

A Life Illuminated

תורה אור



When you find yourself in an illuminated room and you look around for something, you can immediately find your desired object, go over and pick it up. You can see clearly what is a window, what is a door, what is a table, and so on. If the room is dark, however, then all you can do is feel around. When you find a hollow space, you have no idea if it's a window or a door. You need to keep feeling around and trying your best to determine the truth.

This is what light accomplishes. It doesn't create anything new; it merely shows you the truth about all the existing things in the room, what they really are and what their true purpose is.¹

What's Going On?

Hashem created this world in a way that its very existence conceals its true being. When looking at the physical world, one could think that it has no origin at all and that it has always just been here on its own, *chas v'shalom*. But the truth is, everything is

only here because Hashem created it. In essence, everything is truly *Elokus*. Our purpose here on earth is to reveal that truth within the physicality of the world and allow the truth to shine through.

But with so much concealment and distraction, how can we see and experience this truth?

The answer is: by turning on the light. And the light is Torah.

The *possuk* says, "נר מצוה ותורה אור—a mitzvah is a candle and Torah is light." Just like in the *mashal* above, when the light is on one can see each item in the room and understand its purpose clearly; similarly Torah is the light illuminating every aspect of our world and showing how they each should be used for their G-dly purpose.²

Ultimately, every part of our world can be understood by studying Torah diligently, because Hashem used Torah as a blueprint and created the world with it. As the Mishnah says, "הפך בה הפך בה דכולא בה והפך בה דכולא בה—examine Torah and

re-examine it, because *everything* is in it." By studying Torah properly we can find all the answers that we need.³

The Rebbe often emphasized this point in various contexts. We can rest assured that Torah will never leave us stranded to our own devices, to figure things out on our own. Everything we need to know is explained and elucidated in Torah's words. "We don't need to go about feeling in the dark," the Rebbe says. "Whatever lesson we need to know for today can be clearly found in Torah, *Torah Ohr*..."⁴

Torah is referred to as "*Toras Chaim*," Torah of Life; a guide for every aspect of our lives. At the same time, it is also called "*Torah Ohr*," because these life lessons in Torah are set out in an illuminated fashion, clear and bright for all to see.⁵

In this sense, Torah is the ultimate light that reveals every single thing that needs to be revealed in this world. In fact, even things that are essentially higher than Torah itself must also be revealed through Torah. For

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות
 לכ"ק אדמו"ר
 לרגל יום הבהיר י"א ניסן
 ולזכות שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר
 בכל אתר ואתר שיצליחו,
 ושימלאו שליחותם הק'
 מתוך הצלחה מרובה בגו"ר
 נדפס ע"י
 הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל
 וזוגתו מרת אסתר מרים
 ומשפחתם שיחיו
 ליפשיץ

example, doing *teshuva*. The reason a person does *teshuva* is to rectify his transgression of Torah's command. The only way to do that is by invoking a truth that is even higher than Torah itself—the concept of *teshuva*. Nevertheless, we only know about *teshuva* because it is a mitzvah in Torah! Torah reveals everything that a Yid needs to know, in every facet of our lives.⁶

Visibility

Not only is Torah the light that illuminates the rest of the world, the lessons in Torah itself are like a light—

shining, clear, and easily discernible for all.

Torah was not given to only one specific demographic of the Jewish nation. “תורה צוה לנו משה מורשה קהלת” —Torah is an inheritance for every single Jew. Every Yid can find and understand the lessons of Torah as they apply to his or her life. True, there are varying levels of how we understand Torah. But that has nothing to do with the visibility of the lessons themselves. Just like there can be a person who has supersonic vision and can perceive sights with

more clarity, while others have less than perfect vision and can see them only with the help of eyeglasses. But that does not take away from each and every Yid's ability to see the lessons of Torah clearly and lucidly.⁷

If Hashem put us in this world with a purpose—to serve Him—He obviously gave us the capability to do so. Hashem is just and kind, He gives us the tools and the knowledge we need to fulfill this mission. There can be no room for doubt as to what and how we are supposed to do our job; everything is clearly stated and accounted for in Torah. And Torah doesn't “beat around the bush” and leave its lessons open-ended or ambiguous. The answers to any and all questions can be found easily, not leaving any room for the *yetzer hara* to sow doubt and cause a person trouble.⁸ If one tried to find the answers and the lessons he needs but is not successful, he may need to try harder. But with the right amount of work and trying again and again, he will certainly be successful. As the *possuk* says “כי לא” דבר רק הוא מכם—Torah study is not an empty thing from you;” if you are finding it empty, explains the Talmud Yerushalmi, it is “מכם,” it's your responsibility to work harder and discover the truth.⁹

Dark What?

In response to your letter filled with complaints, describing your situation in the darkest of colors...

...You write about the need for a lamp and a light to illuminate your dark path:

Your path is not dark at all! Everything is clear and lucid in Shulchan Aruch and in Chassidus. Even when it comes down to the smallest details, where the *yetzer hara* tries to sow doubt, there are a number of solutions offered in response. For example:

1. The statement of the Mittlerer Rebbe is well-known, that one should seek the counsel of a good friend to discuss his spiritual affairs. Thereby he has the strength of two *nefashos Elokis*, against one *nefesh habahamis*.
2. The litmus test to determine the origins of a certain idea is this: Anything that prevents a person from doing something productive in the realm of actual *avoda*, even if this disturbance seems to have the best justification possible, is certainly a scheme of the *nefesh habahamis*...

(*Igros Kodesh vol. 17, #6329*)

Light and Luminary

Torah as a whole is referred to as “light.” But even light itself must have



a source, the “*maor*”—the luminary. In Torah itself, there is the *ohr*—the light, which is *nigleh*, and the *maor* of Torah,

the innermost part of Torah, *pnimius haTorah*—Chassidus.

The fear is that at times the light will extend so far from its source that it will dim along the way. As *Chazal* note, when someone learns Torah for the wrong reasons, or when a person learns Torah while still doing *aveiros*, his connection to Hashem can be severed, *chas v’shalom*. This is why the study of Chassidus is so important—so that we always remain connected with the luminary itself and never be led astray.¹⁰

No Need

The Rebbe often reminded his listeners at farbrengens to take his words seriously and to understand them as they were said, without twisting them or adding any “*p’shetlach*.” In one rare instance, the Rebbe explained:

“No one should try to deduce any hints and allusions in my words. When I need to make a point, I do so clearly, in a manner of *Torah Ohr*...”

(12 Tammuz 5747 sicha 1, from the audio recording)

Electrifying!

I was pleased to hear that the electricity line has been established in Kfar Chabad, and that they were already able to use its light to farbreng on Yud-Tes Kislev. According to the letters I received, this endeavor was made possible thanks to your great work; thank you very much!

...Ancient Jewish tradition suggests that we should attempt to discover hints and lessons in everything that occurs. As the Mishnah says, a wise man learns something from everyone, and the Baal Shem Tov added: We must learn something from every occurrence and every detail of life.

...The power of electricity is one of the hidden powers of nature, not necessarily tangible with one of the five senses. We only know about it once we observe the outcome of its great power; a power that has the ability to dispel the obscurity and illuminate the darkest night.

Similarly in a spiritual sense: The innermost hidden part of Torah is revealed and can be seen through *Toras haChassidus* and the Chassidic way of life, which is powerful enough to pierce through the obscurity of the corporeal world and illuminate the darkness of the *gashmius*...

(The Rebbe’s letter to Mr. Zalman Shazar, *Igros Kodesh* vol. 8, #2343)

Don’t Keep It

Once a Yid connects with the light of *Torah Ohr*, it is his or her job to allow this light to illuminate the rest of the world as well. Our souls are like candles—“*נר ה’ נשמת אדם*”, and we are here to let that light spread and shine. When we do so, we will gradually chase away the darkness of *galus* and expose the great light of the *geula*, ultimately illuminating the entire world with the light of Torah and *Elokus*.¹¹ **T**

1. Purim 5733 sicha 7; Shabbos Parshas Tavo 5740 sicha 2; et. al.
2. Shabbos Parshas Naso 5742 sicha 1.
3. Chai Elul 5742 sicha 1.
4. Shabbos Parshas Pinchas 5744 sicha 3; et. al.
5. Sicha 25 Iyar 5744, et. al.
6. Simchas Beis Hashoeva 5723 sicha 7; et. al.
7. 13 Tishrei 5743 sicha 1.
8. 19 Kislev 5744 sicha 3.
9. Shabbos Parshas Lech Lecha 5745 sicha 2.
10. Sicha Chof Av 5710, et. al.
11. Sicha 27 Iyar 5742, et. al.