

Chayus

A Shabbos Stimulus

THE EDA AND DAVID SCHOTTENSTEIN EDITION

In Loving Memory of Itta bas Yosef Mordechai ז"ל and Tzvi Daniel ben David ז"ל Ainsworth

Dedicated by David & Eda Schottenstein

הקהל

Hakhel

Excerpt from **Hakhel: The Inside Story**

Published by **Sichos in English**

Every Person and Their Uniqueness Matter

The once-in-seven-years event of Hakhel serves as a refresher of the original Sinai experience. Like Sinai, Hakhel fosters Jewish identity, connection to G-d, and the enhanced observance of Torah and mitzvos. Most relevantly, just like Sinai, Achdus Yisrael, Jewish unity, is the integral theme of Hakhel.

Despite the comparison of Hakhel to Sinai, the display of unity was different. When the Torah tells of the Jewish People who gathered at Sinai to receive the Torah it provides the number of heads of households: Six-hundred-thousand men, without enumerating their families. Meanwhile, at Hakhel, all segments of Jewish society receive individual attention. The Torah enumerates, "Gather the nation, the men, the women, and the children, and the converts at your gates" (Devarim 31:11).

This indicates that while Hakhel was an experience where the core of the Jewish soul and identity was expressed, it did not override the details. Rather than causing us to ignore our diverse strengths and capacities, Hakhel teaches us to embrace them as part of our wholesome, indivisible oneness.

Absolute oneness and diverse contributions would seem contradictory, but not for Hakhel. This is a time when the boundless relationship between G-d and His people comes to the fore and even the diversity of the Jewish People expresses nothing but unity.

סיפור חסידי

Once Upon a Chasid

By **Yanki Tauber**

Published by **Kehot Publication Society**

When the Rabbi Made a Mistake

G-d descended upon Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. And G-d called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses ascended. (Yisro19:20)

If G-d descended from the supernal heights, couldn't He come down just few thousand feet further? Why trouble a man of eighty to climb to the top of the mountain?

Yet therein lies the essential nature of man's comprehension of Torah. G-d is infinite and undefinable. Torah is His wisdom and will—by definition, ungraspable by the finite mind of man. The notion that the human intellect can relate to the divine truth, or even meet it halfway, is ludicrous. It is only because G-d gave us the Torah, only because He chose to suspend the line He drew at creation separating the finite from the infinite, that we can access His communication to man.

But the Almighty desired that man's understanding of Torah not be a gift from above, but the result of a combined effort, the issue of a union between the human mind and the mind of G-d.

Man must give it his intellectual all, and apply to the utmost the powers invested in his brain of flesh. And when he attains the peak of his finite mountain, there is G-d with His gift of absolute truth.

From the teachings of Chassidism

The Lubavitcher Rebbe related: Rabbi Yechezkel Landau, the famed author of Noda B'Yehudah, served as the rabbi of Prague from 1754 to 1793. Once, a group of scholars who wished to contest his rabbinic qualifications presented him with a series of questions in Torah law. These fictitious “cases” were carefully constructed to be as complex and as misleading as possible, so as to ensnare the rabbi in their logical traps and embarrass him with an incorrect ruling.

Rabbi Yechezkel succeeded in resolving all the questions correctly—all, that is, but one. Immediately his detractors pounced on him, demonstrating how his verdict contradicts a certain principle of Torah law.

Said Rabbi Yechezkel: “I am certain that this case is not actually relevant, and that you have invented it in order to embarrass me. You see, whenever a man of flesh and blood is called upon to decide a matter of Torah law, we are confronted with a basic dilemma: how can the human mind possibly determine what is G-d’s will? The do’s and don’ts of Torah are the guidelines by which the Almighty desires that we order our lives. How is it that the finite and error-prone intellect is authorized to decide such divine absolutes?”

“But the Torah itself instructs that the Torah ‘is not in heaven,’ but has been given to man to study and comprehend; and that whenever a question or issue is raised, it is man, employing his finite knowledge and judgement, who must render a ruling. In other words, when a person puts aside all considerations of self and totally surrenders his mind to serve the Torah, G-d guarantees that the result will be utterly consistent with His will.

“However,” concluded Rabbi Yechezkel, “this guarantee applies only to actual events, when a rabbi is called upon to determine what it is that G-d desires to be done under a given set of circumstances; but not if his personal honor is the only issue at hand. Had you presented me with a relevant question, I know that I would not have erred, since I approached the matter with no interest or motive other than to serve the will of G-d. But since your case was merely a hypothetical question designed to mislead me, my mind was just like every other mind, great and small alike—imperfect and manipulable.”

לקוטי שיחות

A Sicha

By: ProjectLikkuteiSichos.org

Adapted from the works of the **Lubavitcher Rebbe**

The Mitzvah To Write A Personal Sefer Torah

The Law:

Rambam writes in his Mishneh Torah:

It is a positive commandment for each and every Jewish man to write a Torah scroll for himself, as the verse says: “And now, write down this song for yourselves” (Devarim 31:19), i.e., write down the [entire] Torah which contains this song.... If a per-

son writes the scroll by hand, it is considered as if he received it on Mount Sinai. If he does not know how to write himself, [he should have] others write it for him (Laws of Tefilin, Mezuzah and Sefer Torah 7:1).

The Question:

Why do Jewish people no longer fulfill this ob-

ligation of writing, or commissioning, their own Torah scroll?

The Rosh offers the following explanation:

In earlier generations, people studied from written scrolls, and therefore the commandment was to write a scroll from which you can study. But in this generation, where people study from written manuscripts, the commandment is to write books of Tanach, Talmud, and their commentaries, and to study from them (Hilchos Ketanos, Laws of Sefer Torah).

But this is unsatisfactory: In our generation, printing has taken the palace of handwritten manuscripts. It follows that the modern fulfillment of this command would be to commission the printing of books, or to be involved in the process. This would be equivalent to the Rosh's standard of writing the manuscripts. Yet, we do not find that anyone makes an effort to do so; common practice is to simply purchase books. How is this the fulfillment of the command to "write a Torah scroll"?

The Explanation:

The objective of the mitzvah to write a Torah scroll is, as the verse continues, "and teach it to

the Children of Israel... When I bring them to the land which I have sworn to their forefathers.... it will not be forgotten from the mouth of their offspring" (*Devarim* 31:19-21).

The Rosh therefore concludes that the mitzvah is not the physical act of writing the scroll, but the action of procuring materials that can be studied so that the Torah remains at the forefront of the people's consciousness. At the time of the giving of the Torah, however, the only acceptable way to study was to read from a written Torah scroll with all its specifications, for there was a prohibition against writing the Oral law. That is why the mitzvah is originally described as writing a scroll, because that was the only way to fulfill it.

But now, that prohibition has been suspended. Therefore, any action that a person does to procure material that can be used for Torah study is a fulfillment of "writing a Torah scroll." Buying a book to be studied so that Torah "will not be forgotten from the mouth of their offspring" is a sufficient action to be considered the fulfillment of this mitzvah.

Likkutei Sichos vol. 23, p. 17ff.

גאולה
Geulah

Yalkut Moshiach uGeulah al HaTorah
Translated by Yaakov Paley

The Torah of Moshiach

Matan Torah will never be repeated, because everything that was or will be innovated in Torah study is already contained in the Torah we received from Moshe. True, the innovative reasoning was the work of an individual, and his teaching is henceforth named after him, but in truth, he simply brought the concept out to light. The idea was already planted in the Torah since the Giving of the Torah at Sinai.

This is even true of the Torah that will be revealed by Moshiach, regarding which it is stated, "A new Torah will emerge from Me" (*Yeshayah* 51:4; *Vayikra Rabbah* 13:3). It is referred to as new because it will be infinitely greater than anything heard before, to the extent that no human can possibly introduce such wisdom. Only G-d, the Giver of the Torah, is able to produce the teachings that Moshiach will transmit, and the verse therefore states that it will "emerge from Me" – from G-d Himself. Nevertheless, even this will be the revelation of the depths of the Torah that was transmitted by Moshe at Sinai.

The Rebbe

Humility at Sinai

One of the reasons that the righteous are exceedingly humble is that they stand in G-d's presence. There, they perceive G-d's greatness and recognize how insignificant they and their accomplishments are, relative to Him—not unlike a wealthy man who feels rich next to a pauper, but considers himself a man of modest means when he stands beside the king.

G-d greatly values humility, and connects Himself with all who are humble. This is the mystical explanation of the verse (Daniel 2:22): “He knows what is in the dark and light dwells with Him.” Since the word “what” (מה) denotes self-effacement and the word “know” (ידע) denotes connection, the verse can be interpreted to mean that G-d connects with the humble, even if they dwell “in the dark” among the wicked, and He bestows upon them the Supernal “light” reserved for the righteous. Moreover, G-d “dwells” with the humble, at the verse states (Isaiah 57:15): “With the lofty and the holy ones I dwell, and with the crushed and humble in spirit.”

This is why the Torah was given on Sinai, the smallest and humblest mountain in the wilderness, and not on a larger mountain like Tabor. Sinai represents the most humble, and through choosing Sinai G-d intended to convey that the Torah was being given in the merit of the most humble, he who never imagined that the Torah would be given in their merit—and it was that kind of humility that G-d was looking for when giving us the Torah.

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מורה שיעור לחת"ת ורמב"ם לשבת Shabbos Chitas / Rambam Guide

Book	Section
Chumash – Rashi*	Naso, 7th Aliyah
Tehillim*	Chapters 39 – 43
Tanya*	עמ' 152 - שער היחוד והאמונה... עד עמ' 152 - ימי בראשית.
Rambam – Sefer Hamitzvos*	Positive Mitzvah #215 and Order of Prayers for the Entire Year
Rambam – One Chapter*	Sefer HaMada – Hilchos Talmud Torah Chapter 6
Rambam – Three Chapters**	Sefer Ahavah – Hilchos Milah Chapter 2 – 3; Seder Tefillos Kol HaShana, Nohagu Ha'am... Yimloch Aleinu etc.



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