

## WHY SPECIFICALLY CHABAD?

*The following is a collection of letters from the Rebbe articulating in great detail why everyone must study Chabad Chassidus, especially in our day and age.*

### CHASSIDUS AND KABBALA

*In this letter, the Rebbe explains the importance of studying Chassidus Chabad in general, including the reason why it is needed despite the fact that Zohar and Kisvei Ho'Arizal are also considered pnimiyus HaTorah:*

I am responding to your letter from Tuesday, replying to your question whether “one perek of Tanya per day is sufficient to fulfill the obligation of learning *pnimiyus HaTorah*.”

Your question about this is rather surprising, since there is a general rule about all the mitzvos of the Torah that one must fulfill them according to his own capabilities. You can certainly learn and understand more *seforim* of Chassidus. Particularly considering the explanation in my father-in-law, the Rebbe's notes (printed in the sefer *Kitzurim VeHa'oros* on Tanya), that the Tanya, compared to other *seforim* of Chassidus, is like the Written Torah compared to the Oral Torah. One of the elements of this comparison, as the Alter Rebbe explains in *Iggeres HaKodesh*, is that the details of the Written Torah, and even of the mitzvos, are only fully understood through their explanation in the Oral Torah (see *Iggeres HaKodesh siman 29*). The same holds true for *Toras HaChassidus*, as is self-evident.

In regards to what you write about the [lack of] availability of *seforim*: You live among *Anash* in the holy city of Yerushalayim;

[they will certainly lend you *seforim*] as the well-known the saying of *Chazal*, extolling the virtues of those who have *seforim* and lend them to others.

In regards to what you write at the end of his letter, [asking]: The Zohar and writings of the Arizal are also *pnimiyus HaTorah*, so why do we emphasize that *pnimiyus HaTorah* was revealed specifically through Chassidus?

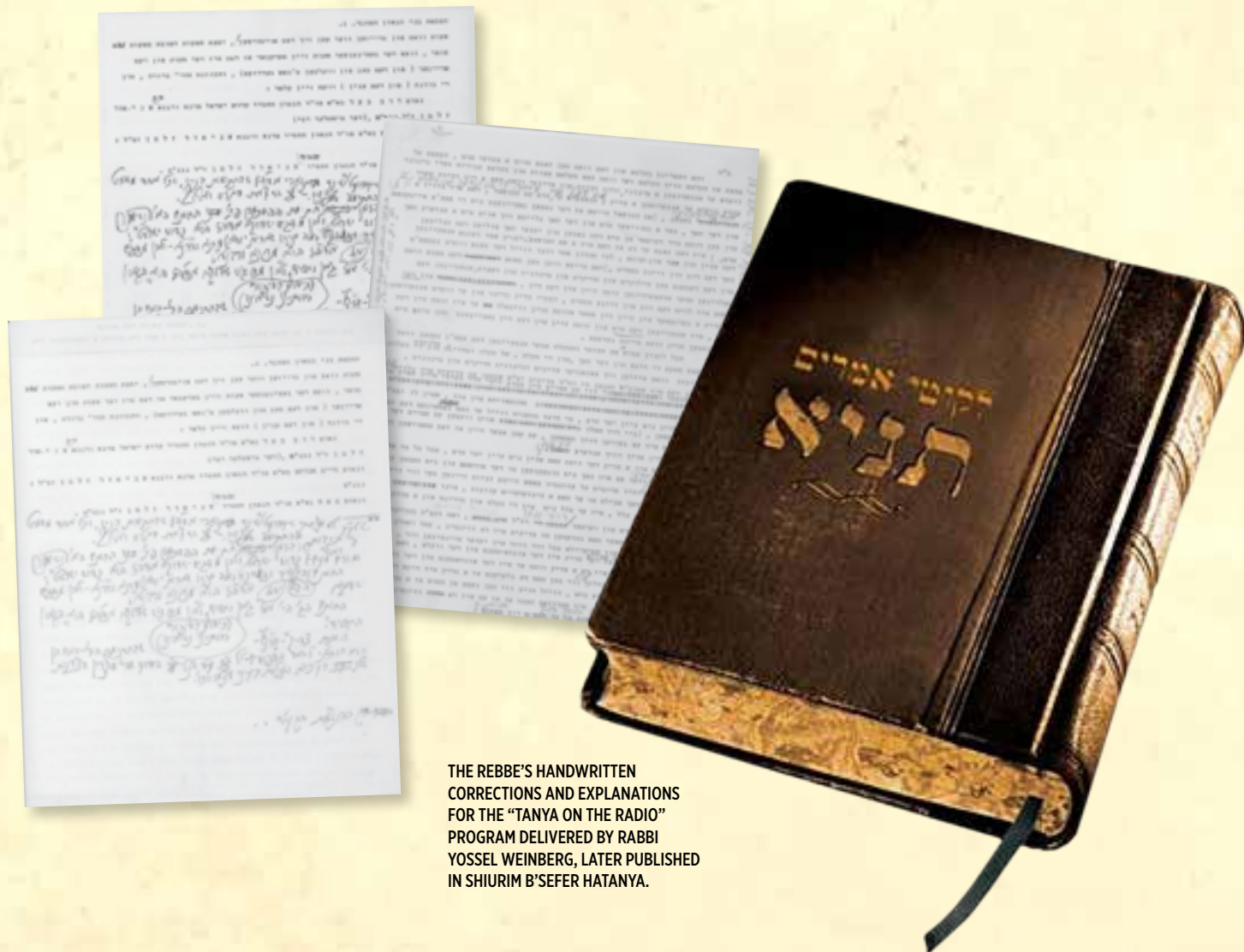
This question is also surprising, for that which is obvious does not need any explanation. Namely, comparing the comprehension of a concept as explained in the Zohar to the comprehension of that same concept as it is explained in Chassidus [for example, you can learn something in Zohar itself and then learn how it is explained in [Chassidus in the] *Biurei HaZohar*], is similar to one learning the Mishnah without the explanation of the *Gemara* and its commentaries. The same holds true for the writings of the Arizal. There is no need to elaborate on something so simple.

I hope that, although you didn't mention it in your letter, you participated in the farbrengen of Yud Shevat, the yahtzeit of my father-in-law, the Rebbe, who risked his life to disseminate the aforementioned study.

With a blessing for good news...<sup>1</sup>



# אגרות קודש



THE REBBE'S HANDWRITTEN CORRECTIONS AND EXPLANATIONS FOR THE "TANYA ON THE RADIO" PROGRAM DELIVERED BY RABBI YOSSEF WEINBERG, LATER PUBLISHED IN SHIURIM B'SEFER HATANYA.

## CHASSIDUS CHABAD AND OTHER SCHOOLS OF CHASSIDUS

*Here the Rebbe explains the importance of studying specifically Chabad Chassidus, in addition to the teachings of other schools of Chassidus:*

In response to your letter in which you write that you have a nightly Chassidus study session, but you do not disclose any details; i.e. what you learn, how long you learn for, and how long this session has been going on. [All of these points are important because] depending on these factors is how well you grasp what you are learning, which may define the way to best answer the question you raised in this letter. [Let me preface that] this is not the way to go about learning any area in Torah, beginning with questions on the subject before you possess a sufficient amount of knowledge of it.

But, being that *Chazal* tell us to judge everyone favorably, I hope that you had only good intentions. As to your questions:

Why must we learn specifically Chassidus Chabad? Why not suffice with learning the Polish-style of Chassidus? After all, they all "drank from the same fountain"--[stemming off of] the Baal Shem Tov and the Mezricher Maagid.

The gist of the answer is similar to the answer to another question:

Why must we learn Gemara, in addition to the study of Mishnah? After all, for the most part, the Gemara is merely an explanation on the Mishnah, so why not suffice with studying only Mishnah. Didn't they [i.e. the *Tanna'im* and *Amora'im*] all "drink from one fountain"?

The same holds true with learning Chassidus:

The words of the students of the Baal Shem Tov are written as short, concise pointers. Someone learning them on his own, even with lengthy explanations, will not necessarily reach the correct understanding--for not every mind is so capable. Chassidus Chabad, on the other hand, true to its name ["Chabad" meaning intellectual capabilities] succeeds in elucidating these short points in the "Mishnah" of Chassidus.

In the Gemara, many additional points come to light by elaborating and discussing the hidden details in the words of the Mishnah, and many original concepts are also generated from the discussion (as *Chazal* say – כל מה שתלמיד ותיק עתיד – לחודש). So the same holds true with Chassidus Chabad as well. To be sure, the words of the Baal Shem Tov are also quoted within Chassidus Chabad, so you have both the "Mishnah" along with explanation; it is all included.

Needless to say, the aforementioned does not invalidate, even in the slightest manner [the study of other Chassidus-works], *chas ve'sholom*. [My intention is] only that it should only serve as a lesson. Just as one must learn Gemara in addition to the Mishnah, in our day and age, one must study Chassidus Chabad in addition to studying the "Mishnah" of Chassidus, as is now self-evident.

(See also the *moshol* by Rashbatz, along with my father-in-law's explanation, published in *HaTomim* vol. 2 p. 56 and on).<sup>2</sup>



## CHASSIDUS AND MUSSAR

*In this letter, the Rebbe underlines the need to institute thorough study of Chassidus in yeshivos, especially when considering the deteriorating spiritual state of society today:*

...I will utilize this opportunity, relying on the saying of *Chazal* that "we only urge enthusiasm on the enthusiastic," to encourage you regarding something that is well-known and obvious: the necessity for every yeshiva and educational institution to exercise immense effort to instill *yiras shomayim* in their students; not only by means of supervising their behavior, but also through appropriate studies. Being that the nature of a yeshiva student is to seek an explanation for everything and not just accept it as a command, they must be taught appropriately in this regard. In fact, all yeshivos have agreed to institute the study of either Mussar or Chassidus.

One of the differences between the study of Mussar and Chassidus (with regards to the abovementioned issue) is: Mussar, in general, subordinates and therefore constricts [the spirit of] the student, whereas Chassidus elevates the person and causes expansiveness in him (although there are obviously some aspects of Mussar that lead to joy and expansiveness, and some aspects of Chassidus that lead to submission and constriction).

Another advantage that Chassidus has is that it is more likely to lead a person to love and fear of Hashem. As is explained in Rambam, *hilchos Yesodei HaTorah*, that the way to achieve love and fear of Hashem is through meditating [upon His greatness], etc.

As one upon whom Heaven has granted the merit of being a *rosh mesivta*, influential over many young men and yeshiva students, you were certainly also given the ability to carry this out, in accordance with current needs, to influence those who are under your wing; to draw them towards the study of Chassidus.

It is certainly unnecessary to explain to someone like you that although some generations ago it was possible for a yeshiva to suffice without any study of Mussar--since even the streets were G-d-fearing—yes the situation has changed in the last two generations. Undesirable "winds" blow around the world and have penetrated the walls of the yeshiva as well. As a result, the study of Mussar was introduced into the yeshiva curriculum. And our generation is even more different, in that there is a doubled and redoubled darkness, deeming the study of Mussar alone insufficient. Every Torah scholar is now required to learn *pnimiyus HaTorah*, which is referred to in the *Zohar* as the "soul" of the Torah, in order to protect his study of *nigleh d'Torah*. This will enable the youth of this generation to achieve love and fear of Hashem, as explained above. As the famous statement of the Arizal asserts, that specifically in our generation it's a mitzvah to reveal this wisdom (referring to *pnimiyus HaTorah*).

With esteem, and with blessing for a speedy recovery.<sup>3</sup>

1. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 22 p. 150

2. *Ibid.* vol. 14 p. 406

3. *Ibid.* vol. 8 p. 177