

A Lesson For All

ביז אפילו דעם פשוט שבפשוטים



The lesson learned this week must be understood by every single Yid, even the most simple-minded. The entire Torah was given to the *Bnei Yisroel* as a whole, but at the same time it was also given to each and every Yid individually, as the Midrash points out: *Matan Torah* was only able to happen when all 600,000 Yidden were present at Har Sinai. If even one had been missing, Hashem would not have given the Torah.

Obviously then, this lesson must be understandable even for the simplest of Jews. Yes, a smarter Yid, one of the “heads of tribes,” can and should delve deeper into the lesson and understand it more comprehensively. But at the base of it, just like every part of Torah, this lesson must be clear and straightforward—accessible to all...

(*Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar, Erev Shavuos 5738, et. al.*¹)

Me Too

When Hashem gave the Torah to the Yidden, the first words uttered were: “אנכי ה' אלקיך”—I am Hashem

your G-d,” using the singular term—even though there were millions of people being addressed. The Midrash explains² that each and every Yid heard the words in a personal way; each one said “עמי הדיבור מדבר”—Hashem’s words are being addressed to me specifically.”

Likewise, the Torah was given as an inheritance to every single Yid: מורשה קהלת יעקב. There is no prerequisite to acquiring an inheritance; according to *halacha*, even a one-day-old child can inherit whatever belonged to his predecessor.

With that being the case, every part of Torah must be accessible and understandable by each and every Yid.

The Rebbe often emphasized this point when teaching a lesson in *avodas Hashem*, stating that it must be understood by everyone—even the most simple of individuals. Similarly, the Rebbe would connect the theme of the various *parshios* and *Yomim Tovim* with the fact that each and every

Yid, even the most simple, must be included in the order of the day.

The Rebbe would often connect it with the theme of the *farbrenge* and the time of year. For example: Around Rosh Hashanah, the Rebbe elaborated on the *possuk* of אתם נצבים היום כולכם—how all the Yidden stand together on Rosh Hashanah, regardless of their status. We all crown Hashem as king over all of us—as members of the same nation. So the lessons of the day must certainly be appreciated by each and every one.

This is one of the most important founding principles of Chassidus as taught by the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe. The Rebbe explains:

Before Chassidus was revealed, there was a great divide between the scholars, the *bnei Torah*, and the simple folk. Then the Baal Shem Tov, the Maggid, the Alter Rebbe, and all the Rabbeim that followed, invested immense effort to show that it is possible, and allowed access, for even the most simple Jews to reach

לזכות
החייל בצבאות ה'
מאיר שלמה שיחי'
ניו
שיגדל להיות חי"ל לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר
נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו



the highest levels of *avoda*. The Alter Rebbe wanted Chassidus to be for everyone, not merely for one group of people or select individuals.

The Baal Shem Tov forged a whole new path and revolutionized the way things are done:

Before the revelation of Chassidus, the great *tzaddikim* and teachers of Torah would stay in their own place and expected anyone who wanted to learn from them to come to wherever the teacher was. Even those *tzaddikim* who had a habit of traveling and moving about, did so mainly for their own spiritual benefit, as a means of experiencing “*galus*” and cleansing their souls. While on the road, they would try hard to hide their true identity, not allowing themselves to be revealed to the Yidden that they met in the cities along the way.

The Baal Shem Tov, on the other hand, traveled extensively from city to city and from village to village. The Alter Rebbe also traveled a lot, and even when he wasn't traveling, he sent

talmidim (*shadarim*, *meshulachim*, etc.) on his behalf. Instead of concealing themselves from the public, these people would engage and educate, spreading the light of Torah and the source of the light of Torah—*penimius haTorah*—to the whole world.

This allowed for the engagement of even the least inspired Yidden, those who did not even know they were missing anything in their lives. They were taught to learn and appreciate the Torah they were missing, and they were eventually transformed into teachers themselves who spread the message even further.

Such are the ways of the Baal Shem Tov and all those who follow in his path—to teach and inspire even the uninitiated, including even very small children. The Baal Shem Tov himself worked as a teacher's assistant, tending to young children, helping them get to and from *cheder*, teaching them to say *brachos* and *Shema Yisroel*, and so on.

This was also one of the primary occupations of the [Frierdiker] Rebbe,

working hard that all Jewish children should have a proper education, not only those who were up to learning Chumash and Gemara, but even those who still needed to learn Aleph-Beis and Modeh Ani!

Even someone who is not yet even ready to learn Aleph-Beis, the [Frierdiker] Rebbe demanded that we should help them and teach them the basics of Yiddishkeit in a language that they do understand.

It is our sacred obligation to teach and inspire all the Yidden in our surroundings, to kindle the fire of their *neshamos*, or to fan the existing flames and allow them to shine ever brighter.³

The Rebbe once explained that while the Baal Shem Tov opened the door for bringing the secrets of the Torah to even the most simple people, the Alter Rebbe carried through with this mission and made it a reality. The Baal Shem Tov dealt with very young children teaching them the very basics of Yiddishkeit, as well as with the



very simple folk, inspiring them to praise Hashem and so on. However, these great and lofty energies were not able to manifest in a proper way. The *giluyim* he was revealing were sourced in *Sefiras HaKesser* and did not come

down in a manner that was palatable by lower realms.

The Maggid, and then the Alter Rebbe with Chassidus Chabad, were able to begin the process of allowing these lofty concepts to sit well within the human mind. Chassidus

Chabad not only teaches us that we can influence the most simple Jew and carry him to the loftiest heights, moreover, it even gives us the *explanation* for how this is possible. How a Yid who is considered by Torah to be a נדח—far from where he needs to be—is truly a Yid who will ultimately not be cast out forever: לא ידח ממנו נדח. We can teach this Yid even the deepest concepts in *penimius haTorah*, thereby bringing him back to where he needs to be, to the ways of Torah and mitzvos.⁴

The Rebbe once explained that since the Torah was given to each and every one of us, it is not enough for us to merely read up on what the final ruling is, what the “*maskana*” is and follow the orders. Each and every Yid needs to try and understand the depth of what lies behind that order, to the best extent possible.

This is in stark contrast to the way things were when the Yidden were still in Mitzrayim: The culture in Mitzrayim was such that only the great scholars, the “*chartumim*,” the sorcerers and stargazers, were well

What Did Chassidus Accomplish?

Many people ask: What did Chassidus accomplish? I never heard anything in this regard from my forebears. I never farbrenged with my father on Yud-Tes Kislev, so I never heard an explanation from him on this.

...What I personally think Chassidus accomplished is that each and every Yid can really understand how Hashem is כל עלמין וסובב כל עלמין—He fills all the worlds and He surrounds all the worlds... Every Yid, even one who doesn't have such a lofty *neshama*, one who didn't work on cleansing his *neshama*, even he can understand and deeply connect with a G-dly idea.

When the Baal Shem Tov was told by Moshiach that he would arrive after the wellsprings of Chassidus reached the *chutza*, the Baal Shem Tov was crying. People say that he was crying because these precious wellsprings were about to be dispersed everywhere, even in the furthest places. It seems that this is what Chassidus is all about: That even those people who did not cleanse their souls should be able to understand and relate to *Elokus*.

(*The Rebbe Rashab, Sefer Hasichos Toras Shalom*, p. 113)



versed in intellectual concepts, and they gave the orders for what the common folk should do. For the Yidden, Hashem wanted the exact opposite: Every Yid is supposed to learn and understand the Torah for himself, appreciating the depth of every Torah concept to the best of his capabilities.

Even a small child is supposed to be taught Torah from the moment he begins to speak. True, he may not understand the concepts at hand as well as an adult, but the obligation to study Torah is real nonetheless. A good analogy for this would be the rays of light from the sun: The sun is indeed the greatest and most powerful luminary in the solar system, yet its reflection can be found at the same time on both a tiny drop of water and on the ocean. Torah, too, is a great and G-dly wisdom, but it manifests itself in the mind of a great genius just as well as it does in the mind of a two-year-old child.⁵

Our job is to bring the waters of Torah to everyone, even the most simple Yid, and explain it in a way that

Everyone

As we search for a lesson from this Chai Elul that we can all apply in our own *avodas Hashem*, one might think that the lesson should be by delving into a very deep secret in the innermost parts of the Torah, or by analyzing a complex subject in *nigleh*.

This is absolutely wrong. It would go contrary to the philosophy of the Baal Shem Tov, the Alter Rebbe, and all the Rabbeim who followed, including the [Frierdiker] Rebbe, to say that a lesson should be a complex thing that only intellectuals can understand but not the common folk.

The Rabbeim taught us that every lesson needs to be accessible to everyone—from the “heads of the tribes” through the “wood-choppers” and “water-drawers,” even the most simple people.

Not only that, but all these people are placed together, אתם נצבים היום כולכם, becoming one entity together.

(*Shabbos Parshas Ki Savo, Chai Elul 5740*)

is palatable and understandable. If the other person still doesn't understand it, it's obviously not a problem on his part, because every concept in Torah is, by definition, accessible to all. The problem then must lie on the shoulders of the teacher—it is his responsibility to form a better method of explanation.⁶ 1

1. This same sentiment was repeated by the Rebbe at countless farbrengens, perhaps even hundreds of times. See below.
2. Yalkut Shimoni, Shemos 20:2.
3. Shabbos Parshas Ki Savo, Chai Elul 5711, sicha 1.
4. 19 Kislev 5720, sicha 7.
5. Yud Shevat 5743, sicha 2.
6. Pesach Sheini 5743, sicha 1.