



Hashem's Wisdom

A Chossid's Approach to Limud HaTorah

PRESENTED FOR SHAVUOS—ZMAN MATTAN TORASEINU

“Leave me one room...”

The story is told in Midrash Rabbah of a king who had an only daughter, and she got married to another king. After the royal wedding, the son-in-law wished to take his new bride with him to his homeland.

Said the father-in-law: “The daughter I gave you is my one and only child; for me to part from her is impossible. Yet for me to forbid you from bringing her to your homeland is also impossible. Do me this favor: at every place where you will be, designate a small room for me so I’ll be able to remain nearby, for I cannot part from my only daughter...”

The Frieddiker Rebbe explains:

The king is Hashem, and he gave us, His eternal people, His precious “daughter”—the Torah.

When giving us the Torah, Hashem told the Jewish people, “The Torah is my only daughter.” True,

Torah is *sechel*, intellectual concepts; but at the same time it is *sechel Eloki*—G-dly intellect.

“For you to take her away from me is impossible,” says Hashem. “Yet on the other hand, to tell you that you can’t ‘take’ the Torah is also impossible.” Hashem must allow us to grasp and understand the Torah with our physical minds.

“So,” says Hashem, “allow me one room in your Torah study.”

While studying Torah, we must always remember that it is Hashem’s Torah; חכמתו ורצונו של הקב”ה—the wisdom and will of Hashem.¹

Guide to Life

The Torah is our life. Ever since we stood at Har Sinai, the Torah remained in our midst and has been studied, analyzed, reviewed, and taught in each generation.

תורת חיים, The Rebbe often referred to Torah as תורת חיים—the Torah of life, a lesson for life. It is the Torah that shows us how to live our lives in this world in the manner that Hashem intends it to be.

Not only is *limud haTorah* important for guidance in our lives, but the actual study itself is a most essential mitzvah, greater than all the others.

But just like every other area in Torah and mitzvos, Chassidus shined new light on the meaning of *limud haTorah*, especially on the need to learn Torah “לשמה”.

The Alter Rebbe explains in Tanya (*perek hei*) that when one learns Torah, his physical mind is connected and unified with Hashem in a manner not possible through any other means. “This is the meaning of לשמה,” he says. “To connect one’s soul to Hashem by understanding the Torah.”

In truth, this approach to *limud haTorah* actually has precedent in Gemara:

The *possuk* says, “על מה אבדה הארץ .. על עזבם את תורת—Why is the land in ruins? It is because they have forsaken my Torah...” Chazal explain that the problem was, “לא ברכו בתורה תחילה—They did not make the appropriate blessing over the Torah before study...”²

It would seem that skipping the *bracha* before learning is a trivial matter. Why would such oversight warrant so severe a punishment?

The Bach explains that the real problem was they did not study with the proper intention. One should learn Torah in order to connect to Hashem (something we are reminded of in the words of the *bracha* “נותן התורה”—Hashem is the Giver of the Torah) and draw down the *Shechina* to this world.³



19 ELUL 5737, LEVI FREIDIN via JEM 20719

“REBBE, WHICH MISHNAH?”

The *ga’on* of Lublin, Reb Zalman Fradkin (author of the *Toras Chesed*) related that when he used to come to the Tzemach Tzedek in Lubavitch, he always brought along a *pilpul* to present and discuss with the Rebbe.

One year, he prepared a sophisticated *pilpul* with many deep *chiddushim*. He was especially excited to present his novel dissertation to the Rebbe, for he was sure the Rebbe would derive much *nachas* from it.

When the Lubliner *ga’on* concluded his *pilpul* for the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe remarked: “You’ve prepared a fine Torah with many nice points, but the foundation of your presentation is wrong. In fact it contradicts a clear Mishnah!”

The *ga’on* was taken aback. “Rebbe, where is this Mishnah?” he asked. “In Seder Kodshim,” the Tzemach Tzedek said.

The *ga’on* scanned through the entire seder in his mind but was still unable to find the Mishnah. Finally, the Tzemach Tzedek pointed out the exact Mishnah and the *ga’on* realized his mistake.

“At that moment,” the Lubliner *ga’on* would later conclude his story, “I saw and felt what true תורה לשמה really is!”

(*Sefer Hasichos* 5690 p. 87)

“Only when Torah is properly approached will the study have the desired effect on a person,” the Rebbe explains. “We need to maintain our connection to the Source of the Torah and study for the proper reasons, avoiding all ulterior motives.”

In this vein, the Rebbe quoted the famous story said about the Tzemach Tzedek (and other Rabbeim), that when someone came to him and said how much he learned, the Tzemach Tzedek responded:

“דאס איז וואס דו האסט געלערנט תורה; וואס האט אבער די

תורה דיר אויסגעלערנט?”

(Roughly translated: “So you learned the Torah; but what did the Torah teach you?”)⁴

So how is it possible to learn Torah in such a perfect manner?

The Alter Rebbe writes in Tanya that a person needs to remind himself of the reason for learning Torah—to connect ourselves with Hashem—before

beginning a session of *limud haTorah*, and to continue reminding himself each hour during his learning.

In a more general sense, *limud haTorah l'shmah* is accomplished through learning Chassidus.

.....

“I HAVE SEEN IT!”

The Rebbe's *chozer*, Reb Yoel Kahn relates:

When I was a *bochur*, I used to give a *shiur* Chassidus in one of the Litvishe yeshivos in New York and befriended one of the elite *bochurim* there (though he would not attend my *shiur*). At some point, he asked me to arrange a *yechidus* for him with the Rebbe, which I did. Years later, he told me what the Rebbe spoke to him about:

The Rebbe wanted him to start learning Chassidus for a few hours a day, and explained to him how important it is for his learning.

Without Chassidus, the Rebbe said, you will never learn for the sole reason of connecting with Hashem. You will always have ulterior motives in mind (becoming a “*gadol*” or receiving other honors), and once those side-benefits whither away, your Torah learning may whither just as well.

The Rebbe further explained that learning *l'shmah* doesn't merely mean to know how to behave or even to connect oneself with Hashem. It means to connect to the Torah because it is Hashem's will. Imagine the reaction of a child who hasn't seen his father in a long time and then suddenly meets up with him. He runs over to his father and embraces him; not because it's the right thing to do or because he wants to connect. He runs to his father simply because he is his father and that's it!

“This is what Torah *l'shmah* means,” the Rebbe concluded. “Hashem is in the Torah, (אורייתא וקוב”ה). (כולא חד). The way we embrace Him is by learning Torah! Have you ever seen someone learn Torah in this manner?”

The *bochur* retorted with his own question: “And with Chassidus one can really and truly learn Torah with that feeling?”

The Rebbe responded: “I have seen such *limud haTorah*!”

(*Hamoadim B'Chassidus* p. 303)

.....

Just Learn!

Chazal tell us: “לעולם יעסוק אדם בתורה ובמצוות—A person should always study Torah and do mitzvos, even if it's not for the right reason, for this will lead him to eventually doing it *l'shmah*.”

The Rebbe often stressed the need to learn Torah without over-calculating the reasons and motives behind it.

In fact, in *yechidus* with a *bochur* who seemed to be complaining that his Torah wasn't for the right reasons, the Rebbe discouraged him from giving too much credence to these thoughts:

“You wrote in your note about learning *nigleh*, that sometimes you forget about Hashem, *chas v'shalom*.”

“In Tanya it says that you need to think about *l'shmah* only at the beginning of study. [But once you've started] you need to delve diligently into your learning and analyze the subject at hand...”⁵

When the Rebbe launched the “*uforatzta*” campaign in 5718, he explained that especially for *talmidei hayeshivos*, the “*uforatzta*” should be sensed in their learning:

“Everyone needs to learn Torah without limitations, in the spirit of *uforatzta*,” the Rebbe said at a *farbrengen*. “Just learn Torah for hours on end without stopping to look at the clock. For if you truly



TISHREI 5740, LEVI FREDIN via JEM 192248

break down all the boundaries, as the *possuk* says ימה
 וקדמה וצפנה ונגבה—to the west, the east, the north,
 and the south, then there will be no walls left to hang
 a clock from!”⁶

ללא פשט'לאר!

בהמשך להמדובר לעיל אודות לימוד התורה באופן
 שלמעלה ממדידה והגבלה - יש לסיים את הענין ולהדגיש
 שכוונת הדברים היא לכל אחד ואחד, "אשר אנכי בקרבו":
 לכל לראש בנוגע לתלמידי הישיבה - בפשטות, ללא
 פשט'לאר וללא קונצים - לישב וללמוד נגלה וחסידות
 הן בסדרי הישיבה והן מחוץ לסדרי הישיבה, היינו, שלא
 להביט על השעון אם הזמן מוקדם או מאוחר, ולא להביט על
 המשגיח, ראש הישיבה או המשפיע, ולא להמתין שמשהו
 יבוא ויאמר להם "ישר-כח" ויעניק להם "פרס", וכיו"ב - כיון
 שהלימוד אינו מפני יראת הרצועה, כתינוק היוצא מבית
 הספר שבורח והולך לו, אלא מתוך ידיעה והכרה בגודל
 העילוי דלימוד התורה, שע"ז מתאחד ביחוד נפלא עם
 חכמתו ורצונו של הקב"ה, ששכלו מלושב ומוקף בחכמת ה',
 וגם חכמת ה' היא בקרבו, כמ"ש "ותורתך בתוך מעי".
 (יום ב' דחג השבועות תשכ"ב)

Reb Meir Tzvi Gruzman related that he was once
 asked by the Rebbe in *yechidus* why he doesn't sense
 an increasing "koch" in *limud haTorah* in our yeshivos
 as much as it should be.



Reb Meir suggested that perhaps in other yeshivos,
 the *bochurim* focus on ulterior motives, such as
 becoming a "gadol" or the like. The Rebbe replied:

In our yeshivos too, there can be other reasons
 for learning. Even though this is *shelo l'shmah*—
 nevertheless, *Chazal* say that one should learn Torah,
 even if it's not *l'shmah*.

There are several reasons why a Lubavitcher
bochur would learn Torah that can be classified as an
 "eideler sheloi l'shmah," for example:

Talmidim go out on *Merkos Shlichus* and at times
 they have to meet with a local rav. If they cannot
 properly speak with him in learning, they are being
 (spreading false impressions) about all
 of the Rabbeim, from the Baal Shem Tov to the
 Frieddiker Rebbe! On the other hand, if they do speak
 in learning, it will help their shlichus greatly.

Another motive to encourage learning *nigleh*
 could be in order to better understand Chassidus.

Additionally, *bochurim* can learn for "hiskashrus."
 The Rebbe explained:

"The meaning of *hiskashrus* is to fulfill the will
 [of the Rebbe]. My *ratzon*; *ratzon pnimi*, *ratzon*
atzmi, *ratzon chazak* [my internal, innermost and
 strong will], is that *bochurim* should truly 'koch' in
 learning..."⁷

Torah and Yirah

In letters written to *bochurim* over the years, the
 Rebbe often concluded with a *bracha* "לתלמוד תורה"
 —to succeed in Torah study with *yiras*
Shamayim."

In this letter, written to the *hanhala* and *talmidim*
 of Yeshiva Gedola—Buenos Aires, the Rebbe
 concludes in his holy handwriting:

"...ולהצלחה רבה בתומ"צ [=בתורה ומצוות] מתוך דו"ר

"[דחילו ורחימו] ובמנונהו"ג [=ובמנוחת הנפש והגוף]"

"With blessings for success in Torah and mitzvos
 with *yirah* and *ahavah*, and with tranquility of the
 body and soul..." **T**

1. Likutei Diburim vol. 1 p. 380
2. Nedarim 81a
3. See Likutei Sichos vol. 15 Bereishis (1)
4. Simchas Beis Hashoeva 5716; Toras Menachem vol. 15 p. 97
5. Teshura Heber-Gross 5766
6. Shabbos Bereishis 5719; Toras Menachem vol. 24 p. 192
7. Kovetz Hayechidus, Vaad Hatmimim 5771