָאג, נִיט ווִי פֶּסַח אוּן סוּכּוֹת ווֶעלְכֶע זַיְינֶען זִיבְּן אוּן אַכְט טֶעג, אִיז נִיט וַוייל דֶער יוֹם טוֹב אִיז אַ קְלֶענֶערֶער, נָאר אַדְּרַבָּה, דֶער יוֹם אֶחָד פוּן חַג הַשָּׁבוּעוֹת טוּט אוֹיף דֶעם עִנְיָן פוּן וּמִי כְעַמְּךָ כְּיִשְׂרָאֵל גּוֹי אֶחָד בָּאָרֶץ.

This reflects **what was explained in the previous** ***sichah*** **– that the true concept of unity is found specifically in the Torah that was given in the third month**, the month that unites the opposite themes of the previous two months in singular unity.

דָאס אִיז ווִי פְּרִיעֶר גֶעזָאגְט, אַז אֲמִיתִּית עִנְיַן הָאַחְדוּת אִיז אִין תּוֹרָה שֶׁנִּיתְּנָה בַּחוֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי דַּוְקָא.

The Architecture of Excellence

2. The concept of Shavuos being in the center relates to the Kabbalistic concept of the middle vector. To explain:

ב. אִין קַו הָאֶמְצָעִי זַיְינֶען פַארַאן צְווֵיי מַעֲלוֹת: א) קַו הָאֶמְצָעִי אִיז

The *sefiros,* the Divine attributes, are often depicted in three vectors. **The middle vector possesses two**

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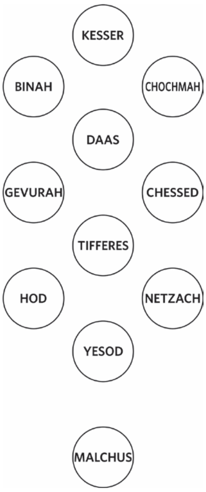
1. **See the extensive** explanation in **the** ***Zohar,*** **Vol. III, p. 96a. See also the** ***Hosafos*** **to** ***Torah Or,*** p. 110a-b.

2. *II Shmuel* 7:23.

The Alignment of the Sefiros in Three Vectors



qualities: a) It is superior to the other two vectors; its prominence is highlighted by **the Talmudic teaching**[3] **that** when walking on a journey, **"the master [should walk] in the center, [his] greater [student] should be on his right and [his] lesser [student] on his left." b) It is the root of all the vectors because the middle vector ascends to *kesser*,**[4] which is **the root and source of all the *sefiros*.**

Similarly, Shavuos, positioned between the other festivals, **possesses both qualities** that express the uniqueness of the middle vector: **a) Shavuos is loftier than the other festivals. b) The Torah was given on Shavuos and the Torah** describes **all the festivals,** mandating their observance.[5]

Since, **as mentioned previously, the primary focus of Shavuos is the Torah, the superiority of Torah study over the fulfillment of *mitzvos* reflects both of the above concepts: a) The *mitzvah* of Torah study is greater than all other *mitzvos*, as our Sages taught,**[6] **"Torah study is equivalent to all of them." b) It is the root that leads to all *mitzvos*, as our Sages taught,**[7] **"Great is [Torah] study, for it leads to action."**

מְשׁוּבָּח פוּן דִי אַנְדֶערֶע צְוֵויי קַוִים, אַזוֹי וְוִי מִיר גֶעפִינֶען אִין גְמָרָא[ח]: רַב בָּאֶמְצַע גָדוֹל מִימִינוֹ וְקָטָן מִשְׂמֹאלוֹ. ב) קַו הָאֶמְצָעִי אִיז דֶער שׁוֹרֶשׁ אוֹיף אַלֶע קַוִים, ווָארוּם קַו הָאֶמְצָעִי עוֹלֶה עַד הַכֶּתֶר, שׁוֹרֶשׁ וּמָקוֹר לְכָל הַסְפִירוֹת.

אַזוֹי זַיְינֶען אוֹיךְ אִין דֶעם אֶמְצָעִי פוּן חַג הַשָּׁבוּעוֹת פַאַרַאן בֵּיידֶע מַעֲלוֹת: א) חַג הַשָּׁבוּעוֹת אִיז הֶעכֶער פוּן אַנְדֶערֶע יָמִים טוֹבִים. ב) שָׁבוּעוֹת אִיז גֶעגֶעבְּן גֶעווָארְן דִי תּוֹרָה, אִין וְועֶלְכֶער עֶס שְׁטֵייעֶן אַלֶע מוֹעֲדִים.

ווִי גֶערֶעדט פְרִיעֶר, אִיז דֶער עִיקָר עִנְיָן פוּן חַג הַשָּׁבוּעוֹת - תּוֹרָה. דִי מַעֲלָה פוּן לִימוּד הַתּוֹרָה אוֹיף קִיּוּם הַמִצְווֹת אִיז אִין בֵּיידֶע עִנְיָנִים הַנַ"ל: א) מִצְוַת תַּלְמוּד תּוֹרָה אִיז גְרֶעסֶער פוּן אַלֶע מִצְווֹת, כְּמַאֲמַר רַזַ"ל[ט]: וְתַלְמוּד תּוֹרָה כְּנֶגֶד כֻּלָּם. ב) תַּלְמוּד תּוֹרָה אִיז דֶער שׁוֹרֶשׁ ווָאס בְּרֶענְגְט אַלֶע מִצְווֹת, כְּמַאֲמַר רַזַ"ל[י]: גָּדוֹל תַּלְמוּד שֶׁמֵּבִיא לִידֵי מַעֲשֶׂה.

3. *Yoma* 37a.

4. *Kesser,* "the crown," is the loftiest of the Divine attributes. Sometimes, it is considered in the schema of the Ten *Sefiros* and, at times, it is considered as supreme, transcending that schema.

5. Thus, it is the source of all other festivals.

6. *Mishnah, Peah* 1:1.

7. *Kiddushin* 40b.

A Lesson in Spiritual Anatomy

3. Clarifying and further extending these concepts:

The 613 *mitzvos* correspond to the 613 limbs and components of the human body. **The 248 positive commandments correspond to 248 limbs, and the 365 negative commandments correspond to 365 *giddim*.**[8] **The Torah** as a whole **corresponds to the brain. The superiority of the brain over all the limbs is twofold: a) The vitality of the brain is loftier** in nature **than the vitality found in all the other limbs. b) The brain also contains the vitality that flows to all the limbs, serving as their root** and source.[9] **Similarly, the superiority of Torah over the other *mitzvos*** reflects these two dimensions, **as explained above.**

ג. דִי דֶערְקְלֶערוּנְג אִין דֶעם אִיז: תַּרְיַ"ג מִצְווֹת זַיְינֶען כְּנֶגֶד תַּרְיַ"ג אֵבָרִים. רְמַ"ח מִצְווֹת עֲשֵׂה כְּנֶגֶד רְמַ"ח אֵבָרִים אוּן שְׁסָ"ה מִצְווֹת לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כְּנֶגֶד שְׁסָ"ה גִידִים[א]. תּוֹרָה אִיז מוֹחִין, אוּן פּוּנְקְט ווִי דִי מַעֲלָה פוּן מוֹחִין אוֹיף אַלֶע אֵבָרִים אִיז אַ צְווֵייעֶנְדִיקֶע: א) דֶער חַיּוּת פוּן מוֹחִין אִיז הֶעכֶער פוּן דֶעם חַיּוּת וָואס אִין אַלֶע אִיבֶּערִיקֶע אֵבָרִים. ב) אִין מוֹחַ אִיז כָּלוּל אוֹיךְ דֶער חַיּוּת וָואס אִין אַלֶע אֵבָרִים אוּן עֶר אִיז אוֹיף זֵיי אַ שֹׁרֶשׁ[ב]. אַזוֹי אִיז אוֹיךְ דִי מַעֲלָה פוּן תּוֹרָה אוֹיף דִי אַנְדֶערֶע מִצְווֹת, ווִי אוֹיבְּן דֶערְקְלֶערְט.

Beyond Reward or Reason

4. The middle vector possesses another virtue: It ascends to the inner essence of *kesser*, which surpasses even **the root and source of the *sefiros* within *kesser*.**[10]

ד. נָאךְ אַ מַעֲלָה אִיז דָא אִין קַו הָאֶמְצָעִי, שֶׁעוֹלֶה עַד פְּנִימִיּוּת וְעַצְמוּת הַכֶּתֶר, הֶעכֶער פוּן שׁוֹרֶשׁ וּמְקוֹר הַסְּפִירוֹת שֶׁבַּכֶּתֶר.

Similarly, the Torah as whole possesses a quality that surpasses **the abovementioned virtues – that it leads to the observance of *mitzvos* and is greater than all *mitzvos*. These virtues stem from the *mitzvah*** of **Torah study.** However, **there is also a virtue unique to the Torah itself: It is the wisdom of G-d,**[11] as hinted at in the verse,[12] **"I was mentored by Him...."**

אַזוֹי אִיז אוֹיךְ אִין תּוֹרָה אַז אוֹיסֶער דִי דֶערְמָאנְטֶע מַעֲלוֹת - וָואס זִי בְּרֶענְגְט צוּ מַעֲשֵׂה הַמִּצְווֹת אוּן אִיז גְרֶעסֶער פוּן אַלֶע מִצְווֹת - וָואס דָאס זַיְינֶען מַעֲלוֹת אִין מִצְוַת תַּלְמוּד תּוֹרָה, אִיז אוֹיךְ פַאַראן אַ מַעֲלָה אִין תּוֹרָה מִצַּד עַצְמָהּ, וָואס זִי אִיז חָכְמָתוֹ שֶׁל הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא, וָאֶהְיֶה אֶצְלוֹ אָמוֹן גו'[יג].

This is also the true meaning of Torah study *lishmah* ("**for its own sake**"), **according to the literal**

וָואס דָאס אִיז אוֹיךְ דֶער אֱמֶת'עֶר עִנְיָן פוּן לִימּוּד הַתּוֹרָה לִשְׁמָהּ, כִּפְשַׁט

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8. ***Zohar*, Vol. I, p. 170b.** *Giddim* is an inclusive term referring to blood vessels, sinews, and major nerves (*Rambam's* Commentary on the Mishnah, *Zevachim* 3:4).

9. ***Tanya*, ch. 51.**

10. *Kesser* possesses two dimensions: Within its external dimension is found the potential for all the *sefiros*. However, in addition, it possesses an inner dimension of its own, a magnificence that surpasses any comparison to other *sefiros*. The middle vector accesses that inner dimension.

11. **See *Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar*, p. 12a ff.,** where this concept is explained.

12. *Mishlei* 8:30. The translation of *amon* as "mentor" follows *Rashi* and other commentaries.

meaning of the phrase – for the sake of the Torah itself: not for the purpose of knowing how to conduct oneself, nor for the purpose of fulfilling the *mitzvah* of Torah study, but rather to study the Torah for the sake of the Torah alone.

To illustrate by analogy: A child who has not seen his father, the king, for some time, will call to him. When he sees his father, he will embrace him, hug him, and kiss him. His actions **are not** motivated by the thought of **any benefit he will receive from him; they come because he is** is **his father.** The inherent love he has for his father is his sole motivation.

When **a Jew** studies the Torah, he is holding fast to his Father, the King, **as our Sages**[13] **said, "It is Me that you are taking."** As such, **whenever he has a free moment, he** eagerly seizes **the opportunity to cling to his Father, the King, through the Torah. At that moment, he does not think about anything** else: **not about learning how to conduct himself** according to Torah Law, **not about fulfilling the *mitzvah* of studying the Torah. He grasps onto the Torah itself, because "the Torah and the Holy One, blessed be He, are entirely one."**[14]

הַלָּשׁוֹן - לְשֵׁם הַתּוֹרָה עַצְמָהּ. אֲפִילוּ נִיט צוּלִיב וויסן ווי זיך צוּ פִירְן, אוֹיךְ נִיט צוּלִיב קִיוּם מִצְוַת לִימּוּד הַתּוֹרָה, נָאר לֶערְנֶען תּוֹרָה צוּלִיב תּוֹרָה אַלֵיין.

עַל דֶּרֶךְ מָשָׁל אַ קִינְד וואָס הָאט אַ צַיְיט נִיט גֶעזֶען זַיְין פָּאטֶער, רוּפְט עֶר אִים, אוּן בְּעֵת עֶר דֶערזֶעט אִים, כַאפְּט עֶר זִיךְ אַרוּם מִיט זַיְין פָּאטֶער דֶעם מֶלֶךְ, אוּן הַאלְזְט אוּן קוּשְׁט אִים, וואָס דָאס אִיז נִיט צוּלִיב דֶער תּוֹעֶלֶת וואָס עֶר וועט פוּן אִים הָאבְּן, נָאר צוּלִיב דֶעם פָּאטֶער אַלֵיין.

אַזוֹי אִיז אוֹיךְ אַ אִיד, ווען נָאר עֶר הָאט אַ לֵיידִיקֶע מִינוּט, וואָס עֶר קֶען אַרַיְינְכַאפְּן אֶת אָבִיו הַמֶּלֶךְ דוּרְךְ תּוֹרָה, כְּמַאֲמַר רַזַ"ל[יד]: אוֹתִי אַתֶּם לוֹקְחִים, טְרַאכְט עֶר נִיט בְּשַׁעַת מַעֲשֶׂה וועגְן קֵיין זַאךְ, נִיט וועגְן לֵידַע אֶת הַמַּעֲשֶׂה, נִיט וועגְן קִיּוּם מִצְוַת תַּלְמוּד תּוֹרָה. עֶר כַאפְּט זִיךְ אָן אִין תּוֹרָה אַלֵיין, ווַיְיל אוֹרַיְתָא וְקוּדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא כּוּלָּא חַד[טו].

When Love Transcends Law

5. The above explanations **enable us to understand a teaching of the *Gemara:***[15] **"Hillel obligates the poor and Rabbi Elazar ben Charsom obligates the rich [in Torah study]."** Hillel was extremely poor and Rabbi Elazar ben Charsom was fabulously wealthy. Nevertheless, they persistently devoted their time to Torah study. Therefore, **if a poor or wealthy person appears** before the Heavenly Court in judgment **and claims that preoccupations prevented them from studying,** their arguments will be rebutted by citing the examples of **Hillel and Rabbi Elazar ben Charsom** who, notwithstanding their

ה. לוֹיט דֶעם וועט מֶען אוֹיךְ פַארְשְׁטֵיין וואָס עֶס שְׁטֵייט אִין גְּמָרָא[טו], הִלֵּל מְחַיֵּיב עֲנִיִּים וְרַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן חַרְסוֹם מְחַיֵּיב עֲשִׁירִים. אוֹיבּ עֶס ווֶעלְן קוּמֶען עֲנִיִּים אוּן עֲשִׁירִים אוּן טַעֲנֶה'ן אַז זֵיי הָאבְּן נִיט גֶעלֶערְנְט מִצַּד הַטִּרְדָא, וועט מֶען זֵיי בְּרֶענְגֶען אַ רְאָיָה פוּן הִלֵּל אוּן רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן חַרְסוֹם.

13. *Shmos Rabbah* 33:6, using slightly different wording; *Tanya,* ch. 47.

14. *Tanya,* ch. 23, in the name of the *Zohar* (see *Zohar Chadash,* p. 24a).

15. *Yoma* 35b.

extreme poverty or wealth, were continuously devoted to Torah study.

On the surface, from either perspective, this argument is not satisfactory. If such persons were giving **a false excuse and they really had time to study, one does not need to** cite examples of **Hillel and Rabbi Elazar ben Charsom.** They would be liable because they disobeyed **an explicit commandment,**[16] **"You shall meditate on it day and night." If there was** even **a short time when such a person could have studied, but did not, he is included among those** who incur the words of censure,[17] **"he has despised the word of G-d...." And if they truly did not have any time to study, how can they be obligated?**

This proves that there is a possibility from the standpoint of law, i.e., **according to the** person's obligation to **fulfill the *mitzvah* of studying the Torah, that he is exempt. Nevertheless, because of the excitement and delight that** he **should find in Torah study,** recognizing that **"the Torah and the Holy One, blessed be He, are entirely one," he should cling to Torah study even when he is exempt according to law.**

אִין פְּלוּג, מִמָּה נַפְשָׁךְ, אוֹיב דָאס אִיז אַ פַאלְשֶׁע פַארְעֶנְטְפֶערוּנְג, אוּן בֶּאֱמֶת הָאבְּן זֵיי גֶעהַאט צַיְיט צוּ לֶערְנֶען, דַארְף מֶען דָאךְ נִיט אָנְקוּמֶען צוּ הִלֵּל אוּן רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן חַרְסוֹם, עֶס אִיז דָאךְ אַ בְּפֵירוּשׁ'עֶר צִיווּי[יז]: וְהָגִיתָ בּוֹ יוֹמָם וָלַיְלָה. אוֹיב עֶס אִיז גֶעוֶוען אֵיין וַוְיילֶע וָואס עֶר הָאט גֶעקֶענְט לֶערְנֶען אוּן נִיט גֶעלֶערְנְט אִיז עֶר דָאךְ בִּכְלַל כִּי דְבַר ה' בָּזָה גו'[יח]; אוּן אוֹיב זֵיי הָאבְּן טַאקֶע בֶּאֱמֶת נִיט גֶעהַאט קֵיין צַיְיט אוֹיף לֶערְנֶען, ווִי קֶען מֶען זֵיי מְחַיֵּיב זַיְין?

אִיז דָאךְ אַ רַאְיָה דֶערְפוּן אַז עֶס אִיז דָא אַ מֶעגְלֶעכְקַיְיט וָואס מִצַּד הַדִּין, מִצַּד קִיּוּם מִצְוַת תַּלְמוּד תּוֹרָה, אִיז מֶען פָּטוּר, אוּן פוּנְדֶעסְטְוֶועגְן צוּלִיבּ דֶעם קָאךְ אוּן גֶעשְׁמַאק וָואס דַארְף זַיְין אִין תּוֹרָה, וָואס אוֹרַיְיתָא וְקוּדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ כּוּלָּא חַד, כַאפְּט מֶען זִיךְ צוּ צוּ דֶער תּוֹרָה אוֹיךְ ווֶען עַל־פִּי דִין אִיז מֶען פָּטוּר.

The Eternal Constant

6. This is also the reason why the Torah is identified with **truth, as our Sages taught,**[18] **"There is no truth but the Torah."**

Truth is constant; it allows for **no interruption. If something is subject to interruption, it cannot be true. As is well known,** our Sages[19] implied this concept when describing waters that dry up once in seven years as **"lying streams."** By contrast, "**truth endures forever.**"[20]

This is also alluded to by the very **letters** of the Hebrew word for truth, *emes: **alef, mem, sav.*** **As the *Talmud Yerushalmi***[21] **states, *alef* is the first of the**

ו. אוּן דָאס אִיז אוֹיךְ דֶער טַעַם וָואס תּוֹרָה ווֶערְט אָנְגֶערוּפְן אֱמֶת, כְּמַאֲמַר רַזַ"ל[יט], אֵין אֱמֶת אֶלָּא תּוֹרָה.

דֶער עִנְיָן פוּן אֱמֶת אִיז וָואס עֶס הָאט נִיט קֵיין הֶפְסֵק. דָאס וָואס הָאט אַ הֶפְסֵק אִיז נִיט אֱמֶת, כְּיָדוּעַ[כ] בְּעִנְיַן נְהָרוֹת הַמְכַזְּבִין. אֱמֶת אִיז - תִּכּוֹן לָעַד[כא].

וָואס דָאס אִיז אוֹיךְ מְרוּמָּז אִין דִי אוֹתִיּוֹת א' מ' ת', ווִי עֶס שְׁטֵייט אִין יְרוּשַׁלְמִי[כב], אַז א' אִיז תְּחִלַּת

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16. *Yehoshua* 1:8.

17. *Sanhedrin* 99a, citing *Bamidbar* 15:31. See *Tanya,* ch. 1.

18. *Berachos* 5b.

19. *Parah* 8:9. See also *Likkutei Sichos,* Vol. p. 36, footnote 2.

20. *Mishlei* 12:19. See also *Tanya,* ch. 13.

21. *Sanhedrin* 1:1.

letters, *mem* is the middle, and *sav* is the end. Truth is immutable, prevailing **everywhere. At the beginning, in the middle, and at the end, it remains the same.**

Therefore, the Torah as a whole **is identified with truth because it** is universal, **without any limitations,** while its ***mitzvos* are** grounded in the **limitations of time and place. Even the *mitzvah* of studying the Torah has time limitations.** For example, someone **who is occupied in his business following the guidelines of the Torah is exempt from studying the Torah during the time he must devote to his occupation. (The particular details** of his exemption **are clarified in the *Shulchan Aruch, Hilchos Talmud Torah.*)**[22] Similarly, Torah study has limitations in **space; one may not study in unclean places.**[23] **However, the Torah itself has no limitations, neither of time nor of place, as indicated by the *Gemara,***[24] **"If compelled, it is different."**

הָאוֹתִיּוֹת, מ׳ - אֶמְצָעִית הָאוֹתִיּוֹת, אוּן ת׳ - סוֹף הָאוֹתִיּוֹת, אוּן דֶער עִנְיָן פוּן אֱמֶת אִיז, אַז אוּמֶעטוּם, בַּיְים אָנְהוֹיבּ, אִין מִיטְן אוּן צוּם סוֹף, אִיז עֶר גְלַיְיךְ.

אוּן דֶערִיבֶּער וֶוערְט תּוֹרָה אָנְגֶערוּפְן אֱמֶת, וַוְיל זִי הָאט נִיט קֵיינֶע הַגְבָּלוֹת. מִצְווֹת זַיְינֶען בַּאגְרֶענֶעצְט אִין צַיְיט אוּן אָרְט. אוֹיךְ מִצְוַת תַּלְמוּד תּוֹרָה הָאט אִירֶע הַגְבָּלוֹת הַזְּמַן (דִי וֶועלְכֶע זַיְינֶען טָרוּד אִין זֵייעֶרֶע גֶעשֶׁעפְטְן עַל פִּי תּוֹרָה - זַיְינֶען פָּטוּר פוּן לִימּוּד הַתּוֹרָה אִין דֶער צַיְיט וָואס זֵיי מוּזְן הָאבְּן פַארְן עֵסֶק, ווִי עֶס וֶוערְן דֶערְקְלֶערְט דִי פְּרָטֵי דִינִים פוּן דֶעם אִין שֻׁלְחָן עָרוּךְ הִלְכוֹת תַּלְמוּד תּוֹרָה) וְהַמָּקוֹם (וָואס אִין מְקוֹמוֹת הַמְטוּנָּפִים טָאר מֶען נִיט לֶערְנֶען). אָבֶּער תּוֹרָה אַלֵיין הָאט קֵיינֶע הַגְבָּלוֹת נִיט, נִיט פוּן זְמַן אוּן נִיט פוּן מָקוֹם (ווִי עֶס שְׁטֵייט אִין גְמָרָא[כג]: לְאוֹנְסוֹ שַׁאנִי).

With No Limits, Not for Any Other Purpose

7. To put the above into action: we must continue studying the Torah constantly.

Our **study should not be** merely **to fulfill our obligation** to study the Torah **according to the** minimum requirements of the ***Shulchan Aruch.* (Ultimately,** such an approach can quite possibly **lead to calculating that, according to the *Shulchan Aruch,* we can fulfill our obligation with** just

ז. בְּנוֹגֵעַ לְפוֹעֵל אִיז - מֶען דַארְף הַאלְטְן אִין אֵיין לֶערְנֶען תּוֹרָה.

נִיט לֶערְנֶען צוּלִיבּ יוֹצֵא זַיְין פַארְן שֻׁלְחָן עָרוּךְ (אוּן סוֹף כָּל סוֹף בְּרֶענְגְט עֶס צוּ מַאכְן אַ חֶשְׁבּוֹן אַז עַל פִּי שֻׁלְחָן עָרוּךְ קֶען עֶר יוֹצֵא זַיְין מִיט פֶּרֶק א׳

22. See the Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch, Hilchos Talmud Torah* 3:2-5.

23. *Berachos* 24b-25a.

24. *Kiddushin* 33a. In that source, the Talmud explains that one is permitted to contemplate matters of Torah everywhere, except for the bathhouse and the lavatory. However, there are times when Torah thoughts come to him unbidden; they are beyond his control, as it were. Therefore, if they enter his mind, even while in the lavatory, he is not held liable for disobeying this prohibition.

Now, why would thoughts of Torah come to a person while he is in the lavatory? Not because he was seeking to fulfill the *mitzvah* of Torah study – quite the contrary, it is forbidden to study Torah there – but because he is bonded so intrinsically with the Torah that "he is compelled" to study. Since his Torah study results from this inner bond, it has no limits, neither in time nor in place.

This unbounded commitment to Torah study results from the unbounded nature of the Torah itself. Since it is one with G-d who has no limits, it also has no limits and produces an unlimited commitment among those who bond with it (the *maamar* entitled *VeKibeil HaYehudim,* 5711).

one chapter in the morning and one chapter in the evening). This approach is problematic for several reasons: Firstly, when making such a reckoning, **one must** make an honest **assessment of whether his calculation actually holds up according to the *Shulchan Aruch*. It may be that he has more time available and, therefore, even according to the *Shulchan Aruch* he is obligated** to study **more. Beyond this, even if things are as he maintains, nevertheless, because of the delight and excitement that he should find in the Torah, he must continue studying constantly.**

שַׁחֲרִית וּפֶּרֶק א׳ עַרְבִית). וואָרוּם אויסער דעם וואָס מען דאַרף וויסן צי זײַן חֶשְׁבּוֹן האַלט טאַקע אויס עַל פִּי שֻׁלְחָן עָרוּךְ, וואָרוּם עס קען זײַן אַז ער האָט גאָר מערער צײַט, וּבְמֵילָא איז ער אויך עַל פִּי שֻׁלְחָן עָרוּךְ מְחוּיָּב מער, אויסער דעם, אֲפִילוּ אויב עס איז אַזוי ווי ער האַלט, איז אָבער מִצַּד דעם געשמאַק און קאָך אין תּוֹרָה, דאַרף מען האַלטן אין איין לערנען.

Also, one should not make calculations claiming **that since "great is Torah study** for it leads to **action,"[25] therefore, when a practical question comes to him,** he will focus on it. Then, **he will sit down and thoroughly study the law from its source in the *Chumash*, through the *Gemara*, and all the** later Sages, including the ***Rishonim*[26] and *Acharonim,*[27] until the Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch*. However, when** there **is no** *halachic* question that is **practically relevant, he** thinks that he need **not study** as much. This is an invalid approach: **He must know that the essential nature of Torah** study **is Torah for the sake of Torah** (*Torah lishmah, lisheim haTorah*) **and he must continue studying the Torah every moment, and "make the Torah great and glorious."[28]**

אויך נִיט מאַכן קיין חֶשְׁבּוֹנוֹת, אַז דער גָּדוֹל תַּלְמוּד איז דאָך לֵידַע אֶת הַמַּעֲשֶׂה, אִיז בְּעֵת אַז עס וועט קומען צו אים אַ שְׁאֵלָה וועט ער זיך אַוועקזעצן און דורכטאָן דעם דִּין פון דעם מָקוֹר אין חוּמָשׁ מיט דער גְּמָרָא און אַלע רִאשׁוֹנִים און אַחֲרוֹנִים בִּיז דעם אַלטן רֶבִּי׳נס שֻׁלְחָן עָרוּךְ, אָבער בְּשַׁעַת אַז לְמַעֲשֶׂה איז עס נִיט נוֹגֵעַ לערנט ער נִיט - דאַרף מען וויסן, אַז דער עִיקָּר עִנְיָן פון תּוֹרָה איז תּוֹרָה צוּלִיב תּוֹרָה, און מען דאַרף האַלטן אין איין לערנען תּוֹרָה יעדע רֶגַע, און יַגְדִּיל תּוֹרָה וְיַאְדִּיר.

An Ageless Obligation

8. In light of the above, we can also understand why a child's obligation to study the **Torah differs from his obligation to observe *mitzvos:***

ח. לויט דעם אַלעמען, וועט מען אויך פאַרשטײן דעם חִילּוּק צווישן תּוֹרָה און מִצְווֹת לְגַבֵּי קְטַנִּים.

A child is exempt from the obligation to observe *mitzvos* according to Scriptural Law, but, in practice, **he is obligated because he must be trained in the**

פון אַלע מִצְווֹת זײַנען קְטַנִּים פָּטוּר. עס איז דאָ אַ מִצְוָה מִצַּד

25. *Kiddushin* 40b.

26. The *Rishonim* (literally, "the first ones") were the leading commentators on the Talmud and the *halachic* authorities who lived approximately during the 11th to 15th centuries CE, in the era before the writing of the *Shulchan Aruch*.

27. The term *Acharonim* (literally, "the later ones") is used to refer to the commentators on the Talmud and the *halachic* authorities who followed the *Rishonim* and have continued the chain of Torah study until the present time.

28. *Yeshayahu* 42:21.

observance of *mitzvos*. **However, that obligation is Rabbinic in origin**[29] **and is incumbent on the father, not on the child himself.**

חוֹבַת חִינּוּךְ, אָבֶּער דִי מִצְוָה אִיז נָאר מִדִּבְרֵי סוֹפְרִים[כד], אוּן דִי מִצְוָה אִיז אוֹיפְן פָאטֶער, נִיט אוֹיפְן קָטָן.

By contrast, concerning Torah study, it is stated,[30] **"It is a positive commandment from the Torah upon the father to teach his minor son the Torah."** Furthermore, **there is also an obligation upon the son; he is "obligated to learn by himself when he [attains] understanding."**[31]

אָבֶּער בַּיי תּוֹרָה שְׁטֵייט[כה] "מִצְוַת עֲשֵׂה מִן הַתּוֹרָה עַל הָאָב לְלַמֵּד אֶת בְּנוֹ הַקָּטָן תּוֹרָה", עֶס אִיז דָא אַ חִיּוּב אוֹיךְ אוֹיפְן בֵּן אַז עֶר אִיז "חַיָּב לְלְמוֹד אֶת עַצְמוֹ כְּשֶׁיַּכִּיר"[כו].

The reason for the difference: ***mitzvos*** **are limited. However, the Torah is without limit and** therefore **applies to all Jews,** no matter what their age.

דֶער טַעַם אוֹיף דֶעם: מִצְווֹת זַיְינֶען בְּהַגְבָּלָה. אָבֶּער תּוֹרָה, ווָאס זִי אִיז בְּלִי גְבוּל, אִיז בַּיי אַלֶע אִידְן.

The Unexpected Prerequisite

9. Therefore, at the Giving of the Torah, guarantors were required and **the children** were chosen for that role.[32] When **the *mitzvos* were commanded at Marah, no guarantors were needed, yet specifically at the Giving of the Torah, guarantors were required.**

ט. דֶערְפַאר הָאט מֶען בַּיי מַתַּן תּוֹרָה גֶעפָאדֶערְט דִי עַרְבוּת פוּן בָּנִים[כז], בַּיי דִי מִצְווֹת שֶׁנִּצְטַווּ בְּמָרָה הָאט מֶען קֵיין עַרְבוּת נִיט גֶעדַארְפְט אוּן דַוְקָא בַּיי מַתַּן תּוֹרָה הָאט מֶען גֶעפָאדֶערְט עַרְבוּת.

According to the above explanations, the difference **becomes understandable: The primary aspect of the Giving of the Torah was not the giving of the *mitzvos*, but the giving of the Torah, whose obligation also extends to minors. Since minors are also obligated to study the Torah, the positive virtue lies specifically with them,**[33] as indicated by the prooftext[34] **the Midrash cites there, "From the mouths of infants and sucklings, You have established strength."**

לוֹיט דֶעם ווֶעט עֶס זַיְין פַארְשְׁטַאנְדִיק: דֶער עִיקַר עִנְיָן פוּן מַתַּן תּוֹרָה אִיז נִיט נְתִינַת הַמִּצְווֹת, נָאר נְתִינַת הַתּוֹרָה, ווָאס אִיר חִיּוּב אִיז אוֹיךְ אוֹיף קְטַנִּים, אוּן ווִיבַּאלְד אַז אוֹיךְ קְטַנִּים זַיְינֶען מְחוּיָּב בְּלִימּוּד הַתּוֹרָה, שְׁטֵייט דִי מַעֲלָה אִין זֵיי דַוְקָא[כח], ווִי עֶר פִירְט דָארְט אוֹיס אִין מִדְרָשׁ: מִפִּי עוֹלְלִים וְיוֹנְקִים יִסַּדְתָּ עֹז.

The Torah's Truth - Encompassing the Entire Spectrum

10. This reinforces **the concept** stated previous-

י. אוּן דָאס אִיז דֶער עִנְיָן ווָאס

29. See the Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim,* sec. 343; *Tanya,* the introduction to *Shaar HaYichud VehaEmunah*. This is not the place for further discussion of the matter.

30. The Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch, Hilchos Talmud Torah* 1:1.

31. *Rambam, Hilchos Talmud Torah* 1:3. See the *Tzemach Tzedek's Piskei Dinim* on that source and *Likkutei Sichos,* Vol. 17, p. 233ff.

32. *Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 1:4 (1).

33. See also *Likkutei Sichos,* Vol. 1, p. 110.

34. *Tehillim* 8:3.

ly: **that the Torah is** described as **"true." Truth extends from *aleph* to *sav* – from the loftiest levels to the lowest. On the one hand, the Torah represents "the loftiest of heights,"[35] loftier than knowing how to conduct oneself, loftier than matters connected with action. On the other hand, the Torah is also found in the "depths of the low"[36] – extending even to minors who are exempt from all *mitzvos*.**

תּוֹרָה אִיז "אֱמֶת". אֱמֶת אִיז פוּן אַלֶ"ף בִּיז תָּי"ו, פוּן דִי הֶעכְסְטֶע מַדְרֵיגוֹת בִּיז דִי נִידֶערִיקְסְטֶע. פוּן אֵיין זַיְיט זָאגְט מֶען אַז תּוֹרָה אִיז עוֹמֶק רוּם, הֶעכֶער פוּן לֵידַע אֶת הַמַּעֲשֶׂה, הֶעכֶער פוּן עִנְיָנִים וואָס זַיְינֶען פַארְבּוּנְדְן מִיט עֲשִׂיָּה; פוּן דֶער צְווֵייטֶער זַיְיט אִיז דָא תּוֹרָה אוֹיךְ אִין עוֹמֶק תַּחַת בִּיז קְטַנִּים שֶׁפְּטוּרִים מִן כָּל הַמִּצְוֹות.

One Essence, Applying Universally

11. This also explains why we find the expression "make the Torah great and glorious" used in reference to two opposite extremes.

In one source,[37] this expression is used regarding teachers of young children – that the concept of encroaching on someone else's livelihood does not apply regarding opening up a competing school for young children, **because** doing so **"make[s] the Torah great and glorious." This refers to** teaching children at **their beginning stage of study, the "depths of the low."**

In a second source,[38] it is mentioned regarding the signs of a kosher fish; the *Gemara* states that any fish **that has scales also has fins, and asks:** Why then does the Torah **also mention fins?** It answers: **To "make the Torah great and glorious."**

Here, we are speaking about studying **Torah for its own sake, a loftier** level **than for the purpose of knowing how to conduct oneself.**

On all levels of Torah study, from the loftiest level to the lowest, the concepts of "mak[ing] the Torah great and glorious" and "It is Me that you are taking" apply.

יא. דָאס אִיז אוֹיךְ אַ הֶסְבֵּר אוֹיף דֶערוֹיף וואָס מִיר גֶעפִינֶען דֶעם לָשׁוֹן "יַגְדִּיל תּוֹרָה וְיַאְדִּיר" אִין צְווֵיי קְצָווֹת הָפְכִיִּים.

אִין אֵיין אָרְט[כט] שְׁטֵייט דֶער לָשׁוֹן לְגַבֵּי מְלַמְּדֵי תִּינוֹקוֹת - אַז דֶערְבַּיי גֵייט נִיט אָן קֵיין הַשָּׂגַת גְּבוּל, ווַיְיל יַגְדִּיל תּוֹרָה וְיַאְדִּיר. דָאס אִיז דָאךְ אַן אוֹפֶן פוּן רֵאשִׁית תְּחִלַּת הַלִּימּוּד, עוֹמֶק תַּחַת.

אִין אַ צְווֵייטְן אָרְט[ל] רֶעדט זִיךְ עֶס לְגַבֵּי סִימָנֵי דָג טָהוֹר. זָאגְט דִי גְמָרָא, כָּל שֶׁיֵּשׁ לוֹ קַשְׂקֶשֶׂת יֵשׁ לוֹ סְנַפִּיר, און צוּלִיב וואָס שְׁטֵייט אוֹיךְ סְנַפִּיר - צוּלִיב יַגְדִּיל תּוֹרָה וְיַאְדִּיר. דָא רֶעדט מֶען שׁוֹין ווֶעגְן אַן עִנְיָן פוּן תּוֹרָה מִצַּד עַצְמָהּ, הֶעכֶער פוּן לֵידַע אֶת הַמַּעֲשֶׂה.

און אִין אַלֶערְלֵיי אוֹפַנִּים אִין לִימּוּד הַתּוֹרָה, פוּן דֶעם הֶעכְסְטְן אוֹפֶן בִּיז דֶעם נִידֶערִיקְסְטְן, זָאגְט מֶען "יַגְדִּיל תּוֹרָה וְיַאְדִּיר" און "אוֹתִי אַתֶּם לוֹקְחִים".

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35. In the original, *omek rom,* "the depths of the heights," an expression found in *Sefer Yetzirah* 1:5

36. An antonym to the above expression found in the same source.

37. ***Rambam, Hilchos Talmud Torah*** 2:7, based on *Bava Basra* 21b.

38. ***Chulin* 66b.**

This is also the meaning of the teaching,[39] **"'G-d is close to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth,'**[40] **and there is no 'truth' other than the Torah."**[41] This means **that, on all levels, "G-d is close"** to **"'all who call upon Him with truth,' the Torah."** When studying Torah, **one grasps** G-d's **Essence, and regarding** G-d's Essence – **"When you grasp part of the essence, you grasp it all."**[42] **The essence is the same everywhere.**

דָאס אִיז אוֹיךְ וָואס עֶס שְׁטֵייט: קָרוֹב ה׳ לְכָל קוֹרְאָיו לְכֹל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָאוּהוּ בֶאֱמֶת, וְאֵין אֱמֶת אֶלָּא תּוֹרָה, אַז אִין אַלֶערְלֵיי אוֹפַנִּים, לְכֹל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָאוּהוּ, מִיט אֱמֶת וָואס דָאס אִיז תּוֹרָה, אִיז קָרוֹב ה׳, נֶעמְט מֶען עַצְמוּת, וָוארוּם הָעֶצֶם - כְּשֶׁאַתָּה תּוֹפֵס בְּמִקְצָת מִן הָעֶצֶם אַתָּה תּוֹפֵס בְּכֻלּוֹ[לא], דֶער עֶצֶם אִיז אוּמֶעטוּם דֶער זֶעלְבֶּער.

Blessings for New Birth

12. May G-d grant that we engage in studying the Torah in all different **types of manners and may all of them be carried out in a way that "make[s] the Torah great and glorious,"** *Torah lishmah.* **Such study will lead to birth** – the natural consequence **that results from "the day of His wedding … the Giving of the Torah."**[43] Just as a child resembles his parents, through our Torah study, **we will** "bring about birth," i.e., **accomplish the building of the world,**[44] creating a dwelling for G-d – **one that resembles His Essence. We will transform the lower realm – and by transforming the lower realm,** we will transform **also the upper realm – into a dwelling for G-d, blessed be He.**

יב. דֶער אוֹיבֶּערְשְׁטֶער זָאל גֶעבְּן, מֶען זָאל טָאן אִין לִימּוּד הַתּוֹרָה, אִין אַלֶערְלֵיי אוֹפַנִּים, אוּן אִין זֵיי אַלֶע בְּאוֹפֶן פוּן יַגְדִּיל תּוֹרָה וְיַאְדִּיר, וָואס דוּרְךְ דֶעם וֶועט זַיְין דִי הוֹלָדָה וָואס קוּמְט פוּן יוֹם חֲתֻנָּתוֹ זֶה מַתַּן תּוֹרָה - בְּדוֹמֶה לְעַצְמוּתוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ, אוּן מֶען וֶועט דוּרְכְטָאן דֶעם בִּנְיַן הָעוֹלָם[לב], מֶען וֶועט מַאכְן פוּן דֶעם מַטָּה, אוּן דוּרְךְ דֶעם מַטָּה אוֹיךְ פוּן דֶעם מַעְלָה, אַ דִירָה לוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ.

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39. See *Likkutei Torah, Vayikra* 3a, *et al.,* which couples the two sources that follow. At the *farbrengen* when this *sichah* was delivered, the Rebbe also recited a *maamar* focusing on this teaching. See *Tanya,* the end of ch. 37.

40. *Tehillim* 145:18.

41. *Eichah Rabbah, Pesichtah* 2, *et al.*

42. A teaching of the Baal Shem Tov, cited in the *maamar* entitled *HaShamayim Kisi* 5668, printed **in the series of *maamarim* entitled *Yom Tov shel Rosh HaShanah, 5666,* p. 522;** included in *Kesser Shem Tov, Hosafos,* sec. 227.

43. *Taanis* 26b.

44. Commenting on the verse (*Chavakuk* 3:6), *vechol baniach limudei Hashem,* "And all your children will be students of G-d," our Sages (*Kerisos* 6a-b) state, "Do not read *banayich* ('your children'), but *bonayich* ('your builders')," and explain that **Torah scholars are referred to as "builders." The concepts of birth and building in general were explained at length in the *sichah.* This is not the place** for further discussion of the matter. See also *Likkutei Sichos,* Vol. 18, pp. 33-34, where the Rebbe further develops the points mentioned here in a different context.

ז) חלק ג צו, א, עיין שם באריכות. זע אויך הוספות לתורה אור סוף פרשת יתרו.
ח) יומא לז, א.
ט) פאה פרק א משנה א.
י) קידושין מ, ב.
יא) זהר חלק א קע, ב.
יב) תניא פרק נא.
יג) זע לקוטי תורה במדבר יב, א און ווייטער.
יד) שמות רבה פל"ג, ו (בשינוי לשון). תניא פרק מז.
טו) תניא פרק כג בשם הזהר.
טז) יומא לה, ב.
יז) יהושע א, ח.
יח) במדבר טו, לא. סנהדרין צט, א.
יט) ברכות ה, ב.
כ) פרה פרק ח משנה ט.
כא) משלי יב, יט. זע אויך תניא פרק יג.
כב) סנהדרין פ"א ה"א.
כג) קידושין לג, א.
כד) זע שולחן ערוך לאדמו"ר הזקן אורח חיים סימן שמ"ג. תניא הקדמה לחלק ב. ואין כאן מקומו.
כה) לשון רבנו הזקן בשלחנו פרק א מהלכות תלמוד תורה ס"א.
כו) רמב"ם הלכות תלמוד תורה פרק א ה"ג. זע פסקי דינים להצמח צדק דארט.
כז) שיר השירים רבה פ' א' ד, א.
כח) זע אויך לקו"ש ח"א ע' 110.
כט) רמב"ם הלכות תלמוד תורה פרק ב הלכה ז.
ל) חולין סו, ב.
לא) מאמר הבעל שם טוב - געבראכט אין ד"ה השמים כסאי תרס"ח (בהמשך תרס"ו ע' תקכב).
לב) שתלמידי חכמים נקראים בנאין כו' וענין ההולדה והבנין בכלל - נתבאר בהשיחה בארוכה - ואין כאן מקומו.

SHAVUOS III | חג השבועות ג

Adapted from a *sichah* delivered on *Shavuos,* 5718 (1958)

Introduction

In the rich tapestry of the *Chabad* tradition, few innovations have had as profound and lasting an impact as the Previous Rebbe's establishment of daily *Chitas* study. This seemingly simple directive – to study designated portions of *Chumash*, *Tehillim*, and *Tanya* each day – became a cornerstone of *Chabad* spiritual life, binding thousands of chassidim worldwide to a shared rhythm of daily learning.

The devotion of chassidim to this regimen of study stems primarily from their *hiskashrus* ("bonds of connection") with the Rebbe. Needless to say, they appreciated the spiritual significance embedded in the daily study of these three texts and the valuable lessons to be derived from them, but the fundamental motivation for their commitment to studying these texts daily was their bond with the Rebbe.

In that vein, Reb Pinya Althaus, a devoted chassid, was known to say that when pressed for time, he might defer *Ashrei*, *U'va LeTziyon*, or other portions of the prayer service until later in the day, but his commitment to *Chitas* was non-negotiable, never to be compromised or postponed.

All three of the *Chitas* texts are intrinsically related to Shavuos: That festival marks the Giving of the Torah (i.e., *Chumash*). King David, the primary author of *Tehillim*, was born and passed on Shavuos. And the Baal Shem Tov, whose thought system is outlined in the *Tanya*, also passed on that day. Accordingly, every Shavuos, the Rebbe would emphasize why that festival provides a particularly auspicious time to strengthen our commitment to this study.

So that Shavuos is Not Just One Day

A Call to Study *Chitas* Daily

1. Shavuos is an auspicious time to strengthen ourselves in the observance of the directive of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, regarding studying the designated ***Chitas*** **lessons: the daily portions of *Chumash*, *Tehillim*, and *Tanya*.**

***Chumash*: Every day, a portion of the weekly Torah reading with *Rashi's* commentary: Sunday – until the second *aliyah*, Monday – until the third *aliyah*, and so forth.**

***Tehillim*: Every day after the morning prayers, readings from *Tehillim* as divided according to the days of the month.**

(*Levush HaTecheiles 1:9* mentions reciting *Tehillim* before prayers, but that is a different matter. The directive of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, is to recite the daily *Tehillim* after prayers.[1])

***Tanya*: Every day, a lesson in *Tanya* as it has been divided according to the days of the year.[2]**

The *Chumash* was given on Shavuos through Moshe our teacher.

***Tehillim* is connected to King David, and Shavuos is his birthday and the day of his passing.[3]**

And *Tanya* is connected to the Baal Shem Tov because the revelation of the Baal Shem Tov's teachings comes through *Chabad Chassidus* and

א. שָׁבוּעוֹת אִיז אַ זְמַן מְסוּגָל צוּ שְׁטַארְקְן זִיךְ אִין אָפְּהִיטְן דִי תַּקָּנָה פוּן כְּבוֹד קְדֻשַּׁת מוֹרִי וְחָמִי אַדְמוּ"ר בְּלִימּוּד הַשִּׁיעוּרִים, חוּמָשׁ תְּהִלִּים אוּן תַּנְיָא בְּכָל יוֹם. חוּמָשׁ: אַלֶע טָאג אַ פַּרְשָׁה חוּמָשׁ מִיט פֵּירוּשׁ רַשִׁ"י: זוּנְטִיק - בִּיז שֵׁנִי, מָאנְטִיק - בִּיז שְׁלִישִׁי, אוּן אַזוֹי וַוייְטֶער. תְּהִלִּים: אַלֶע טָאג נָאכְן דַאוְונֶען אִין דֶערְפְרִי אַ שִׁיעוּר אִין תְּהִלִּים ווִי עֶר אִיז אַייְנְגֶעטֵיילְט לוֹיט דִי טֶעג פוּן חוֹדֶשׁ. - אִין "לְבוּשׁ" שְׁטֵייט וֶועגְן זָאגְן תְּהִלִּים פַארְן דַאוְונֶען, אָבֶּער דָאס אִיז נָאךְ אַן עִנְיָן. דִי תַּקָּנָה פוּן כְּבוֹד קְדֻשַּׁת מוֹרִי וְחָמִי אַדְמוּ"ר אִיז, צוּ זָאגְן דֶעם יוֹם תְּהִלִּים נָאכְן דַאוְונֶען[לג]. - תַּנְיָא: אַלֶע טָאג אַ שִׁיעוּר אִין תַּנְיָא כְּפִי שֶׁנֶּחְלַק לִימֵי הַשָּׁנָה[לד].

חוּמָשׁ אִיז דָאךְ גֶעגֶעבְּן גֶעוָוארְן בְּחַג הַשָּׁבוּעוֹת דוּרְךְ מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּינוּ.

תְּהִלִּים אִיז דָאךְ שַׁייָךְ צוּ דָוִד הַמֶּלֶךְ, ווָאס שָׁבוּעוֹת אִיז זַייְן יוֹם הוּלֶּדֶת וְיוֹם הַהִילוּלָא[לה].

אוּן תַּנְיָא אִיז דָאךְ שַׁייָךְ צוּם בַּעַל שֵׁם טוֹב (ווָארוּם גִּילּוּי תּוֹרַת הַבַּעַל שֵׁם טוֹב אִיז דוּרְךְ חֲסִידוּת חַבַּ"ד אוּן

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1. **See the note appended to *Sefer HaMaamarim 5708,* p. 264,** regarding the Rebbe Rayatz's institution of this practice. That source distinguishes between the recitation of *Tehillim* as ordained by the Rebbe Rayatz and the time-honored custom of many to recite *Tehillim* before prayer.

2. There is a **study schedule** specifying the portions of *Tanya* to be studied each day included at the back of the printings of the *Tanya.*

3. **The *Talmud Yerushalmi,* cited by *Tosafos, Chagigah* 17a,** s.v., ***af beAtzeres,*** mentions David's passing on Shavuos. *Bechor Shor* on *Bava Basra* 13b mentions his birth on that day. See *Toras Menachem 5716,* Vol. 2, p. 333.

through *Tanya* in particular. This is seen[4] **in the approbation** of Rav Yehudah Leib HaKohen **to *Tanya*, "And now Yisrael** (an **allusion** to the Baal Shem Tov, whose name was Yisrael,[5]) **will rejoice in the revelation of his holy words." And Shavuos is the day of the passing of the Baal Shem Tov.**

Therefore, now is a propitious time to strengthen oneself in these lessons, which are uniformly applicable to every individual, in addition to strengthening oneself in Torah study as a whole, each person according to his capacity. This is also self-understood as fitting for the festival of Shavuos, "the season of the Giving of our Torah," including **the entire Torah, even "every new (Torah) concept to be developed by an experienced Torah scholar."**[6]

Observing the directive of the aforementioned lessons, will lead to *Chitas*[7] (an acronym for *Chumash*, *Tehillim*, *Tanya*), i.e., "the dread of G-d [will be] upon the cities."[8] We will "set out," journeying to *Eretz Yisrael* in tranquility with the coming of the complete and true redemption, as our patriarch Yaakov was told,[9] "Journey forth and let us go." And so will it be – that **speedily in our days "saviors will ascend Mount Zion to judge Mount Esav."[10] By studying the Torah, observing the *mitzvos*, and following the aforementioned directives, we will draw down** the coming of **our *Mashiach* to our material world.[11] May this be speedily in our days.**

דורך תַּנְיָא בִּפְרַט, וּכְיָדוּעַ[לו] הָרֶמֶז אִין דֶער הַסְכָּמָה פוּן תַּנְיָא, "וְכָעֵת יִשְׂמַח יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּהִגָּלוֹת דִּבְרֵי קָדְשׁוֹ"), וואָס שָׁבוּעוֹת אִיז דֶער יוֹם הַהִילוּלָא פוּן בַּעַל שֵׁם טוֹב.

אִיז דָאךְ אִיצְטֶער אַ זְמַן מְסוּגָל זִיךְ צוּ שְׁטַארְקְן אִין דִי שִׁיעוּרִים, וואָס זֵיי זַיְינֶען שָׁוִים לְכָל נֶפֶשׁ, נוֹסָף אוֹיף דֶער הִתְחַזְּקוּת אִין שִׁיעוּרִים בַּתּוֹרָה בִּכְלַל, כָּל חַד לְפוּם שִׁיעוּרָא דִילֵיהּ, וואָס אוֹיךְ אוֹיף דֶערוֹיף אִיז זֶעלְבְּסְטְפַארְשְׁטֶענְדְלֶעךְ, פַּאסִיק דֶער זְמַן פוּן חַג הַשָּׁבוּעוֹת, זְמַן מַתַּן תּוֹרָתֵנוּ, גַאנְץ תּוֹרָה, אוֹיךְ כָּל מַה שֶּׁתַּלְמִיד וָתִיק עָתִיד לְחַדֵּשׁ.

אוּן דוּרְךְ שְׁמִירַת הַתַּקָּנָה פוּן דִי שִׁיעוּרִים הַנַּ"ל, וועט זַיְין דֶער "חִתַּת"[לז] (רָאשֵׁי תֵּיבוֹת ח'וּמָשׁ תְּ'הִלִּים תַּ'נְיָא) אֱלֹקִים עַל הֶעָרִים", אוּן עֶס וועט זַיְין דֶער "וַיִּסָּעוּ", אַז מֶען וועט פָארְן מִתּוֹךְ מְנוּחָה אִין אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל בִּגְאוּלָּה הַשְּׁלֵמָה וְהָאֲמִתִּית, ווִי מֶען הָאט גֶעזָאגְט צוּ יַעֲקֹב אָבִינוּ נִסְעָה וְנֵלֵכָה, וואָס אַזוֹי וועט דָאךְ טַאקֶע זַיְין בִּמְהֵרָה בְיָמֵינוּ, וְעָלוּ מוֹשִׁיעִים בְּהַר צִיּוֹן לִשְׁפּוֹט אֶת הַר עֵשָׂו, אַז דוּרְךְ לִימּוּד הַתּוֹרָה וְקִיּוּם הַמִּצְווֹת, אוּן דִי אָפְּהִיטוּנְג פוּן דִי אוֹיבְּנְדֶערְמָאנְטֶע תַּקָּנוֹת, וועט מֶען מַמְשִׁיךְ זַיְין מָשִׁיחַ צִדְקֵנוּ לְמַטָּה מֵעֲשָׂרָה טְפָחִים בִּמְהֵרָה בְיָמֵינוּ.

(משיחת חגה"ש, תשח"י)

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4. See ***Likkutei Dibburim,* Vol. 1, p. 61a.**

5. Cf. *Tehillim* 149:2. In the published text of *Tanya,* the name Yisrael is printed in bold, highlighting this allusion.

6. The exact wording quoted is found in later Rabbinic writings. Although it is not found in any *Talmudic* or *Midrashic* source, similar and related statements are found in *Megillah* 19b; the *Talmud Yerushalmi, Peah* 2:4; *Shmos Rabbah* 47:1; *Vayikra Rabbah* 22:1; *Koheles Rabbah,* 1:9(2); 5:8(2), and other sources.

7. **See the *sichos* of the second day of *Shavuos,* 5796, *Sefer HaSichos 5796,* p. 145,** (p. 158 in the latest edition). In that source, the Rebbe Rayatz relates a vision one of the previous Rebbeim received regarding the added spiritual potential generated by the study of *Chitas.*

8. *Bereishis* 35:5, which describes how Yaakov and his household, "set out on their journey, and the dread (*chitas*) of G-d was upon the cities that were around them, and [their inhabitants] did not pursue the children of Yaakov."

9. Ibid. 33:12.

10. *Ovadiah* 1:21

11. In the original, the Rebbe uses the expression, *lemateh meiasarah tefachim,* literally meaning, "below ten handbreadths." See *Sukkah* 5a.

לג) זע אויך ספר המאמרים תש"ח ע' 462 בהערה.

לד) נדפס במורה שיעור.

לה) ירושלמי הובא בתוספות ד"ה אף עצרת, חגיגה יז, א.

לו) לקוטי דבורים ח"א סא, א.

לז) זע שיחת יום ב' דחג השבועות תרצ"ו (סה"ש תרצ"ו ע' 541).

SHAVUOS IV | חג השבועות ד

Adapted from a *sichah* delivered on the second day of Shavuos, 5711 (1951)

Introduction

The *sichah* that follows was delivered in the 1950s, when the American Jewish community was struggling to find its footing. The scars of the Great Depression lingered for some, while for others, the challenges of integrating into a new culture and environment were an ongoing struggle. Many prioritized establishing a firm material foundation – understandably so. Their Jewish life and heritage remained important to them, but the pressing need to stay afloat financially and more crucially, to secure a future for their children, consumed much of their focus. Torah study, though valued, often took a back seat to these seemingly more urgent concerns.

The Rebbe gently but firmly addressed this mindset. Rather than dismissing these legitimate worries, he reframed them entirely. Pointing to the setting where the Jewish people received the Torah – a desolate wilderness lacking the most basic provisions – he challenged his listeners to reconsider what truly makes spiritual growth possible. If G-d chose to give the Torah in a place devoid of material security, what does that teach us about the relationship between physical stability and spiritual commitment?

This question remains as relevant today as it was then. The *sichah* offers a timeless lesson – relevant not only when preparing to commemorate the Giving of the Torah on Shavuos, but when approaching our Divine service throughout the year.

Where We Received the Torah

Why in a Wasteland?

1. The reason the Torah was given in the desert is to teach that just as a desert is an ownerless place – no one's private **property – so too, no one is the** exclusive **owner of the Torah. Every Jew is** directly **connected to the Torah, and when he studies the Torah, the Torah becomes his.**

However, it can still be asked: **Why was the Torah given in a wasteland, "an arid and thirsty land without water,"**[1] a place **lacking clothes, food, and even water?** In the desert, the Jews were unable to secure even their basic necesssities on their own. For that reason, **as** the Torah relates, **the clothes the Jews** wore **grew with them** as they journeyed through **the desert.**[2] **They ate manna** from Heaven, **and G-d gave them water from a stone because there was nothing in the desert. Why was the Torah given in such a desolate wasteland?** What lesson can we learn from this?

When **the Torah provides an analogy, all its details are representative of the subject that it is intended to illustrate. Thus, we must say that all of these particular aspects that were found in the desert are connected to the Giving of the Torah. However, the above** answer **– that** the desert **is ownerless – relates to only one aspect, not to** all **the other points.**

א. דֶער טַעַם אוֹיף דֶעם וָואס דִי תּוֹרָה אִיז גֶעגֶעבְּן גֶעוָוארְן אִין מִדְבָּר אִיז צוּ וַוײַזְן אַז אַזוֹי ווִי אַ מִדְבָּר אִיז אַ מָקוֹם הֶפְקֵר, אָן אַ בַּעַל הַבַּיִת, אַזוֹי אִיז אוֹיךְ אוֹיף תּוֹרָה נִיטָא קֵיין בַּעַל הַבַּיִת און יֶעדֶער אִיד אִיז שַׁײַךְ צוּ תּוֹרָה, און וֶוען עֶר לֶערְנְט תּוֹרָה וֶוערְט דִי תּוֹרָה זַײַנֶע.

פַאְרוָואס אִיז אָבֶּער דִי תּוֹרָה גֶעגֶעבְּן גֶעוָוארְן אִין אַ מִדְבָּר אֶרֶץ צִיָּה וְעָיֵף בְּלִי מָיִם, אָן קְלֵיידֶער, אָן עֶסְן, און אֲפִילוּ אָן וַואסֶער, ווִי עֶס שְׁטֵייט אַז דִי קְלֵיידֶער זַײַנֶען מִיטְגֶעוואָקְסְן מִיט דִי אִידְן אִין מִדְבָּר, גֶעגֶעסְן הָאבְּן זֵיי דֶעם מָן און וַואסֶער הָאט זֵיי דֶער אוֹיבֶּערְשְׁטֶער גֶעגֶעבְּן פוּן אַ שְׁטֵיין; וַוײַל דָארְט אִין מִדְבָּר אִיז נִיט גֶעוֶוען קֵיין זַאךְ - אִיז פַארְוָואס הָאט מֶען גֶעגֶעבְּן דִי תּוֹרָה דַוְקָא אִין אַזַא ווִיסְטְן מִדְבָּר?

אִין אַ מָשָׁל פוּן תּוֹרָה זַײַנֶען דָאךְ אַלֶע זַײַנֶע פְּרָטִים מְכוּוָן צוּם נִמְשָׁל. מוּז מֶען דָאךְ זָאגְן אַז דִי אַלֶע פְּרָטִים וָואס זַײַנֶען גֶעוֶוען אִין דֶעם מִדְבָּר הָאבְּן אַ שַׁײַכוּת צוּ מַתַּן תּוֹרָה. דֶער אוֹיבְּנְדֶערְמָאנְטֶער טַעַם אִיז דָאךְ נָאר אוֹיף דֶעם פְּרַט פוּן מָקוֹם הֶפְקֵר, נִיט אוֹיף דִי אַנְדֶערֶע פְּרָטִים.

An Indirect Answer

2. When it comes to Torah study, a person may **claim that various obstacles prevent him from studying.** He will offer all sorts of

ב. וֶוען עֶס קוּמְט צוּ לִימּוּד הַתּוֹרָה, טַעֲנֶה'ט מֶען, אַז עֶס זַײַנֶען דָא פַארְשִׁידֶענֶע מְנִיעוֹת, וָואס שְׁטֶערְן צוּם לֶערְנֶען. מֶען

1. Cf. *Tehillim* 63:2.

2. See *Pesiksa D'Rav Kahana, Vayehi Beshalach,* quoted by *Rashi, Devarim* 8:4.

excuses and peculiar rationalizations for not studying.

When a businessman is asked to establish fixed times for Torah study, he claims that this is not his arena. He is a businessman; his role **is to give** ***tzedakah*** **and the like, not to study the Torah.**

He knows that the distinctive virtue of a businessman is that he tears himself away in the middle of his business to recite the Afternoon Service. As is well known, this is the special quality that distinguishes the Afternoon Service, one **so great that even** the Prophet **Eliyahu's** prayer **was answered only at the time of the Afternoon Service.**[3] **Thus, the businessman already possesses a very significant** spiritual **virtue. Why then** – he asks – **is he being pressed specifically to study Torah?**

When he is asked to study the daily **passage of** ***Chumash*** **with** ***Rashi's*** **commentary, let alone the** daily **lesson in** ***Tanya,***[4] **he** does not object in principle, but **claims that** ***Chassidus*** **requires that Divine service be ordered and structured. First, one should carry out all the** spiritual **tasks** relevant to **him, including reciting the Afternoon Service like the Prophet Eliyahu. After that, he will proceed** even **higher. He is not rejecting the study of** ***Chumash*** **with** ***Rashi's*** **commentary or** even ***Tanya*****. However,** he argues, **all in good time, when he finishes dealing with his** more immediate **concerns.** Then, he will be able to structure his life **in a properly ordered manner.**

A similar failing **may be present regarding a Torah scholar. He is asked** to study with total engagement to the extent that **"all [his] limbs will declare,** 'G-d, who is like You?!,'"[5] as it is written,[6] "This Torah scroll **will not depart** from your mouth day and night." **He,** too, **will not take exception** in

שְׁטֶעלְט צוּ פַארְשִׁידֶענֶע טַעֲנוֹת אוּן מְשׁוּנֶה׳דִיקֶע פַארְעֶנְטְפֶערוּנְגֶען.

וֶוען מֶען מָאנְט פוּן אַ בַּעַל עֵסֶק עֶר זָאל קוֹבֵעַ זַיְין עִתִּים לַתּוֹרָה, טַעֲנֶה׳ט עֶר אַז נִיט דָאס אִיז זַיְין עִנְיָן. עֶר אִיז אַ בַּעַל עֵסֶק אוּן זַיְין עִנְיָן אִיז צוּ גֶעבְּן צְדָקָה אוּן עֶנְלֶעכֶע עִנְיָנִים, אָבֶּער נִיט צוּ לֶערְנֶען תּוֹרָה.

עֶר ווֵייסְט, אַז דֶער עִנְיָן פוּן אַ בַּעַל עֵסֶק אִיז צוּ אָפְּרַיְיסְן זִיךְ אִין מִיטְן עֵסֶק אוּן דַאווְנֶען מִנְחָה, אוּן ווִי בַּאווָאוּסְט אַז דָאס אִיז דִי מַעֲלָה פוּן תְּפִלַּת הַמִּנְחָה, בִּיז אַז אוֹיךְ[לז*] אֵלִיָּהוּ לֹא נַעֲנָה אֶלָּא בִּתְפִלַּת הַמִּנְחָה, הָאט עֶר דָאךְ שׁוֹין זֵייעֶר אַ גְרוֹיסְן עִנְיָן, אִיז פַארְווָאס יָאגְט מֶען אִים צוּ לִימּוּד הַתּוֹרָה דַוְקָא?

וֶוען מֶען מָאנְט בַּיי אִים עֶר זָאל לֶערְנֶען אַ פַּרְשָׁה חוּמָשׁ מִיט רַשִׁ״י, וֶוער רֶעדט נָאךְ דֶעם שִׁיעוּר תַּנְיָא - טַעֲנֶה׳ט עֶר, חֲסִידוּת מָאנְט דָאךְ עֲבוֹדָה בְּסֵדֶר וְהַדְרָגָה, אִיז פְּרִיעֶר וֶועט עֶר אָפְּטָאן בִּשְׁלֵימוּת אַלֶע זַיְינֶע עִנְיָנִים, בִּיז תְּפִלַּת מִנְחָה, אַזוֹי ווִי אֵלִיָּהוּ הַנָּבִיא, אוּן נַאכְהֶער וֶועט עֶר גֵיין הֶעכֶער. עֶר זָאגְט זִיךְ נִיט אָפּ חַס וְשָׁלוֹם פוּן לֶערְנֶען חוּמָשׁ מִיט רַשִׁ״י אָדֶער תַּנְיָא, אָבֶּער אַלְץ מִיט דֶער צַיְיט, לִכְשֶׁיִּפָּנֶה פוּן זַיְינֶע עִנְיָנִים, מִיט אַ סֵדֶר.

אַזוֹי אוֹיךְ אַ יוֹשֵׁב אֹהֶל, אַז מֶען מָאנְט בַּיי אִים כָּל עַצְמוֹתַי תֹּאמַרְנָה, לֹא יָמִישׁ וגו׳ אוּן דָאס גְלַיְיךְ - זָאגְט עֶר זִיךְ נִיט אָפּ פוּן דֶעם, נָאר עֶר טַעֲנֶה׳ט אַז עֶר דַארְף הָאבְּן

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3. ***Berachos*** **6b.**

4. The Rebbe is referring to the daily study sessions of *Chumash* and *Tanya,* as ordained by the Rebbe Rayatz.

5. Cf. *Tehillim* 35:10; the Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch* 48:3; *Tanya,* ch. 37, citing *Eiruvin* 54a.

6. *Yehoshua* 1:8.

principle. **However, he claims he must first prepare himself. First, he needs to sleep well, so that his mind will be rested.** Additionally, **he must be careful and** protect his health by **eating** only **refined food of superior quality and the like. As stated in** Rav Moshe **Alshich's** commentary[7] – **and similarly in *Rambam's* responsa[8] – when one eats refined foods of superior quality, it** helps to **refine one's** thinking. **After all these** preparatory steps are accomplished, **he will sit down and study.**

דֶערְצוּ הֲכָנוֹת, פְּרִיעֶר דַארְף עֶר זִיךְ אוֹיסְשְׁלָאפְן, וועט ער האבן א רוּאִיקֶע קָאפּ, עֶר דַארְף זִיךְ אָפְּהִיטְן, עֶסְן אֵיידֶעלֶע מַאֲכָלִים וכו׳,

- אִין אַלְשִׁיךְ[לח] שְׁטֵייט (וְעַל דֶּרֶךְ זֶה בִּשְׁאֵלוֹת וּתְשׁוּבוֹת הָרַמְבַּ״ם) אַז וועֶן מֶען עֶסְט אֵיידֶעלֶע מַאֲכָלִים אֵיידְלְט עֶס אוֹיס דִי קָאפּ -

אוּן נָאךְ דֶעם אַלֶעם וועֶט עֶר זִיךְ זֶעצְן לֶערְנֶען.

Absolute Trust

3. The lesson of the Torah being given in a desert, "an arid and thirsty land without water," invalidates all these excuses. Such a setting teaches **that when it comes to the Torah, we must rely entirely on G-d.**

Before **the Giving of the Torah, the Jews left Egypt** and journeyed through **the desert, "a land that is not cultivated,"[9] without knowing how and with what they would be able to sustain themselves.** So lacking were they of the basic necessities of life that **they had** to **receive the manna through the merit of Moshe; the pillar of cloud,** which provided protection from the elements, **through the merit of Aharon; and the water, through the merit of Miriam.[10] They had to rely on the merit of these three *tzadikim;*** without their merits, they could not have maintained themselves. Yet, **specifically** in such a state, they did not busy themselves with trying to obtain their physical needs, but relied on G-d. Through this approach, **they became prepared to receive the Torah.**

This is a lesson for us at present: We have to simply **sit and study the Torah** without worrying about our material concerns, **relying on G-d.**

ג. אוֹיף דֶערוֹיף אִיז דִי הוֹרָאָה פוּן נְתִינַת הַתּוֹרָה אִין מִדְבָּר אֶרֶץ צִיָּה וְעָיֵף בְּלִי מָיִם, אַז בְּנוֹגֵעַ צוּ תּוֹרָה דַארְף מֶען זִיךְ אִינְגַאנְצְן פַארְלָאזְן אוֹיף דֶעם אוֹיבֶּערְשְׁטְן.

פּוּנְקְט ווִי צוּ מַתַּן תּוֹרָה זַיְינֶען דִי אִידְן אַרוֹיס פוּן מִצְרַיִם אִין אַ מִדְבָּר בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא זְרוּעָה, נִיט ווִיסְנְדִיק ווִי אוּן מִיט ווָאס זֵיי ווֶעלְן אוֹיסְקוּמֶען, - דֶעם מָן הָאבְּן זֵיי גֶעהַאט בִּזְכוּת מֹשֶׁה, דֶעם עַמּוּד הֶעָנָן בִּזְכוּת אַהֲרֹן, אוּן ווַאסֶער בִּזְכוּת מִרְיָם[לט]. זֵיי הָאבְּן זִיךְ גֶעדַארְפְט פַארְלָאזְן אוֹיף אַ זְכוּת פוּן דְרַיי צַדִּיקִים, אוּן דַוְקָא דַאן זַיְינֶען זֵיי גֶעווֶען גְרֵייט צוּ קַבָּלַת הַתּוֹרָה.

דָאס אִיז אַ הוֹרָאָה אוֹיךְ אִיצְטֶער פַאר אוּנְז, אַז מֶען דַארְף זִיךְ זֶעצְן לֶערְנֶען תּוֹרָה אוּן פַארְלָאזְן זִיךְ אוֹיף דֶעם אוֹיבֶּערְשְׁטְן, אוּן דַאן ווֶעט דֶער

7. *Alshich,* ***Daniel*** **1:5.**

8. The exact source in *Rambam's* responsa has not been identified. See *Kesser Shem Tov,* secs. 186, 381, and the notes in the *Kehos* edition.

9. *Yirmeyahu* 2:2.

10. *Taanis* 9a.

אוּיבֶּערְשְׁטֶער גֶעבְּן כָּל הַמִּצְטָרֵךְ בְּגַשְׁמִיּוּת וּבְרוּחְנִיּוּת.

(משיחת חגה"ש, תשי"א)

When we live in this manner, **G-d will provide us with everything we need both materially and spiritually.**

לז*) ברכות ו, ב.
לח) דניאל א, ה.
לט) תענית ט, א.

SHAVUOS V | חג השבועות ה

Adapted from a *sichah* delivered on the second day of Shavuos, 5718 (1958)

Introduction

From the very first years of his leadership, the Rebbe established a practice known as the *tahaluchah* – literally, "parade." On the penultimate night of the festivals of Pesach, Shavuos, and Simchas Torah, he would send groups of chassidim to visit neighboring Jewish communities in Flatbush, Borough Park, Williamsburg, and even further afield. Their mission was simple but profound: to share Chassidic ideas and, more importantly, to share in the celebration of the Jewish festivals with fellow Jews.

The moments when the *tahaluchah* left Lubavitch headquarters at 770 Eastern Parkway were unforgettable. The Rebbe would stand at the entrance, watching as the entire parade of chassidim departed, encouraging them to sing as they marched forward. His presence there was not ceremonial – it was deeply personal. He would often come out again when they returned. He did so even on one occasion after the stroke that left him incapacitated.

Invariably, at the *farbrengen* that concluded the festival, the Rebbe would address the inevitable questions. Why send people out when they could be learning Torah at home? Why ask them to walk for hours when they could be resting? In response, he would explain the profound significance of the *tahaluchah* and offer words of encouragement to those who had undertaken the effort.

This practice continues today, decades after the Rebbe's passing. For younger chassidim who never witnessed the Rebbe standing at the doorway, and for those from other communities unfamiliar with this custom, the *sichah* that follows offers a window into the Rebbe's vision. It is not merely an explanation of a practice, but a teaching about boundless commitment, selfless giving, and the blessings that flow from placing G-d's mission above personal comfort.

When Feet Lead the Way

An Unusual Choice of Words

1. Our Sages[1] **teach, "If you extend (*pazarta*) your feet for the poor and for the *mitzvah,*** [you will merit the blessing,[2]] **'You will be blessed when you enter, and you will be blessed when you depart.'" Our Sages' choice of words requires explanation:**

a) "For the poor" refers to giving ***tzedakah.* Why then did the Sages say "for the poor and for the *mitzvah*"? Is the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah* not included in "the *mitzvah*"?** This is particularly problematic because **throughout the** ***Talmud Yerushalmi,***[3] **when the term *mitzvah*** is used without any further description, it **refers to *tzedakah.***

On the surface, the Sages **were alluding to the idea that *tzedakah* refers to all the *mitzvos*** as a whole, **for it is equivalent to all the *mitzvos.* However, that concept is expressly stated in the Talmud.**[4] **Why then did** the Sages **state it here merely as an allusion?**

b) The verbs "walk" and "run" would be more **appropriate** to use when speaking **of feet. What is the implication of the word *pazarta,*** **"extend"?**

א. עֶס שְׁטֵייט[מ] אִם פִּזַּרְתָּ רַגְלְךָ עַל הֶעָנִי וְעַל הַמִּצְוָה נִתְקַיֵּם עָלֶיךָ בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה בְּבוֹאֶךָ וּבָרוּךְ אַתָּה בְּצֵאתֶךָ.

דִּיוּק הַלָּשׁוֹן אִין דִּבְרֵי רַזַ"ל דַארְף הָאבְּן בֵּיאוּר:

א) עַל הֶעָנִי מֵיינְט דָאךְ צְדָקָה, אִיז וָואס זָאגְט עֶר עַל הֶעָנִי וְעַל הַמִּצְוָה, צִי דֶען אִיז מִצְוַת צְדָקָה נִיט בִּכְלַל הַמִּצְוָה? אַדְּרַבָּה, צְדָקָה רוּפְט מֶען בְּכָל תַּלְמוּד יְרוּשַׁלְמִי סְתַם מִצְוָה[מא].

לִכְאוֹרָה אִיז עֶר דָא מְרַמֵּז אַז צְדָקָה אִיז ווִי כְּלָלוּת כָּל הַמִּצְוֹת, שְׁקוּלָה כְּנֶגֶד כָּל הַמִּצְוֹת. אָבֶּער דָאס שְׁטֵייט דָאךְ בְּפֵירוּשׁ אִין שַׁ"ס, וָואס דַארְף עֶר דָאס זָאגְן דָא בְּרֶמֶז?

ב) אוֹיף רַגְלַיִם פַּאסְט דֶער לָשׁוֹן הֲלִיכָה אָדֶער רִיצָה. וָואס אִיז דָא דֶער לָשׁוֹן פִּזַּרְתָּ?

The Language of the Limbs

2. Generally, the human body is divided into three portions: the head, the trunk, and the feet. More particularly, it is divided into 248 limbs.

There are similar divisions regarding *mitzvos.*

ב. דֶער גּוּף הָאָדָם ווֶערְט פַּאנַאנְדֶערְגֶעטֵיילְט בִּכְלַל אִין דְרַיי טֵיילְן, רֹאשׁ, גּוּף אוּן רֶגֶל. בִּפְרָטִיּוּת, טֵיילְט עֶר זִיךְ אִין רְמַ"ח אֵבָרִים.

אַזוֹי אִיז אוֹיךְ אִין מִצְוֹת, אַז

1. ***Derech Eretz Zuta,* ch. 9.** The *sichah* was delivered in appreciation of the chassidim who went on the *tahaluchah,* walking from Crown Heights to visit neighboring Jewish communities on the second night of Shavuos.

2. *Devarim* 28:6.

3. See ***Tanya,* ch. 37.** See *Talmud Yerushalmi, Pe'ah* 8:3, *Shekalim* 5d.

4. *Bava Basra* 9a.

In detail, there are 248 positive commandments. *Sefer Chareidim* actually **lists the *mitzvos* according to their corresponding limbs, each *mitzvah* in connection with the limb that aligns with it. In a more general sense,** the *mitzvos* **can be divided into three** groupings:

a) **those associated with understanding,** for example, **the knowledge of the greatness of the Creator, Torah study, and the like;** these correspond **to the head;**

b) **those associated with the feelings of the heart, the love and fear of G-d, and the love of one's fellow Jew;** these correspond **to the trunk;**

c) ***mitzvos* fulfilled through action, which are primarily connected with *kabbalas ol*** (acceptance of the yoke of G-d's kingship) **and** thus associated **with the feet.**[5]

Understanding and feelings are limited. Moreover, **even the *kabbalas ol* arising from understanding and feeling is limited.** In other words, the understanding and feeling that we **must accept the yoke of G-d's kingship is also limited. However, *kabbalas ol* as it exists in essence is unlimited.**

This is the implication of the phrase, "extend your feet." "Extend" suggests boundless expansion. Where is there a possibility for "unlimited extension"? In the realm of **feet, *kabbalas ol,*** i.e., **pure** *kabbalas ol*, **the feet** functioning **as feet,** independent of the influence of the mind and heart. **When the feet are connected with the mind and/or the heart, it is possible to walk, and, at most, to run. However, when the feet operate on their own, it is possible for them to extend and proceed in a** truly **unlimited fashion.**

בִּפְרָטִיּוּת טֵיילְן זֵיי זִיךְ אִין רְמַ"ח מִצְווֹת עֲשֵׂה,

- אִין סֵפֶר חֲרֵדִים טֵיילְט עֶר פַאנַאנְדֶער דִי מִצְווֹת לוֹיט דִי אֵבָרִים, יֶעדֶער מִצְוָה צוּ וֶועלְכְן אֵבֶר זִי אִיז שַׁיָּיךְ -

וּבִכְלָלוּת טֵיילְן זֵיי זִיךְ אִין דְרַיי: מִצְווֹת וֶועלְכֶע זַיְינֶען פַארְבּוּנְדְן מִיטְן פַארְשְׁטַאנְד, ווִי יְדִיעַת גְדוּלַת הַבּוֹרֵא, תַּלְמוּד תּוֹרָה וכו' - רֹאשׁ. מִצְווֹת וֶועלְכֶע זַיְינֶען פַארְבּוּנְדְן מִיטְן גֶעפִיל פוּן הַארְץ, ווִי אַהֲבַת ה', יִרְאַת ה', אוּן אַהֲבַת יִשְׂרָאֵל - גוּף. אוּן מִצְווֹת מַעֲשִׂיּוֹת וֶועלְכֶע זַיְינֶען פַארְבּוּנְדְן, בְּעִיקָר, מִיט קַבָּלַת עֹל - רֶגֶל.

פַארְשְׁטַאנְד אוּן גֶעפִיל זַיְינֶען בַּאגְרֶענֶעצְט. אוֹיךְ דֶער קַבָּלַת עֹל ווָאס קוּמְט דוּרְךְ הַשָּׂגָה אוּן הֶרְגֵּשׁ, דָאס הֵייסְט פַארְשְׁטֵיין אוּן פִילְן אַז מֶען דַארְף מְקַבֵּל זַיְין עֹל מַלְכוּת שָׁמַיִם, אִיז עֶס אוֹיךְ בַּאגְרֶענֶעצְט. אָבֶער קַבָּלַת עֹל ווִי דָאס אִיז בְּעֶצֶם, אִיז בְּלִי גְבוּל.

אוּן דָאס מֵיינְט פּוּרְתָּ רַגְלְךָ, פּוּרְתָּ מֵיינְט - צֶעשְׁפְּרֵייטוּנְג, אוּמְבַּאגְרֶענֶעצְט. וֶוען אוּן וואוּ קֶען זַיְין "פּוּרְתָּ", בְּלִי־גְבוּל, - אִין "רַגְלְךָ", קַבָּלַת עֹל, רֵיינֶער "רֶגֶל" (רֶגֶל שֶׁבְּרֶגֶל) ווִי עֶר אִיז נִיט פַארְבּוּנְדְן מִיט מוֹחַ וְלֵב. וֶוען רֶגֶל אִיז פַארְבּוּנְדְן מִיט מוֹחַ וְלֵב, קֶען זַיְין אִין דֶערוֹיף הִילוּךְ, הֶעכְסְטְנְס, רִיצָה. בְּשַׁעַת אָבֶער עֶס אִיז רַגְלְךָ בְּעֶצֶם דֶעמָאלְט אִיז "פּוּרְתָּ" - בְּלִי־גְבוּל.

5. Regarding the connection between the feet and *kabbalas ol,* see *Likkutei Sichos,* Vol. 1, p. 1032ff. (translated in *Lessons in Likkutei Sichos,* Vol. 1, p. 294ff.). See also *Likkutei Sichos,* Vol. 9, p. 75ff. (translated in *Selections from Likkutei Sichos,* Vol. 5, p. 136-137ff).

Why Would One Put Aside His Heart and Mind?

3. How is such an all-encompassing commitment to ***kabbalas ol*** possible? **How can a person, a thinking being, bring himself to set aside his understanding and feeling, and** unreservedly carry out G-d's will to "**extend [his] feet**"?

The answer lies in the phrase, "**for the poor.**" When a person honestly **contemplates his own spiritual circumstances, he will see that he is poor, impoverished in knowledge. As such, there is no reason for him to take his intellectual conclusions into account. The same applies regarding the feelings of his heart. He will then be able to adopt the mode of** the prescription "**extend your feet**" **regarding *mitzvos* in general, and for "the *mitzvah*," i.e., the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*, in particular. He will run with his feet, without making calculations, to give a Jew *tzedakah* in a material sense, and also to give *tzedakah* in a spiritual sense.**

ג. ווִי קֶען אָבֶּער אַ מֶענְטשׁ, אַ בַּר דַּעַת, פּוֹעֵל'ן בַּיי זִיךְ צוּ אַוֶועקְלֵייגְן זַיְין שֵׂכֶל וְהֶרְגֵּשׁ אוּן שְׁטֵיין אִין אַ תְּנוּעָה פוּן פַּזַּרְתָּ רַגְלְךָ?

אוֹיף דֶעם זָאגְט עֶר וַוייְטֶער - "עַל הֶעָנִי". עֶר זָאל זִיךְ מִתְבּוֹנֵן זַיְין אִין זַיְין מַעֲמָד וּמַצָּב, וועט עֶר דַאן זֶען, אַז עֶר אִיז אַן עָנִי, עֶר אִיז אָרֶעם בְּדַעַת, וּבְמֵילָא הָאט עֶר נִיט וָואס צוּ רֶעכֶענֶען זִיךְ מִיט זַיְין שֵׂכֶל, וְעַל דֶּרֶךְ זֶה מִיט הֶרְגֵּשׁ הַלֵּב, אוּן עֶר וועט פּוֹעֵל'ן בַּיי זִיךְ דֶעם פַּזַּרְתָּ רַגְלְךָ, עַל הַמִּצְוָה בִּכְלַל וְעַל מִצְוָה סְתַם - מִצְוַת הַצְּדָקָה בִּפְרַט. עֶר וועט לוֹיפְן מִיט דִי פִּיס, אָן קֵיינֶע חֶשְׁבּוֹנוֹת, צוּלִיב גֶעבְּן אַ אִידְן צְדָקָה בְּגַשְׁמִיּוּת אוּן צְדָקָה בְּרוּחְנִיּוּת.

A Place for G-d's Blessing

4. The reward for conducting oneself in this manner **is: "You will be blessed when you enter, and you will be blessed when you depart."** In a Kabbalistic sense, **"when you enter" refers to an "arousal from Above," that precedes and empowers** man's **Divine service. "When you depart"** also **refers to the arousal from Above** but that which **follows and** was brought about by **the "arousal from below,"** i.e., by man's efforts.

This is where G-d's **blessing will be manifest. The arousal from Above will be far loftier than what is commensurate with man's efforts. In other words, after a person's unbounded efforts to "**extend [his] feet,**" he is given** a reward **far greater than his efforts.** Through his **consummate Divine service,** he brings about **"a complete place," and there, "the**

ד. דֶער שְׂכַר אוֹיף דֶערוֹיף אִיז: בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה בְּבוֹאֶךָ וּבָרוּךְ אַתָּה בְּצֵאתֶךָ. בְּבוֹאֶךָ מֵיינְט דִי אִתְעֲרוּתָא דִלְעֵילָא וָואס קוּמְט פַאר דֶער עֲבוֹדָה אוּן אִיז אַ נְתִינַת כֹּחַ אוֹיף אִיר, בְּצֵאתֶךָ מֵיינְט דִי אִתְעֲרוּתָא דִלְעֵילָא וָואס קוּמְט נָאךְ דִי אִתְעֲרוּתָא דִלְתַתָּא.

אִיז אִין דֶערוֹיף דָא דֶער "בָּרוּךְ", אַז דִי אִתְעֲרוּתָא דִלְעֵילָא זָאל זַיְין אַ סַךְ הֶעכֶער ווִי כְּפִי עֶרֶךְ עֲבוֹדָתוֹ. דָאס הֵייסְט אַז נָאךְ זַיְין הָארֶעוֶוען אוּן אִין אַן אוֹפֶן פוּן "פַּזַּרְתָּ", בְּלִי־גְבוּל, גִיט מֶען אִים אַ סַךְ מֶער ווִי לוֹיט זַיְין הָארֶעווַאנְיֶע, וָוארוּם בַּאֲתַר שְׁלִים (שְׁלֵימוּת הָעֲבוֹדָה) -

Holy One, blessed be He, rests."[6]

קוּדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא שַׁרְיָא[מב].

Blessings for Those Who "Extended Their Feet"

5. Our Sages' teaching cited above must also be understood **according to its simple meaning.** Many here have **"extend[ed their] feet" in a literal sense. They went on the *Tahaluchah,*[1]** walking **a distance of several hours. In this time, they could have rested comfortably, occupying themselves with their own matters. Instead, they went out and "extend**[ed their] feet" **to give to the spiritually poor. May they be** granted the blessing, **"You will be blessed when you enter, and you will be blessed when you depart."** May they be blessed **when they "enter and depart"** – when they begin and when they conclude **each day, each week, each month, each year. So too,** may they be blessed **when they "enter and depart"** their **Divine service.** The **blessing when they enter** is **the empowerment granted from Above that they achieve success in their work** and **carry out their mission wherever they go. And the blessing "when they depart" is that upon completing the mission, they should see the success** of their labor, to borrow wording of our Sages,[7] **"You will see Your [place] in the World [to Come] during your lifetime."**

May they also find success in their individual matters: in their study of the Torah, their meticulous observance of its *mitzvos,* and in their Divine service in prayer – the Divine service of prayer being the backbone of all one's spiritual **undertakings.[8] And may they also find blessing in everything they need regarding their material concerns.**

ה. אֵין דְרָשַׁת רַזַ"ל הַנַ"ל יוֹצֵאת מִידֵי פְּשׁוּטָהּ: דִי אַלֶע וָואס הָאבְּן מְקַיֵּים גֶעוֶוען בְּפּוֹעַל "פִּזַרְתָּ רַגְלְךָ", וָואס זַיְינֶען גֶעגַאנְגֶען אִין דֶער תַּהֲלוּכָה אַ מֶרְחָק פוּן כַּמָּה שָׁעוֹת, וָואס אִין דֶער צַיְיט הָאבְּן זֵיי דָאךְ גֶעקֶענְט זִיצְן בִּמְנוּחָה אוּן זִיךְ עוֹסֵק זַיְין מִיט זֵייעֶרֶע עִנְיָנִים אוּן פוּנְדֶעסְטְוֶועגְן זַיְינֶען זֵיי גֶעגַאנְגֶען אִין אַן אוֹפֶן פוּן פִּזַרְתָּ צוּלִיבּ מַשְׁפִּיעַ זַיְין לְעָנִי בְּרוּחְנִיּוּת, - זָאל בַּיי זֵיי זַיְין דֶער בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה בְּבוֹאֶךָ וּבָרוּךְ אַתָּה בְּצֵאתֶךָ, בְּבוֹאֶךָ וּבְצֵאתֶךָ פוּן יֶעדְן טָאג, פוּן יֶעדֶער וָואךְ, פוּן יֶעדְן חוֹדֶשׁ אוּן פוּן יֶעדְן יָאר, אוּן אוֹיךְ בְּבוֹאֶךָ וּבְצֵאתֶךָ פוּן זֵייעֶר עֲבוֹדָה, אַ בְּרָכָה בְּבוֹאֶךָ, בִּנְתִינַת הַכֹּחַ מִלְמַעְלָה צוּ מַצְלִיחַ זַיְין אִין זֵייעֶר אַרְבֶּעט בְּמִילוּי הַשְּׁלִיחוּת וואוּהִין זֵיי גֵייעֶן, אוּן אַ בְּרָכָה בְּצֵאתֶךָ, אַז נָאךְ דֶער עֲבוֹדָה אִין זֵייעֶר שְׁלִיחוּת, זָאלְן זֵיי זֶען פְּרִי טוֹב בַּעֲמָלָם, עוֹלָמְךָ תִּרְאֶה בְּחַיֶּיךָ[מג],

אוּן מַצְלִיחַ זַיְין בְּעִנְיְנֵיהֶם הַפְּרָטִים - אִין לִימוּד הַתּוֹרָה אוּן אִין קִיּוּם הַמִּצְוֹת בְּהִידּוּר וּבַעֲבוֹדַת הַתְּפִלָּה, וָואס דִי עֲבוֹדַת הַתְּפִלָּה אִיז דֶער חוּט הַשֶּׁדְרָה פוּן אַלֶע עִנְיָנִים[מד], אוּן אוֹיךְ בְּרָכָה בְּכָל הַמִּצְטָרֵךְ לָהֶם בְּכָל עִנְיְנֵיהֶם הַגַּשְׁמִיִּים.

(משיחת חגה"ש, תשח"י)

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6. See *Zohar,* Vol. III, p. 90b. **Note *Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim,* p. 24a, regarding the three levels of arousals from Above:** one that precedes and makes possible man's Divine service, one that comes about because of man's Divine service and corresponds to it, and one that is granted because of the "complete place" brought about by man's Divine service, but which transcends that service.

7. *Berachos* 17a, i.e., in the context used by the Rebbe, that they will enjoy seeing the success of their outreach work in their lifetime.

8. *Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar,* p. 70d.

מ) דרך ארץ זוטא פרק ט.
מא) תניא פרק לז.
מב) עיין לקוטי תורה שיר השירים כד, א בענין ג׳ דרגות באתערותא דלעילא.
מג) ברכות יז, א.
מד) לקוטי תורה פרשת בלק (ע, ד).

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whose commitment has brought this sacred initiative to fruition

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