

לזכות
הרה"ת הרב שלום דוב בער
וזוגתו מרת חיה מושקא שיחיו
שוחאט

לרגל יום נישואיהם - יום הבהיר
ראש חודש כסלו

ולזכות בנותיהם ברכה ליפשא,
עליזה ושיינדל תחיינה



The Time Is Now!

*THE EVOLVING
REVELATION
OF PNIMIUS
HATORAH*





גל עיני ואביטה נפלאות מתורתך

“I am at 30 years of strength but my energy has weakened as my thoughts are troubled. For the fall has passed and the summer has gone by, yet we have not been saved nor has our sickness been healed. Our wound—the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash—has not been healed... Our sages tell us, “If the Beis Hamikdash was not built in your days, it is as if it was destroyed in your days.” I put my attention to understanding the reason for this, why has our galus continued for so long? Why has Ben Yishai not come?”

These solemn words were written by Reb Chaim Vital, the most notable *talmid* of the Arizal, in the introduction to *Shaar Hahakdamos* (itself an introduction of sorts to understanding all the writings of the Arizal). He goes on to say that he found the reason for this: People do not study *pnimiyus haTorah*. Furthermore is the cause of all *galus* throughout the generations. *“This was the sin of Adam Harishon: He ate from the eitz hadaas instead of choosing the eitz hachayim, the study of Kabbalah. This itself was the sin of the eirev rav... and why the first luchos were broken... This caused the destruction of the first and second Batei Mikdash and caused our long and bitter galus, until the Yidden will do teshuva and seek Hashem through the study of the secrets of the Torah.”*

The Rebbe would often point people to read these “shocking words” of Reb Chaim Vital in order to understand the importance of learning Chassidus. This same concept was repeated generations later by Moshiach himself; when the Baal Shem Tov asked him when he will come, he replied—*לכשיפוצו מעיינותיך חוצה*, when your wellsprings will be spread to all.

But what does this mean? Why does the lack of this study cause *galus*?

Before getting to the *why*, we must first define *what pnimiyus haTorah* is. It is not simply *another*, deeper, aspect of Torah, *another* subject to be studied; it is the *pnimiyus*—the innermost element—of the Torah, animating and shedding light upon its depths.

Reb Chaim Vital explains at length:

We know from Chazal that Hashem studies Torah on-high, as do the *neshamos* and *malachim*. Now, in the spiritual worlds above, there is no concept of time and place, and certainly no physical objects—so how can we possibly say that they are studying the physical stories of the Chumash and the physical *halachos* of the Gemara? As Reb Chaim Vital puts

it, “When Hashem was enjoying the Torah and creating worlds with it—it obviously was not with the simple story of Adam Harishon, or the story of Bnei Chori or of Bilaam’s donkey...”

The truth is that our Torah down below is merely the *physical manifestation* of the essence of Torah, Reb Chaim Vital explains. The Torah itself is in the spiritual world of *Atzilus* (and beyond), utter *Elokus*—and from there it comes down into the worlds:

First it comes into *Briah* (which corresponds to Torah-study through the method of *drash*), *Yetzirah* (which is the world of *remez*) and *Asiya* (the world of *pshat*). The Torah as we know it—including the Chumash, Mishna, and Gemara—is Torah *clothed* in physicality, in physical stories and physical laws. *Pnimiyus haTorah* is Torah in its purest form, as it is

The Whole of the Torah

The very fact that *pnimiyus haTorah* is half of the Torah (in quantity, and much more in quality, as the Rebbe explains) means that one *must* study it, since every person is obligated to study every part of Torah to refine his *neshama* (as the Alter Rebbe writes in Hilchos Talmud Torah). When someone *denies* the importance of studying it or fights against it, it is considered *kfirah* in the entire Torah.

(*Yud-Tes Kislev 5722 p. 188*)

“...This caused our long and bitter galus, until the Yidden will do teshuva and seek Hashem through the study of the secrets of the Torah...”

in *Atzilus*—it is the *neshama* and innermost element of *nigleh*, the Torah down below.

Thus, Reb Chaim Vital explains, without *pnimiyus haTorah* there’s no *neshama*. Like a dead body without a *neshama* to enliven it, *nigleh* alone lacks the energy and light that comes with *pnimiyus haTorah*.

Furthermore, he says: The only way to comprehend the true meaning of the mitzvos and stories of the Torah is through *pnimiyus haTorah*: The *chachamim* themselves studied *nigleh* based on its *neshama*—*pnimiyus haTorah*, as the Zohar tells us, “The sages of the Mishna and the *amoraim* based their entire study on the secrets of the Torah.” Reb Chaim Vital elaborates, “In the simple meaning of the Torah—its stories, laws, and mitzvos—one cannot recognize Hashem. To the contrary, there are mitzvos and *chukim* that cannot be accepted logically, and all the nations tease the Yidden about them for they seem like riddles

and parables: You blow a horn on Rosh Hashanah and think that you are confusing the Satan? Similarly, a vast percentage of the mitzvos—and especially their details—cannot be accepted logically. Where is the beauty and greatness of the Torah?

“Its words are like a dream without meaning. The secrets of the Torah are the meaning of the dream... Those who study just Talmud Bavli are like blind people stumbling in the dark.”¹

The Zohar uses these terms in describing the difference between *nigleh* of Torah, the revealed part of Torah, and *pnimiyus haTorah*, Kabbalah—that it is like a maidservant to her mistress, like the husk to the grain, like the *eitz hadaas* (which is clothed in the world) of good and evil, compared to the *eitz hachayim* of pure good.

And, the Midrash² tells us—this is a part of Torah that Hashem wants us to focus on. It describes the day of judgement above and how Hashem reacts to people who

study only certain parts of Torah: “Let he who has Chumash come forth... let he who has halachos come forth...” Then it says, “Let he who has Talmud come forth. Hashem says to him, ‘My son, you toiled in Talmud—but have you gazed at my merkava? Have you gazed at my glory? For I have no enjoyment in this world except when talmidei chachamim toil in the Torah, looking and gazing and seeing and contemplating this great study: Where my kisei hakavod is... where the chashmal is... greater than all of them, from my nails to my forehead. Is that not my glory? Is that not my greatness? Is that not my beauty? That my sons should recognize my glory.’”

“Hashem has no enjoyment in this world except when this wisdom is studied,” Reb Chaim Vital declares. The study of *nigleh* [in which we learn about how to keep the mitzvos meticulously] is for *our* sake—for our righteousness does not affect Hashem nor do our sins—but when we study the secrets of the Torah, Hashem *kvaychol* gains strength.

Nigleh is supremely important as well: Hashem brought the Torah into the physical world of good and evil in order to refine it and the person. If one studies *pnimiyus*

haTorah without *nigleh* they are like a *neshama* without a body. But, Reb Chaim Vital says, “A person was created only to study the Kabbalah.”

Moshiach Through Pnimiyus HaTorah

Reb Chaim Vital explains that the cause of all *galus* is because *pnimiyus haTorah* was rejected time and again throughout history—by Adam Harishon who chose *Eitz Hadaas* over the *Eitz Hachayim*; by the *eirev rav* at *Matan Torah* who wished to listen to Moshe Rabbeinu instead of Hashem (which alludes to *nigleh* instead of Kabbalah). This caused the destruction of the first and second *Batei Mikdash* and our long, bitter *galus*.

When Moshiach comes, the Torah will divest itself of its garments and *pnimiyus haTorah* will become fully revealed, and it is only as a result of studying *pnimiyus haTorah* that Moshiach will come.

Reb Chaim Vital writes, “[This *galus* will continue] until the Yidden perform *teshuva* and ‘seek their G-d’ through the study of the secrets of the Torah so that they know Whom they are serving and Who is their King.” The Zohar tells us, “[When Moshiach comes] the Yidden will taste from the ‘tree of life,’ the *Sefer Hazohar*—and it is with it that they will be redeemed mercifully.”

Thus, as the time for Moshiach comes closer and closer, *pnimiyus haTorah* is being revealed more than ever before, becoming ever more accessible to the masses, as the Zohar prophesies, “In the sixth century of the sixth millennium, the gates of wisdom will open,”³ and “When the days of Moshiach come closer, even the children will know the secrets of wisdom.”⁴

The Only Way to Love Hashem

In addition to the fact that *pnimiyus haTorah* is a fundamental element of Torah, there is another crucial issue at play: Two basic mitzvos in which a Yid is constantly obligated are to fear Hashem and to love Him—*yiras Hashem* and *ahavas Hashem*. These serve as the motivation for all the other mitzvos of the Torah; if you don’t fear Hashem and love him, it is impossible to be truly motivated to fulfill all the mitzvos on a consistent basis.

So how does one achieve *yiras Hashem* and *ahavas Hashem*? You can only feel emotions towards something that you know and understand—which can only be achieved through studying *pnimiyus haTorah*, especially Chassidus.

The Rebbe explains that since *pnimiyus haTorah* is the way to fulfil these two fundamental mitzvos, it is relevant to everyone—men, women and even children, whether or not

they officially belong to a certain movement, and whatever their level of Torah observance and study is. Women, for example, do not have an obligation to study Torah in general—but they must study Chassidus in order to achieve *yiras Hashem* and *ahavas Hashem*.⁵ Even non-Jews, who are strongly discouraged from learning Torah, are encouraged to study *pnimiyus haTorah* in order to better fulfill their mitzvah of believing in Hashem.⁶

And without the *ahavah* and *yira* that *pnimiyus haTorah* provides, one cannot learn *nigleh* correctly either. As the Rebbe Rashab explains at length,⁷ Torah must bring a person to *bitul* and nullification to Hashem—the more Torah you learn, the closer you become to Hashem, and the more nullified you become. But if a person suffices with studying *nigleh*—which is *Elokus* as it is enclothed in a physical form—he will become occupied with studying physical subjects and will not feel the *Elokus* in the Torah—and his achievements in Torah study will promote his ego. This (temporarily) causes the Torah to become a *sam hamoves*, a fatal poison, as it enters the *galus* of the person’s ego. Furthermore: a person studying Torah in this manner will inevitably make mistakes, as the *halacha* can be discerned only by someone who is nullified to *Elokus*.

In previous generations, people were more spiritual, and they were able to feel *ahavah* and *yira* naturally, even without *pnimiyus haTorah*. But today, with our lower *neshamos*, we are more coarse people—and without *pnimiyus haTorah*, the Rebbe Rashab writes, the *nigleh* “becomes poison for him, *Rachamana litzlan*, for it causes him to fall, as he becomes a big *yesh* and very coarse.”⁸

So far we have established two major reasons for *pnimiyus haTorah*'s being ever more important as we get closer to Moshiach: 1) This is the study that will bring Moshiach. 2) The *neshamos* of our generation are on a lower level, necessitating this study to achieve *ahavah* and *yirah*.

There are several additional reasons for learning Chassidus:

1) Without Chassidus one cannot truly believe in Moshiach, because some things need to be tried in order to be understood. Chassidus is a taste of what the revelation of the time of Moshiach will be like, and to really understand and await that time, one needs to have a taste first.

Like the well known story of the Alter Rebbe: At a time when Chassidim were suffering greatly from their detractors, the Alter Rebbe succeeded in winning

over tens of *misnagdim*, not by logical persuasion to the merits of Chassidus but by simply saying (in his trademark tune): טעמו וראו כי טוב ה'. *Try it* and you will see.⁹

2) In today's day and age, one cannot have *yiras Shamayim* without learning Chassidus.

The obvious question is: Was there no *yiras Shamayim* amongst Jews until a few hundred years ago? The answer is that not all generations are created equal, just as not all people are created equal. Just like in Hilchos Talmud Torah we find that there are different categories of people when it comes to the obligation of Torah study: Some people are only obligated to study Torah for an hour a day while others must study for many hours. Hashem created some people in a way that a little Torah will be enough to sustain them. Similarly, previous generations could have been sustained with little to no Chassidus. Today, however, a Jewish lifestyle without Chassidus is unsustainable.¹⁰

The *Aseres Hadibros* starts off with the greatest and deepest of all mitzvos, to know and understand that there is one G-d. In other words, *achdus Hashem* has a basic element of *emunah* to it which includes the deepest ideas of knowing Hashem.

But then it proceeds to address those who need to be told not to murder, and its not enough to tell them, they needed to hear it with the thunder and lighting of *matan Torah* in order to get it through to them.

These two *dibros* come together for a reason. The only thing that speaks to this Yid is *pnimiyus haTorah*, Chassidus. While the revealed part of his *neshama* is obviously not functioning well, his *pnimiyus haneshama* is awake. But to talk to his *pnimiyus haneshama* you must speak its language, and its language is Chassidus.

On the other hand even a spiritual Jew must learn Chassidus. He cannot rely on his spiritual intuition to keep him safe from “*lo tirtzach*” for the only way to guarantee that you keep “*lo tirtzach*” is if it comes from your knowledge of “*Anochi Hashem Elokecha*”—truly knowing and appreciating Hashem's existence. Today this can only be done properly through learning Chassidus.¹¹

In a letter to Reb Shimon Yisroel Pozen, a Chossid of the Munkatcher Rebbe and a *rosh yeshiva* in Williamsburg, the Rebbe urged him to spread Chassidus, noting that studying Kabbalah without Chassidus is dangerous because one will not know how to be *mafshit hadevarim m'gashmiyusan* (properly understand the lofty, G-dly concepts for the abstract matter

But why specifically Chabad Chassidus? Doesn't Chassidus come in various forms?

Evolving Revelation

The revelation of *pnimiyus haTorah* occurred in a process that spanned many generations. As we grew closer to Moshiach, the deepest secrets of the Torah were revealed in ways unimaginable in the past.

The greatest revelation of *pnimiyus haTorah* occurred at *matan Torah*, when the Yidden saw Hashem's *merkava* revealed before them (whereas *nigleh* of Torah was only hinted within the *Aseres Hadibros*). Afterwards, however, the study of Kabbalah was very limited; only being taught to select people who had the proper level of *yiras Shamayim* and not in public settings.

Many notable figures in Jewish history authored works on Kabbalah, beginning with Avraham Avinu (who authored *Sefer Yetzira*) and Moshe Rabbeinu (who authored *Raaya Mehemna*). The *nevi'im* throughout the generations spent their lives contemplating the secrets of Hashem's greatness, as the Rambam describes at length. But the majority of Yidden did not learn it at all. And it wasn't only that they didn't learn it—they *couldn't* learn it, for these were the secrets of Hashem's wisdom, the *sod* of Torah that was not meant for the masses.

The first step in the revelation of Kabbalah was the revelation of the Zohar, authored by the Rashbi—yet, he only allowed one student to transcribe his teachings and even he was told to keep it quiet.

Many generations later came the Arizal, who declared that it was now, “permitted and a mitzvah to reveal this wisdom.” His *sefarim* were accepted throughout the Jewish world and many Kabbalistic *minhagim* and *halachos* have become common practice. Still, it was very limited. The only student who was allowed to transcribe his teachings was Reb Chaim Vital—and he ordered his writings buried with him. (It was dug up later upon receiving approval in a dream.)

The Baal Shem Tov was the one who revealed Chassidus and brought *pnimiyus haTorah* to the masses, through stories and inspiring teachings so that even the simplest of people could live their lives with the energy and lifestyle of Chassidus, with an emphasis on the love of Hashem and fellow Yidden, even if they couldn't comprehend it themselves. But when it came to the *study* of Kabbalah—the Baal Shem Tov emphasized that it should be limited to those who could remove it from its physical trappings and understand the underlying abstract concepts.

The Mezritcher Maggid spoke Chassidus more openly, without clothing it in stories, but he did so only for his select students.

With the revelation of Chassidus Chabad, the Alter Rebbe affected a fundamental revolution in the study of *pnimiyus haTorah*. Up until that point, the study of *pnimiyus haTorah*—the study of Hashem Himself—was limited to spiritual people who could inherently relate to such concepts by virtue of their lofty *neshamos* and

it is, without getting distracted by the material-sounding terms).¹²

But why specifically Chabad Chassidus? Doesn't Chassidus come in various forms?

We'll understand this with a *mashal*:

When a new disease is discovered, it requires a new type of medicine or treatment. Also, if an old disease becomes prevalent again it is necessary to increase the power of the medication or the vaccine.

This is all true even for those who are not sick. Everyone must take necessary precautions to protect themselves and perhaps vaccinate themselves from the ensuing danger.

Today's spiritual dangers occupy people's mind and intellect. In order to combat that, the cure must be one that can consume and enchant the human intellect; i.e. Chabad Chassidus.¹³

In another letter¹⁴ the Rebbe responds to this very question in a different way by comparing the

works of the other Chassidus to Mishna and Chabad Chassidus to Gemara. It would be silly to ask why one must learn Gemara if most of it is anyway just explaining the Mishna...

To the argument that they all come from the same source, the Baal Shem Tov, the Rebbe responded:

One only needs to take a look at the works of the other students of the Baal Shem Tov to see the difference between Chagas and Chabad Chassidus.

avodas Hashem. A regular person using his physical brain would have no entry into even beginning to comprehend *pinimiyus haTorah*. Just as you cannot capture smell with your ears, and you cannot hear music with logic, *pinimiyus haTorah* was a spiritual arena *unexplainable* in logical terms.

The Alter Rebbe changed this forever. As a *neshama chadasha*, he took the deepest secrets of *pinimiyus haTorah* and *put it into intellect*. By studying Chassidus Chabad, every person is able to access the depths of *pinimiyus haTorah* in an intellectual manner. After his release from imprisonment—which signified the divine agreement to the dissemination of Chassidus—the Alter Rebbe declared that Chassidus is for the entire *klal Yisroel*, it is now a part of Torah that everyone can and must learn.

With every subsequent generation, as the time for Moshiach comes ever closer, *pinimiyus haTorah* has become more understood and more available, reaching ever growing audiences, as each Rebbe continued the revelation of Chassidus. The very same concepts that the Alter Rebbe said succinctly were developed and explained further by each Rebbe, revealing ever further depth.¹⁶ The Frieddiker Rebbe truly brought it to the world, explaining it in simple terms and translating it into multiple languages so that even people who didn't understand *Lashon Hakodesh* or Yiddish are able to study the deepest secrets of the Torah.

(It should be noted that this wasn't a risk-free endeavor, to say the least. The Rabbeim were subject to dangerous *kitrugim* from above about the validity of spreading Chassidus in such a free manner, leading to severe imprisonment and more.)

In our generation, the final generation before the *geula*, the Rebbe campaigned for the study and dissemination of *pinimiyus haTorah* with tremendous urgency, at unprecedented levels. While the Frieddiker Rebbe expected regular Chassidim to study Chassidus three times a week (and only *temimim* to learn it every day), the Rebbe expected everyone to learn Chassidus on a daily basis. Whereas in previous generations tremendous care was taken about explaining Chassidus using "*osiyos harav*"—the words and terminology of the Rabbeim—the Rebbe encouraged adaptations and explanations of Chassidus in all languages and styles. Whereas previous Rabbeim allowed only a few *sefarim* of Chassidus to be published, the Rebbe published hundreds, opening the entire archive of the Rabbeim's manuscripts to be published.

(Here, too, the Rebbe alluded to *kitrugim* that came as a result, see *Establishing a Yom Tov*, Derher Teves 5775.)

Often quoting the words of Reb Chaim Vital, the Rebbe exerted tremendous efforts so that every type of person can study *pinimiyus haTorah*. "The demand of Reb Chaim Vital to study *pinimiyus haTorah* is accepted by all communities of Yidden—Sefardim, Ashkenazim, Litvishe, Hungarians, Lubavitchers—for Reb Chaim Vital was accepted by all!"

Chagas Chassidus is mostly brief anecdotes and even with great labor, it is doubtful that the student will understand the true depth and meaning of what they're reading. Just as you can hardly trust yourself to arrive at the breadth and depth of the explanations of the Gemara on your own, just from the words of the Mishna.

This is in addition to the fact that the Gemara includes many *chidushim* not attainable from the Mishna.

The Rebbe also notes that the tremendous benefits of Chassidus have a positive effect as soon as one begins to learn it. Just as someone who enters a store of perfumes, even before he purchases anything, the beautiful smell already sticks to him.¹⁵ **T**

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1. The Rebbe would often point to certain details in *nigleh* that have no true reasoning without *pinimiyus haTorah*.

2. Mishlei, 10.
3. Zohar vol. 1 117a.
4. Zohar vol. 3 124b.

5. See *Investing in the Real Future*, Derher Sivan 5779.

6. Shabbos Parshas Bereishis 5729; *Toras Menachem* vol. 54, p. 241. Et. al.

7. *Kuntres Eitz Hachayim* p. 39-41.

8. *Kuntres Eitz Hachayim* p. 43.

9. *Toras Menachem* vol. 9 p. 65

10. *Toras Menachem* vol. 30 p. 331.

11. *Toras Menachem* vol. 33 p. 111.

12. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 22 p. 58.

13. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 12 p. 364

14. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 14 p. 406

15. *Toras Menachem* vol. 9 p. 66.

16. See *Toras Menachem* vol. 14 p. 80