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לזכות
מרים מינדל שתחיל' בת רייזל
שתקויים בה
ברכת כ"ק אדמו"ר אליה
ביחד עם בעלה שי' לגדל...
כיו"ח שי' לתחומע"ט מתוך
שמחה והרחבה", וכ"ז באופן
לכתחילה אריבער



An essential part of the life of a Chossid is his study of the daily shiurim of Chumash, Tehillim and Tanya. As a takanah of the Friediker Rebbe, the Rebbe repeatedly stressed its significance in our lives. In the following paragraphs are presented a collection of sichos, letters, and stories through which we gain a better appreciation of this unique takanah.¹

INDUIT

*A closer look at the
takanah of Chitas*

BLESSINGS



EARLY TRACES

The structure of Chitas as we know it, was introduced by the Frierdiker Rebbe. The daily study of Chumash was a practice of Chassidim for generations, dating back to the days of the Alter Rebbe. In the words of the Frierdiker Rebbe: *“By Chassidei Chabad there is a tradition that the Alter Rebbe instituted to study each day the parshah of Chumash with the commentary of Rashi. This was the custom of the Rabbeim as well.”*²

Regarding the origins of ‘Chitas’ as an acronym for Chumash, Tehillim and Tanya, and the unique blessings that are connected with their study, the Rebbe once recounted: *“On Shavuot 20 years ago, the [Frierdiker] Rebbe repeated what was told to one of the Rabbeim in a vision. ויהי חתת אלקים על הערים* (“The fear of Hashem was upon the cities”)—*the word חתת (fear) is an acronym for תניא, תהילים, חומש.*

“Through the daily study of Chitas, we will see the

*fulfillment of ‘The fear of Hashem was upon them’ and we will merit to go together peacefully to Eretz Yisroel with the complete and true geulah.”*³

The story the Rebbe was referring to took place in the year 5617*. The Rebbe Maharash traveled to S. Petersburg on account of issues being brought about by the *maskilim*. His father, the Tzemach Tzedek, told him, “When I needed to go to the conference of rabbonim in S. Petersburg, I visited the *tziyun* of my mother. She told me that she had approached the Baal Shem Tov to invoke heavenly mercy on my behalf, that I should have the courage to stand up to those who opposed Chassidus. The Baal Shem Tov said to her, ‘Your son is fluent in all of Chumash, Tehillim and Tanya by heart, and the Torah tells us ‘ויהי חתת אלקים’. Chitas is an acronym for Chumash, Tehillim and Tanya; he who knows these by heart can break through all obstacles and concealments.”

The Tzemach Tzedek continued, and instructed the Rebbe Maharash: “Wherever you may be, whether in a government office or visiting a minister, recite a



IN 5740*, RABBI ZEV DOV SLONIM AND HIS WIFE CONCEIVED THE IDEA OF PUTTING A CHUMASH, TEHILLIM AND TANYA INTO ONE HANDY BOOK IN MEMORY OF HIS FATHER.

IN THE POSTSCRIPT TO THIS LETTER ADDRESSED TO RABBI SLONIM, THE REBBE OFFERS ADVICE REGARDING THE ENDEAVOR, AND SUGGESTS AMONG OTHER THINGS THAT THE ESSAY WRITTEN BY RABBI SLONIM ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING CHITAS EVERY DAY—BASED ON THE TORAH OF THE RABBEIM—BE PRINTED SEPARATELY WITH ITS OWN TITLE PAGE.

THE FIRST CHITAS WAS PRINTED SHORTLY THEREAFTER.

portion of Chumash, Tehillim, and a chapter of Tanya.”

The Rebbe Maharash related this story to his son the Rebbe Rashab, and concluded: “What do you suppose? This was a good prescription; with three portions of Chumash, three chapters of Tehillim and Tanya, all the plots of the *maskilim* were nullified, whilst *b’nei Yisroel* who hold true to Torah and its holiness were amazingly victorious! Subsequently, the leader of the *maskilim* escaped the country out of fear and humiliation, a result of the great financial loss that they caused the government, due to the unsold books that they published.”

When the Rebbe Rashab later related this story to his son the Frierdiker Rebbe he added: “Great are *tzaddikim*, in the 50 years since this story until today, a chapter of Tanya does not only break through concealments, it brings about the deepest spiritual revelations both spiritually and materially. A chapter of Tanya by heart brings about a vast amount of blessing and success.”⁴

“In response to your second question, whether you should decrease your daily studies in order to recite more Tehillim—my opinion is that you must keep to your daily studies. Regarding your heart’s commendable desire to recite more Tehillim—aside from the Tehillim you recite prior to davening, you should recite the shiur Tehillim as it is divided according to the days of the month. Additionally, set aside time to study Chassidus each day, and every day to study that day’s portion of Chumash. May Hashem grant you and your wife long years, and to always have good news to share.”¹⁵

THE APPROPRIATE VESSEL

From the beginning of the Rebbe's *nesius*, the Rebbe would regularly emphasize how vital it is for every Chossid, and for that matter every Yid, to study the daily *shiurim* of Chitas. In addition to this being a basic part of our *hiskashrus*, the Rebbe emphasized this as a source for blessings in one's life.

At several of the major farbrengens each year, the Rebbe would consistently mention the study of Chitas and encouraged everyone to adhere to this *takanah* of the Frierdiker Rebbe. On Yud Shevat and Yud-Beis Tammuz, the Rebbe would discuss Chitas as a *takanah* of the "baal hahilula" or "baal hageulah." On Simchas Torah and Shavuos the Rebbe would also speak of Chitas, drawing on its connection to these special days. On Simchas Torah we begin the study cycle of Torah anew. On Shavuos we received the Torah from Moshe

REBBE, IT IS DISTURBING ME!

An individual wrote to the Rebbe that for some time now he has been careful with learning Chitas, yet "it consumes too much of my time and it is disturbing me..." The Rebbe responded: "*Torah and mitzvos enhance one's well-being both materially and spiritually. Obviously, it is inconceivable that what is truly good for you can be disturbing you. Any such thought is a scheme of the yetzer hara, which only exists for you to choose to battle and overpower it. So obviously, you should not pay heed to its words.*"⁹



Rabbeinu (Chumash), and we mark the *yahrtzeit* of Dovid Hamelech (Tehillim), and the *yahrtzeit* of the Baal Shem Tov, who revealed Chassidus to the world (Tanya).

Reading the Rebbe's letters printed in *Igros Kodesh*, one notices how often the Rebbe concludes a letter by instructing the recipient to keep the daily *shiurim* of Chitas. The words בטח שומר שלושת השיעורים השווים—are found literally hundreds of times throughout *Igros Kodesh*.

It is told that once the Rebbe asked someone during a *yechidus* if he had learned Chitas that day, to which this fellow responded that he had not. The Rebbe responded, "I'm taking from my time to connect my *yechidah* with your *yechidah*, yet you carelessly tell me that you haven't learned Chitas!"²⁵

To many Yidden who turned to the Rebbe on various matters, the Rebbe instructed them to study Chitas as a conduit through which they will receive their blessings. In Elul 5710*, the Rebbe wrote in a letter, "*It is my hope that you and your family will be appropriate vessels to*

receive the [Frierdiker] Rebbe's brachos both materially and spiritually. Of the methods to become proper vessels is to keep the shiurim that the [Frierdiker] Rebbe instituted. Namely, to study each day's portion of Chumash with Rashi, the daily Tehillim after davening Shacharis, and Tanya according to how the [Frierdiker] Rebbe divided it for the days of the year.³⁶

In Sivan 5714*, the Rebbe wrote to a Chossid regarding the study of Chitas, "As can be seen by the physical eye, Chitas is relevant for material success."³⁷ Rabbi Dovid Raskin would often relate what he remembered hearing from the Rebbe: "The ten minutes of studying Chitas affects you, your children, and your grandchildren!"

A Yid once wrote to the Rebbe that his schedule is full of various shiurim that he is committed to, thus he only has time to learn the daily Chumash. He is therefore asking the Rebbe to be "released" from the daily Tehillim and Tanya. The Rebbe responded, "In response to your letter from 12/16 in which you write that due to your preoccupation with your studies, you only study Chumash with Rashi but do not keep the monthly shiur Tehillim or the shiur Tanya, and you ask that you should be released from the obligation of these two shiurim. I am surprised at your [train of thought]. Keeping these shiurim is not for the benefit of someone else, rather it is for yourself. Just like all of Torah and mitzvos, which are for the benefit of the one fulfilling them. Thus, if you were released from the obligation to keep these shiurim, you are also 'releasing' yourself of the good results that come from keeping these shiurim..."³⁸

It is told that Reb Yaakov Stambler once lost

CHITAS - A TIKKUN

"The difference between 'takanos' as opposed to mitzvos: Mitzvos were given to us from on high, whereas takanos on the other hand were decided by our sages down here, for they were given to us in order to rectify ourselves. Thus, the word takanah comes from the word tikun—to rectify. The same is true for the takanos of the [Frierdiker] Rebbe, for example Chitas, which was given to us for our tikun hanefesh."³⁹

On Beis Kislev 5748⁴⁰, a few hours before the sefarim were finally returned to 770, the Rebbe admonished the bochorim gathered outside for the waste of time instead of learning. It was apparent that this incident caused the Rebbe much pain. A short while later, a bochor wrote a letter to the Rebbe asking for forgiveness and a tikkun for being a part of what had caused the Rebbe such pain. The Rebbe responded with one word: חתי"ת.



AT THE CONCLUSION OF A LETTER TO SOMEONE GETTING MARRIED, THE REBBE WRITES:

P.S. SURELY YOU FOLLOW THE WELL-KNOWN STUDY CYCLE OF CHITAS, IN ADDITION TO YOUR STUDY SCHEDULE IN NIGLEH AND CHASSIDUS. THIS IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT DURING THE MONTHS BEFORE YOUR WEDDING, IN PREPARATION FOR AN EVERLASTING EDIFICE. ANYONE WHO INCREASES IN THE ABOVE, IS PRAISED.

a substantial amount of money in an investment that went sour. When he wrote to the Rebbe about what had happened, the Rebbe responded by questioning, "Did you learn Chitas on that day?"⁴⁰

To a woman who wrote to the Rebbe about various challenges that were placing her in deep distress, the Rebbe wrote various instructions, among them: "For one year, stop making such deep calculations about where you're standing in life... [Occupy yourself in seeing to] the kashrus of food and drink, taharas hamishpachah, hosting guests, learning Chitas, etc. And as mentioned above, do so in a practical and unpretentious manner."⁴¹

Not only did the Rebbe see the study of Chitas as a Chossid's basic duty, he demanded that we encourage others to study Chitas as well. In a letter dated 14 Shevat 5714*, the Rebbe wrote, "It is incumbent upon you to try and influence your surroundings to learn from the teachings of the [Frierdiker] Rebbe and follow his ways; in particular to follow his takanos—the shiurim of Chumash, Tehillim and Tanya." At the farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Pekudei 5727*, the Rebbe famously said while knocking with his finger on the table: "When Moshiach will come he won't be interested in any tricks. Instead he will demand: 'Write a list... how many Yidden did you influence to study Chitas?'"⁴²

* 5714-1954, 5748-1988, 5727-1967

TO ‘LIVE WITH THE TIMES’

“To understand the particular avodas Hashem demanded of us each day, we must look at the shiurim in Torah of the day. As the Alter Rebbe taught regarding the portion of Chumash for each day, the same is true for the daily shiurim of Tehillim and Tanya.”¹⁶

Throughout the years, the Rebbe taught us time and again, to look to the *shiurim* of Chitas (as well as Rambam, in later years) to understand what each day is about. Not merely to learn the *shiurim*, but to live by them. At almost every farbrengen, the Rebbe would expound on the significance of the day through the lens of that day’s Chitas.

This notion dates back to the early days of Chassidus Chabad. At a public gathering during the early years of his *nesius*, when the Alter Rebbe famously said “מען בעדארף לעבן מיט דער צייט” (literally: one must live with the times).¹⁷ Subsequently it was learned that the Alter Rebbe’s intention was for Chasidim to study

each day’s *parshah* of Chumash and to live by it.

The daily *shiurim* of Tanya were divided by the Frieddiker Rebbe, in two tracks. One track for a standard year and another for a leap year. When Reb Pinchas Menachem Alter, the Pnei Menachem of Gur, was in *yechidus* with the Rebbe, he asked why is it that there are days in which the *shiur* of Tanya is identical in both a leap year and a standard year, while during most of the year the *shiur* is different?

The Rebbe replied, “Just as it is with *krias haTorah*, there is a difference which *parshah* we read depending on whether it is a leap year or not, with the reason for this being that the *avodas Hashem* in these years is different. So, too, the *shiurim* of Tanya are in sync with the *avodas Hashem* of every day in that specific year. It is not merely because a leap year is longer.”

THERE IS NEED FOR IMPROVEMENT

At times, the Rebbe admonished Chassidim for not studying Chitas the way they should. One such example can be seen in this answer from the Rebbe to a question the *manichim* asked him about a certain question they were left with in Rashi after the Rebbe’s *sicha*. In response, the Rebbe wrote: “I said, amongst the writers there must be at least **one individual** who learns Chitas well enough to remember,

and would be able to answer this question very easily.”

On another occasion, during a farbrengen in 5727*, the Rebbe raised a simple question in Rashi, and then said: “From here it becomes apparent that Chitas is not being learned, and if it is being learned, then it is just being quickly read, and is forgotten right after. Or perhaps while it is being read one’s mind is wandering elsewhere. Thus no one can answer this question. Had Chitas been properly studied, the answer to this question would have been known.”¹⁸

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

ENHANCING ONE'S STUDY OF CHITAS

At the farbrengen of Shavuot 5749*, the Rebbe spoke about Shavuot being a time to increase in regular Torah study. Not only to add new personal *shiurim*, but also to increase in the daily study of Chitas: “To increase in studying Chitas (aside from being more careful with the daily *shiurim*) means to devote more energy to better understanding what one learns in Chitas.”¹⁹

DON'T PUSH IT OFF!

“Regarding the *shiurim* of Chitas... it is self understood that they are to be learned on the day, and not to postpone it from one day to the next, for the *shiur* of each day belongs to its day.”²⁰

WITHOUT PRONOUNCING THE WORDS

Regarding a Yid who wasn't in good health, the Rebbe instructed (among other things): “He should take upon

*himself—bli neder—to study the three *shiurim*... If at the time being, speaking is difficult for him, he can recite them with just his thoughts, if the doctors permit this.*”²¹

WHEN TO LEARN CHITAS

“[Regarding] the time to learn Chumash, Tehillim and Tanya: As clarified in the preface to *Hayom Yom*, the *shiur* of Tehillim should be recited following Shacharis.

RABBI AHARON DALFIN RELATES:

After some years of being married and raising a family, I let go of studying the daily Chitas. I was busy with work, and I couldn't do it all. Then some problems came up, and I wrote a long letter to the Rebbe asking for his advice. He answered – because he always answered – but he did not respond to my questions. He only wrote one word, “Chitas?”

I understood that the Rebbe somehow felt that my connection to him as a Chossid was growing weak, and that he attributed it to my laxity with this basic Chabad practice. But I didn't take his message to heart.

A couple of months went by and my problems continued, so again, I wrote to the Rebbe. And, again, he answered, “Chitas?”

So, finally, I started to learn Chitas. And when I did, when I had reconnected to the Rebbe, he answered all the questions which I had sent in – one by one.²⁹



The study of Chumash with Rashi as well as Tanya should ideally take place not long after Shacharis, preferably right away. If this is not possible, it can be made up [even as late as] the following night.²²

DAILY TEHILLIM RECITAL

“It is best to say Tehillim right after Shacharis. However, if [doing so] will affect the morning seder hayeshiva, it should be said (during breaks) before shkiah. In any case, you should say at least one kapitel right after Shacharis so that there will be some form of recital of Tehillim right after davening.”²³

CHUMASH AND TEHILLIM AT NIGHT

“You ask [what to do] on short winter days, when your job doesn’t necessarily allow enough time during the day to complete the shiur of Chumash... should you study it at

night. I haven’t heard a clear directive about this [from the Friediker Rebbe]. But it seems to me that if you know the chapters of the daily shiur of Tehillim by heart, they may be said after chatzos or before tzeis hakochavim, but not from tzeis hakochavim until chatzos. Regarding Chumash, you can split the shiur into smaller sections and learn a small amount at a time throughout the course of the day, while at your place of business. If you don’t have the time even for this, you should study [the shiur of Chumash at night] with commentary on each possuk, which, in a time of pressing need, can be considered to be a form of Oral Torah, particularly in today’s day and age, when many are lenient regarding the [injunction against] learning the Written Torah at night, although [this injunction] is mentioned in many sefarim.”²⁴

WHAT IF I DON’T UNDERSTAND?

“Ideally, the [shiurim] should be learned, although it doesn’t need to be studied in depth. Even just to recite the words is better than not reciting the [shiurim] at all.”²⁵

WHEN TO MAKE UP MISSED SHIURIM

“...One should try to study [Chitas and Rambam] during the day. If, for some reason, one was unable to do this, they can and must be completed at night, up until chatzos, or even until the crack of dawn, just like the chelev and limbs of korbanos were able to be burned all night until dawn.”²⁶

WHICH SHIUR TAKES PRECEDENCE WHEN MAKING UP

“The order in which one should make up [missed] shiurim of Chitas should obviously be: First yesterday’s shiur [and then today’s], because they are to be studied in order; not the second perek before the first.”²⁷

STUDYING THE SHIURIM ON THE RIGHT DAY

“When someone is asked, ‘Did you learn the shiurim of Chitas today?’ he answers that he hasn’t, for he was busy saying Shabbos Mevarchim Tehillim. When asked, ‘Did you finish saying [Shabbos Mevarchim] Tehillim?’ he answers that he hasn’t worked that out yet. When he’s asked, ‘What about yesterday’s shiurim of Chitas? You didn’t have to

WHAT’S GOING ON?

The following story is related by a member of *anash*:

Over the years I often drove the distance of a few hours from my house to New York for the Rebbe’s weekday farbrengens, taking a detour along the way to pick up a relative of mine.

The long journey made it difficult for me to study Chitas during the daytime and I often wasn’t able to learn the daily shiur before the farbrengen started at 9:30 p.m.

It was a Yud Shevat farbrengen in the 5740s*. I did my usual trip and finally arrived at the farbrengen after the day of traveling. When I picked up my cup to say *l’chaim* to the Rebbe and made eye contact with the Rebbe, the Rebbe made a motion with his hand for a few seconds holding his thumb up, as if asking, “What’s going on?”

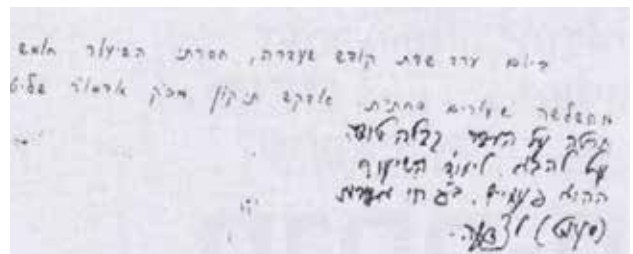
When I arrived home a few days later, I wrote a letter to the Rebbe’s Mazkirus, asking if there was any further explanation about the Rebbe’s motion to me.

Shortly thereafter, I received a phone call from Rabbi Groner with the following answer from the Rebbe:

“מילוי בלי נדר תקנת בעל ההילולא חת”ת אזכיר עה”צ.”

“Be sure to follow, *bli neder*, the initiative of the one whose yahrtzeit we marked [the Friediker Rebbe], Chitas. I will mention this at the Ohel.”

When I consulted with elder Chassidim, they advised me that the Rebbe was urging me to make sure to say Chitas during the daytime.



THE REBBE INSTRUCTS SOMEONE WHO MISSED A SHIUR OF CHITAS TO STUDY THAT SHIUR TWICE.

say the whole Tehillim yesterday!' He admits that he didn't study the shiurim of Chitas yesterday either. Every Yid is assumed to be upstanding, but only when we're trying to give the benefit of the doubt, in which case we must say [It must have been unavoidable, and] 'Hashem exempts one who was coerced' etc.' However, practically, there are apparently some people here who have not studied the shiurim of Chitas today or yesterday! We are therefore discussing this now so that from now on they will make sure to study the shiurim of Chitas. And not only from now on—they should also make up the shiurim [that they missed] in the past."²⁸

CHITAS TWICE

An individual wrote to the Rebbe: "This past Erev Shabbos, I missed the *shiur* of Chumash. I ask for a *tikkun* (rectification)." The Rebbe replied: "Regret the past, [and] make good resolutions for the future. Study that *shiur* twice. Give 2x 18 coins (cents) to tzedakah." **T**

1. For additional reading, see *Darkei HaChassidus—Takanos HaRebbe*, Derher Kislev 5776.
2. Hayom Yom 19 Teves.
3. Toras Menachem 5716, vol. 2 p. 336.
4. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayatz vol. 4, p. 268.
5. Teshurah, 11 Nissan 5756, France.
6. Igros Kodesh vol. 3, p. 430.
7. Ibid. vol. 9, p. 128.
8. Ibid. vol. 14, p. 288.
9. Igros Kodesh vol. 14, p. 435.
10. Teshurah Blau, Cheshvan 5771.
11. Likkutei Sichos, vol. 34, p. 285.
12. Toras Menachem 5710, p. 55.
13. See Derher, Teves 5776.
14. Toras Menachem 5727 vol 2, p. 157
15. Igros Kodesh, vol. 13, p. 160.
16. Rosh Chodesh Shevat, 5742.
17. Hayom Yom 2 Cheshvan.
18. Sichos Kodesh 5727, p. 395.
19. Sefer Hasichos 5749, p. 502.
20. Shabbos Parshas Massei 5727.
21. Igros Kodesh vol. 6, p. 341.
22. Igros Kodesh vol. 17 p. 146.
23. From a *yechidus* with Reb Eliyahu Friedman, Tammuz 5730.
24. Igros Kodesh vol. 18 p. 31.
25. From a *yechidus*, 28 Adar II, 5727.
26. Sefer Hasichos 5749 p. 194 footnote 39 and marginal footnotes there.
27. Igros Kodesh vol. 13 p. 331.
28. Toras Menachem 5742 vol. 2 p. 1037 (Vayakhel – Pekudei).
29. My Encounter with the Rebbe, chabad.org/4059277.



A COLLECTION (IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER) OF THE VARIOUS "LOOKS" OF THE CHITAS OVER THE DECADES.

"CHITAS?"

A story is told of a *bochur* traveling from Eretz Yisroel to the Rebbe. Before he left Eretz Yisroel, he offered some people he knew from *mitvzoim* to have their names brought to the Rebbe for a *bracha*.

The night before he was traveling, he sat down to prepare his *tzetel* with the names for *brachos* to be given to the Rebbe. When he finished writing, he fell asleep before he had a chance to learn that day's Chitas.

As soon as he arrived in New York, he gave in his *tzetel* to the Rebbe's secretary. A few days later he merited to receive an answer from the Rebbe. At the bottom of his *tzetel*, next to his name the Rebbe wrote one word: חת"ת?