

נדפס ע"י ולזכות

הרה"ת ר' יוחנן
וזוגתו מרת לאה ומשפחתם שיחיו
גאלדמאן

PRACTICAL HORA'OS

A CLOSER
LOOK AT
SOME OF
THE REBBE'S
HORA'OS

SPLITTING UP CLASSES

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The Rebbe addresses how best to maximize each student's potential. Adapted from a sicha of Purim 5732.*

For a child's development, it is crucial that they be enabled to grow to their full potential. As Shlomo Hamelech said, "חַנּוּךְ לְנֶעֱר עַל-פִּי דַרְכוֹ גַם כִּי-יִזְקִין לֹא-יִסּוּר מִמֶּנָּה" — Train a child according to his way; even when he grows old, he will not turn away from it."

If the child is trained in accordance with his capacities, it guarantees that when he is older, he will not turn away. If some children in a class are able to learn at a more advanced level than their peers, we cannot be satisfied with allowing them to simply cruise along at the pace of the others — this would not satisfy their obligation of Torah study.

We see when it comes to reading the Megillah that "we suspend Torah-study and come to hear the Megillah."¹ Seemingly, isn't the Megillah itself part of the Torah? Why is listening to the Megillah reading referred to as "*bittul Torah*?" The answer is that it is not studied in depth but merely read, and as most people could be studying at a greater level, the obligation of Torah study has to be "suspended" for hearing the Megillah. From here we see that in general, if one is not studying at the level they're capable of, it does not satisfy their obligation of *limmud haTorah*.

Now, on the one hand, studying in a group is crucial. If everyone were to study alone, those who are more



assiduous would study more, and those who are less assiduous would study less. When learning in a group, on the other hand, the students motivate each other.

On the other hand, however, the larger the class is, the more likely it is that the aptitude of the students will not be on the same level, and so it is necessary to split the students into relatively small groups.

When it comes to studying *alef-beis*, the *halacha* is that the class size should be no more than 25 students (or 40 if there's a teacher's assistant). That's for *alef-beis*, where there really isn't much room for significant differences between individual students in terms of how in-depth the study is taking place.

The reason for this is not only in recognition of the limitations the teacher has in terms of educating and supervising, but also because when a grade is split into two classes — one studying at a higher level — there is an element of *kinas sofrim* [competition amongst scholars], whose purpose is not, G-d forbid, to demean anyone, but instead to increase the study level in *all* of the classes, as the students will aspire to advance. This cannot happen smoothly if all of the students are in the same classroom, so there should be two separate classrooms for the two classes.

Practically speaking: Very large classes are not ideal, and to have two classes in one space is also not ideal, so the classes should be split into two, with one remaining in the

current classroom and the other relocating to a separate space nearby.

This will be of benefit to *all* of the students. It is not the case that the students in the lower class are doing a favor to the students in the higher class [by not holding them back and by enabling them to reach their full potential]. Chassidus explains that when the waters were split on the second day of Creation, this did not only benefit the waters that were now supernal, close to Hashem, but also the waters that were now below benefited and were brought closer to Hashem than they were before the split: the yearning they had to ascend was itself something that brought them closer to Hashem.

In our case, this division into two classes will enable the lower class to recognize and actualize their own talents and bring them to their fullest potential, because they will yearn — not to study in one classroom or the other, but — to study Torah with great toil.

Ensuring that the classes aren't too big in quantity will make them increase in quality — and this will lead to more quantity as word gets out about the advanced level of learning that is taking place. This will lead to success far beyond even the additional effort that the students will invest. **T**

1. Megillah 3a.