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Based on the Teachings of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov and His Holy Disciples

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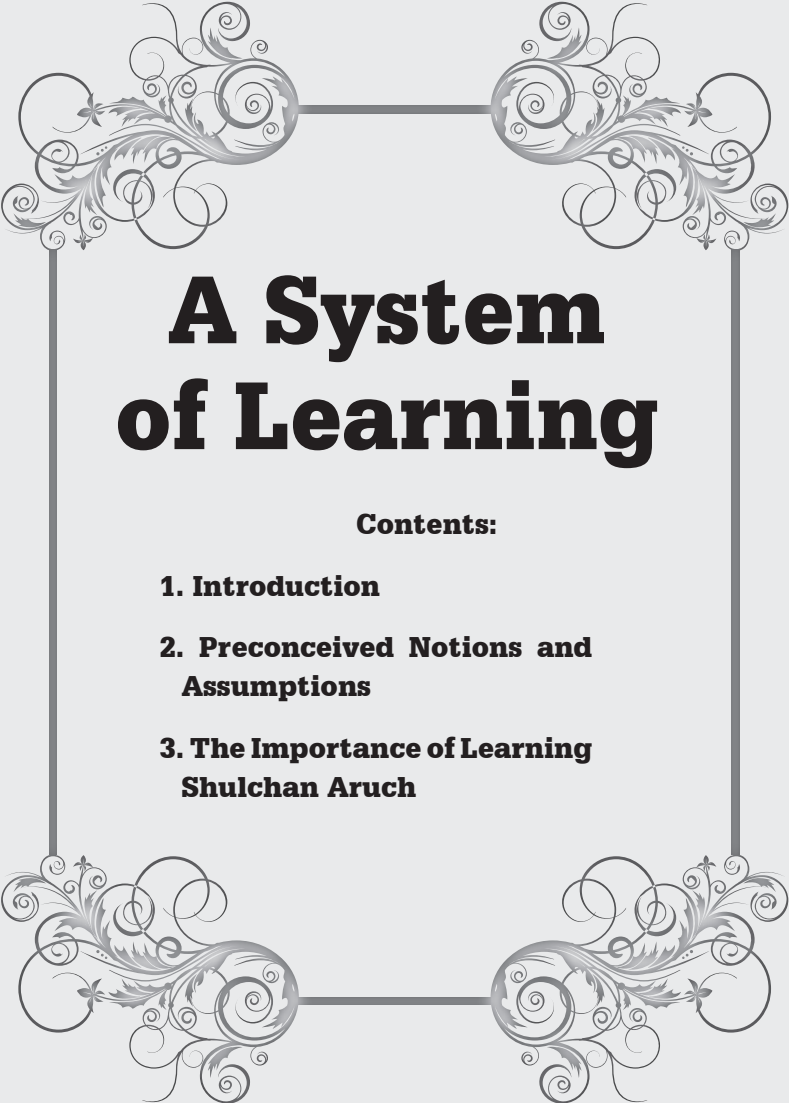
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A System of Learning

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Whatever a person learned
in this world and found it
impossible to truly understand,
he will merit to understand
perfectly in the World-to-come.

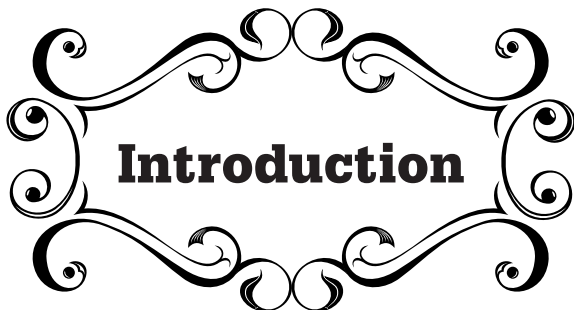
[Sefer HaMidos, Limud. 8]

Habitual learning supersedes
the fulfilment of all the mitzvos.

[Loc. Cit. 33]

A person should study even if
he doesn't understand.

[Loc. Cit. 38]

A decorative frame with intricate scrollwork and flourishes. The word "Introduction" is centered within the frame in a bold, black, serif font.

Introduction

Blessed is Hashem who has not denied us a redeemer, and in our exile has sent us in every generation holy, righteous people, *Tzaddikim*, who teach us the way we must travel to rise up toward G-d and succeed in attaining eternal bounty. Each *Tzaddik* proposes amendments, corrections, and advancements, so that we remain loyal in our faith in G-d, and joyfully fulfill the sacred Torah with its commandments. They bring upon us the pleasure of G-d's presence and illuminate our soul with His light that glows upon the entire world, as stated by the prophet *Yechezkel* (43), "And the world glows from His glory."

In the latter generations we had the G-d given

privilege of receiving the great *Tzaddik* and source of eternal wisdom, **Rebbe Nachman of Breslov**, who illuminated the world with his hallowed proposals, ways, and behavior, to draw close, strengthen, and support all souls on behalf of G-d. He paved the way for each individual – even the worst of the worst – to return to G-d and to bring illumination to his soul. There is nothing – neither method of service, nor system of sanctity, no *mitzva* or good character trait – that he did not discuss, all of which are cited at length in his sacred works and in those of his holy disciples. He especially spoke at great length to strengthen and encourage Jewish souls to study the sacred Torah, and to study it in vast amounts of learning, in order that they attain *bekius* [widespread Torah knowledge]. And it was his holy wish that every Jew know every portion of the Torah – the hidden parts and the revealed parts: *Tanach*; the six orders of *Mishna*; *Talmud Bavli* and *Yerushalmi*; *Tosefta*; all the *Midrashim*; all the works of the *Zohar* and the *Tikunim*; the writings of the *Ariza"l*; all the works of the codifiers – the *Rambam*, *Tur*, *Shulchan Aruch*, and their commentaries (See *Sichos HaRan* [Rabbi

Nachman's Wisdom. It was compiled by Rav Nosson, his chief disciple, from his major talks] 28 and 76). Thank G-d for his generosity to us in granting us this exposition, and for enabling us to place before the Jewish people, a remarkable **System of Learning** – a system of how each and every one can constantly review Torah and get to know all parts of it.

Through G-d's great mercy and generosity this booklet has caused a great response throughout the world, for tens of thousands of copies have been printed and spread literally throughout the entire globe. Wherever Jews live it has been received with great joy and has convinced thousands of Jews to dedicate themselves to great perseverance in the study of our sacred Torah. May Hashem help us reprint it time and again to increase the number of Jews who persevere in the study of our sacred Torah, following the suggestions outlined by our great Master, **Rebbe Nachman of Breslov**.

It is necessary to emphasize that although this booklet speaks at considerable length about the idea of learning *bekius*, it is not our intent, G-d forbid,

to minimize study in depth. G-d in his generosity has allowed us the merit of composing another work titled *Torah Lishmoh* in which we explain in great detail the wondrous position of one who studies in depth. The book *Torah Lishmoh* also includes ideas and counsel on how to study in depth, in accord with the system of our Rebbe Nachman. *This* booklet, however, was written particularly for individuals who are generally involved in earning a living, and most of the day are very occupied. So too, for single men and Yeshiva students who have difficulty in grasping Torah learning. The different problems and difficulties in life cause many people to encounter great hardships and confusions when it comes to Torah study. For them this booklet will, with G-d's help, be very inspirational. Fortunate are they and fortunate will they be, if they fulfill what is written in this booklet. They will succeed in their study of Torah and will rise both in Torah knowledge and in fear of Hashem. The collective experiences of the many people who have tried and tested the suggestions outlined in this booklet have proven it tremendously successful. All the young men who

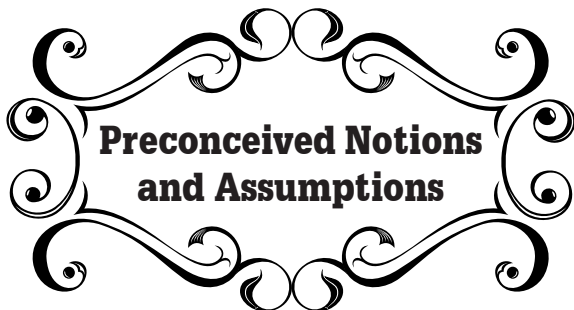
have unfortunately become evildoers, or have simply left the yeshiva at a young age and gone out and joined the work force; or those who simply go around doing nothing – which leads to many worse things – have taken place because of reasons discussed within this booklet. Had they been in the habit of a decent system of learning in their early years, they would have succeeded greatly, and would have grown into wondrous Jewish trees, yielding sweet bountiful fruits. They would have been experts in the Torah and would have filled the *yeshivos*, the *batey midroshim* [houses of study] and the *kollelim* [houses of study specifically for young men after their wedding].

May G-d illuminate our perceptions with the light of his sacred Torah. May we merit adding seats and students in the *batey midroshim*. May we merit increasing the number of students learning in the *yeshivos*, and increasing their study of our sacred Torah in great diligence and powerful desire. For one who develops the habit of learning in this way, even if all the world's crises should come upon him, G-d forbid; even if he has already gone through all sorts of hardships in his lifetime, including all kinds of

pettiness, losses and descents; the light of the Torah will revive him and lead him out of the darkness that he has fallen into. This booklet has the effect of bringing a person to love learning Torah – to give him powerful desire to review and to get to know all parts of the sacred Torah. Whoever has an eye for truth and is clear-minded and clear-hearted – and knows what is happening to the youth of our generation – will admit the truth to be exactly as described in this booklet.

We beg of the G-d of Truth, that our words be accepted, and that whoever studies this amazing booklet will be aroused vigorously to set for himself fixed lessons in study of the sacred Torah in sequence. And in the Torah's merit, may we saved from all the troubles of our times, and draw upon ourselves the pleasantness of G-d's divine vitality, being included with Him entirely from now forever, Amen.





Preconceived Notions and Assumptions

Rebbe Nachman of blessed memory said that those who want to enter Divine service must get rid of preconceived notions and assumptions. All these preconceived notions held by beginners in the service of G-d, are only fantasies and foolishness. These preconceived notions and assumptions cause man to fall away from Divine service by leading him to excessive introspection.

When a man is too particular, he wonders whether he is fulfilling his obligations in serving G-d. But the Rebbe said that it is impossible for any human to fulfill his obligations perfectly. "G-d doesn't demand the impossible from man" (*Avoda Zora* 3), "nor was the Torah given to the angels" (*Kidushin* 74). The Torah wasn't meant to be harsh. About people who are too

careful and add extra restrictions, the Torah says (*Vayikra* 18), “you shall live with them, and not “you shall die with them” (see *Mesechta Yoma* 85a). These people don’t have any life in them. They are always depressed because they think they are not fulfilling their obligations with the commandments that they do. Nor do they have any joy from the commandments which they do so carefully. The commandments of G-d were made to bring happiness and joy into the hearts of man. This happiness can only be obtained through serving G-d with simplicity without adding extra restrictions that G-d does not ask of us at all. And yet, these people say that they aren’t adding restrictions at all. Truly one should throw away all the preconceived notions and assumptions and worship G-d in purity and simplicity.

This is the wisdom above all wisdoms: To realize that ultimate wisdom is beyond you. “There is no wisdom, understanding, or advice – against G-d.” (*Proverbs* 21:30) This means that man’s wisdom and understanding – compared to G-d – is nothingness. The main thing that G-d requires is heart. This refers specifically in matters regarding spending your time, where one goes away from G-d’s service because he

doesn't know what to do with his time. Or one who set learning periods for himself and ultimately did not fulfill them. His heart is then broken completely.

Often you think that your time isn't good for anything. This too is due to excessive restriction and caution creating goals and obligations that you cannot fulfill. The most important element in serving G-d is joy. Through joy you expand your understanding and will always think clearly. Joy expands the mind. When you are joyful you will easily learn the portion that you have set for yourself.

When you don't have time, strengthen and enliven yourself with the essence of your Jewishness, – that “G-d created you a Jew.” Don't go away from G-d because you do not have sufficient time for learning. Such thoughts are the seduction of the evil inclination which wants to catch you in his trap of depression and sadness, feelings that come from excessive care and restrictions.

Because of this it is proper to heed our Rebbe of blessed memory who paved a pleasant and easy way to learning our holy Torah (see *Sichos Haran*, Paragraph 76). His opinion is that every Jew should

set aside set times to learn Torah sequentially. Start from the beginning and don't review until you finish it all. Then start again. For example; begin a regular lesson in *Mishnayos* and don't review it, just study ahead through all the six orders entirely. When you finish them, begin again.

Likewise, learn a regular lesson in *Gemara*. Begin with the tractate *Berachos* and study page after page without review until you finish the whole "Shas" – all the Talmud tractates. Likewise the four parts of the *Shulchan Aruch* [Code of Jewish Law]. Begin at the beginning of *Orach Chayim* and go on to finish *Yoreh Deah*, *Even HoeEzer* and *Choshen Mishpot* and then begin again. So too learn the *Midrashim*, the holy *Zohar* and the *Tikunim*. This refers to the original Hebrew text for those who understand Hebrew or to an English translation for those who don't.

The Rebbe talked to us a lot about the fact that it is good to learn quickly and not to be overly precise in your learning. Learn with simplicity and diligence. Don't confuse yourself by shifting from one matter to the next. Try to understand each matter simply. If at times you can't understand something, don't

spend too much time on it but go forward. Most of the time you will understand later what you couldn't understand at first.

The Rebbe said that just saying the words is also considered study. Just say the words and you will eventually understand them. Don't be upset that you cannot understand everything immediately. Put your mind into your learning. Say the learning with diligence and you will eventually understand it.

The value of quantitative learning is more important than any other kind of learning, as our Sages of blessed memory said (*Avodah Zorah* 19a) "Study the words and then penetrate to understand them even if you don't know what you are saying, as King David said (*Psalms* 119), "Learn, my soul, with great desire." Through this method you will quickly merit to learn a lot. You will merit finishing the books you wanted to finish many times. And you will be able to understand the second or third time everything you weren't able to understand at first. Truly this is an ideal **system of learning**. Through this you can merit to learn a lot of Torah and to finish many works. You will also be able to understand

much more than if you learned very cautiously. This caution causes great confusion in learning. Some people stopped learning completely because they were overly precise in their learning. But if you train yourself to learn quickly without too much attention to detail, the Torah will remain in your hands and you will merit learning much *Gemara, Poskim, Tanach, Midrashim*, the *Zohar* and other *Kaballah* works.

Surely if you follow your preconceived notions and assumptions and do not look ahead at your eternal purpose, then these issues will be inconsequential to you. You'd rather be a famous teacher, a *gaon* [Talmudic genius] and a *rosh yeshiva*, and have your name spread throughout the land. Your actions then are comparable to the generation of the dispersion (Genesis 11) who "built a tower and its head was in the sky." Their main goal was to make a name for themselves; as it says in the holy *Zohar* (1:25b) on the verse, "These are the developments of the sky and the earth." There are five kinds of people in the mixed multitude and the third kind is called "the group of strong men." The Torah says about them, "they are the strong men of yore, the men of renown." They are from the group that said, "Let us build a city and

a tower ... and we will make a name for ourselves building synagogues and houses of study, and placing Torah scrolls inside with crowns on them. All this is just to glorify themselves – not for the sake of the Torah.”

This attitude leads to mocking the pure and holy words of Rebbe Nachman of blessed memory G-d forbid. Not only won't such people accept them, but they talk against them and prevent others from listening to them. But the simple and righteous that look carefully at their purpose, understand that they will not live forever; and the time will come when they must shed their bodies, and then their soul will rise above.

To them are these words directed. Every young man wishes to be a *masmid* [diligent Torah scholar] and to merit finishing *Shas* and the four parts of the *Shulchan Aruch*. The main obstacle to this is the many preconceived notions and assumptions in the heart of man. One of these notions is that when a person opens the *Gemara* he immediately wants to understand it in depth with all the *Rishonim* [early Talmudic commentaries]. These people aren't yet

ready to learn the *Gemara* in depth because they haven't yet finished learning it as *bekius* [quick simple learning]. Especially in these times when the filth that has spread throughout the world touches young people's minds and sullies them, rendering them unable to learn with depth at all. Since they do not immediately grasp what they learn in detail – the *Gemara* with all the views of the *Rishonim* – they are discouraged and give up learning completely. The little they *do* learn is only under compulsion of their fathers or out of fear of the Rosh Yeshiva. Most of them waste their time completely.

The *Rishonim* have already protested this. In the work, *Orchos Tzadikim* an early sage writes: (Chapter 27, *Maalas HaTorah*) Torah was forgotten in this generation even more, because contemporary *lomdim* [Torah learners] try to imitate the *Rishonim* by discoursing in *pilpul* [Torah debate] as *they* did. But they cannot compare themselves to the *Rishonim* at all! *Their* minds were wide open – Torah was their craft – and they were totally dedicated to it day and night. That is why their *pilpul* was fruitful. But the contemporaries have no such knowledge. They spend about half a day at this study, confusing each

other and wasting most of the day. Their learning is as secondary as possible while *bitul* [time-wasting] is their major occupation.

People try to learn *Tsofos* [early Talmudic commentaries written by the French sages] and *chidushim* [novella - new insights in Torah], and even *chidushim* upon *chidushim* before they know what Talmud is all about. How can they succeed if they do contrary to what the Talmudic Sages taught us (*Avodah Zorah* 19a) “A person should always study the words of the Talmud even if he forgets and even if he doesn’t understand what he is saying. A person must first learn everything and then seek understanding.”

As a result of the difficulty to grasp *iyun* [in-depth learning] and *pilpul*, many people drop study completely, saying, “How do I handle this seemingly extraneous reasoning? I wish I knew the simple text of the volumes inside!” If they would cover much simple Talmudic text dedicatedly day and night they would become experts in it and would have an appetite for learning in depth. Consistent learning would grant them the ability to understand with ease. This would help them grow in perfect *yir’as*

Shomayim [fear of G-d] and there would be an increase of *talmidim* [students] who would be constantly involved in Torah. Now, however, because of the burdensomeness of the lectures, the *Halacha* [Jewish Law] has become a deadweight which they do not even wish to look at. As a result they are busy with fads and scoffing; are confused; waste their time; and have no *yiras Shomayim* at all [This is an excerpt from the book *Orchos Tzadikim* *ibid*].

All this was written well over four hundred years ago. What shall we say today in our time when darkness has spread over the world; when dissoluteness and evil desires make holes in the souls of the youth of Israel; when so many stumble because of immorality – a sin that many encounter great difficulty to get out of; when minds are confused and hearts are full of crookedness and questions; truly then, who is ready to learn in depth immediately? Their minds are greatly damaged. And because these young men don't have the tools for learning in depth, when they are put under pressure to learn in depth, they grow too lazy to learn Torah at all. They waste much of the day in foolish chatter with the *Gemara* open. Idleness leads to boredom and boredom to sin.



The evil impulse only has power over one who sits in idleness, and so they grow more and more bitter. When the end of the day comes and they make an accounting, they find that they haven't even completed a single chapter of *Mishnayos*, one complete page of *Gemara* or one section of *Shulchan Aruch*. All of this is a result of excessive cleverness – of attempting to immediately penetrate to the depths of what one is studying.

Meanwhile many days, months, and years of youth pass in nothingness. By the time of their wedding they have not once completed the six orders of the *Mishnah*, nor the four sections of the *Shulchan Aruch*, and certainly not the entire *Shas*. It has even not dawned upon them that it is possible to finish all of the *Mishnayos*, *Gemara Shulchan Aruch*, etc. – by learning in the simple system described by the Rebbe of blessed memory.

Therefore, my dear brother, follow the Rebbe's advice and Hashem will be with you. Aside from the learning period that you have in the Yeshiva – (use this learning period for in-depth learning and review it many times; anything that is difficult to you, ask your *rebbe*, *rosh yeshiva* or

mashgiach) – designate for yourself a period of simple learning. Learn *Mishnayos* in sequence. Open the *Mishnayos* from the beginning of *Berachos*. Then learn diligently one chapter after another, tractate after tractate.

Even if at the beginning you have many difficulties with your learning, don't worry about it – rather continue learning diligently. If you do this, you will eventually get to know the six orders of the *Mishna* well. Likewise set aside time to learn *Shas* by simply starting with *Berachos* and learning page after page diligently until you finish all the tractates. Learn *Shulchan Aruch* the same way. Even though at the beginning the learning will be a heavy burden for you, and people may laugh at you, saying “This *too* is considered learning?!” You my son, my beloved brother, have mercy on your soul and learn Torah day and night. The many reviews and simple learning which you have given yourself in your youth will remain with you all the days of your life. Remember that all learning has to be for the purpose of serving G-d, – that is, for your soul – which is a part of G-d. Just as bread is nourishment for the body, the Torah is nourishment for the soul [See *Likutei Moharan* II:8]. Why



do you dissipate all your strength on nourishment for your body, and not spend time on the nourishment of your soul? Every word of Torah is nourishment for eternity.

Look in the *Tikuney Zohar* (14b) where it says, “A person who learns Torah inherits worlds for himself. A person who merits learning an entire *mesechta* inherits an entire world. All the more so for one who merits learning two or more – he creates and inherits entire spiritual worlds”.

Shir HaShirim [Song of Songs 8] speaks of sixty queens – which allude to the sixty tractates. Every tractate is a queen by itself, and fortunate is the one who learns them all in this world. Happy is the person who merits finishing all the sixty tractates. We have a tradition in the name of the Rebbe, that anyone fortunate enough to finish the entire *Shas* draws upon himself a *Tzelem Elokim* [The Divine Image]. This the greatest joy of all the worlds.

There is great happiness upon finishing a tractate. As *Abaye* said (*Shabbos* 118a), “I serve credit whenever I see a scholar finish a tractate, and I make a holiday for the students.” Look in the words of the *Rama*,

in *Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Dei'ah* (246:26) “When one finishes a tractate it is a *mitzva* to rejoice and make a festive meal. It is considered a *seudas mitzva* [a holiday meal, and a mitzvah to partake of]. His source is the *Pesikta Zuta* [*Parshas Tzav*], “Whoever completes a tractate has to make a *yomtov* [a holiday].” When one merits to learn *Gemara* and *Poskim* diligently, according to the system of the Rebbe of blessed memory, he then merits the biggest joy and pleasure in this world and in the World to come.

Therefore, my friend, the main thing is to rid yourself of fantasy. Know that every word of Torah and prayer is your nourishment in the next world. “If you have learned much Torah you have much reward coming to you” (*Avos* chapter 2). Our Rebbe of blessed memory said (*Sichos Haran* Paragraph 23) “Happy is one who every day eats some chapters of *Mishnayos*, afterwards drinks some chapters of *Tehillim* and dresses himself with some *Mitzvos*. This will lengthen your days in this world and the next. Therefore why do you heed the evil inclination which says that this isn’t considered learning or the like? Our Sages of blessed memory said (*Avoda Zora* 17b), “Learn even though you forget, even though

you don't know what you are saying." The holy *Zohar* (*Kedoshim* 85b) states: "When a man learns Torah and stutters because he doesn't understand what he is saying each word goes up above and G-d rejoices with it."

By regular reciting, your mind and intellect will be opened. Remember the saying of our Sages of blessed memory (*Midrash Rabba* to Song of Songs 2:6), "Through the merit of Torah and the learners of Torah, the world will be saved." Who knows, perhaps through your setting a specified time to labor in Torah every day, learning *Tanach*, *Mishna*, *Gemara*, *Halacha*, and *Midrash* systematically, you will save the whole world. In the *Tana Dvey Eliyahu Zuta* (Chapter 2) it says, "when a man reads Torah, Prophets, Scriptures; learns *Halacha*, *Midrash*, and *Gemara* with its *pilpul* – all for the name of Hashem – the Divine Presence immediately rests upon him."

My brother, how does nonsense compare with this great illumination? Why do you heed those who say this isn't learning? The day will come when you will have to enter the king's palace. There they will examine the chapters of *Mishnayos*, pages of

Gemara, sections of *Shulchan Aruch* and chapters of Psalms which you studied and recited in this world. Our Sages of blessed memory said (*Midrash Koheles* 6:13), “since the days of man are vanity and they are like a passing shadow, what enjoyment does man have? Let him busy himself with the words of Torah. They are life. Let him learn diligently every spare time he has”. Our Sages of blessed memory said (*Talmud Yerushalmi, Berachos* 9:5), “Just as a baby must nurse every hour of the day, so must a Jew learn Torah every hour of the day.”

Do not think there is any greater Divine service than learning Torah. Our Sages of blessed memory said (*Talmud Yerushalmi, P'eah*, Chapter One), “Even all the commandments of the Torah do not equal one statement of learning Torah.” Always make a new beginning in learning Torah. Learn with renewed desire. The Torah should always be beloved by you as if you just received it, as our Sages of blessed memory said (*Eruvin* 54a) “Words of Torah are beloved by the people who study it; every hour is like the first hour.”

Consequently, despite whatever you have

transgressed until now, even defiled acts of immorality, G-d forbid, do not get depressed. Heeding our Rebbe of blessed memory and setting times for studying and reviewing the Torah will eventually purify you of all your sins. You will not have what to fear, because your soul will be surrounded with chapters of *Mishnayos*, pages of *Gemara* and sections of *Shulchan Aruch*. Our Sages of blessed memory have said (*Yerushalmi Rosh Hashana* 4 law 8) “Once you have accepted upon yourself the yoke of Torah it is as if you have never sinned at all. They also said (*Menachos* 110a), “Whoever learns Torah doesn’t need an *Olah*, a *Chatos*, a *Mincha* nor an *Oshom* (different sacrifices brought to atone for sins), because the Torah ties a man to G-d and atones for his sins.”

Our Sages of blessed memory said (*Chagiga* 3b) “Words of Torah direct those who study them along the ways of life.” *Midrash Raba (Naso)* says, “The Torah is called light, because it shines forth before man and illuminates his way.” It teaches man the will of G-d, thus the reward for learning Torah is very great, as our Rebbe of blessed memory said, (*Sefer Hamidos Limud*: 10) “Every piece of knowledge in the laws of the Torah – whether in the commandments

between man and G-d, or between man and his fellowman – this knowledge itself brings success to the soul.” *Devarim Rabba* says, “The soul and the Torah are compared to a candle; the soul as it says (*Mishley* 20), ‘The candle of G-d is the soul of man’; the Torah as it says (*ibid.* 4) ‘The commandments are a candle and the Torah light.’ G-d says to man, “My candle is in your hands and your candle is in My hands. If you watch over My candle, I will watch over yours, but if you put out My candle, so will I put out yours.”

When you are diligent in Torah, Hashems’ light shines upon you, as our Sages of blessed memory said (*Sota* 21 a), “The Scriptures describe the Torah as light, to teach you that just as the light protects a person so does the Torah. ‘When you walk it will lead you (*Proverbs* 6:22) – meaning in this world – ‘And when you lie down it will watch over you’ – meaning in the World to come.”

Many young men, even those who are newlywed, tend to “take it easy” in their learning. This results from excessive stringencies in order to learn Torah and perform *mitzvos* with the maximal *hidur*

[perfection]. (See *Likutei Halochos, Krias HaTorah*, 6:6). His desire is great to learn with deliberation and good understanding. When he sees he cannot achieve this, he comes to the conclusion that otherwise it is not considered learning at all. Since he feels his mind is not ready for such learning he doesn't bother to learn at all.

This thinking is common among workers, householders or older people who have suffered troubles, trials, and confusions in their lives. They come to the conclusion that they will never be scholars – so why learn? Instead of learning, they take in their hands newspapers and secular books. They then get their outlook on life from scoffers, heretics, and adulterers, may G-d save us. Meanwhile they waste valuable time – the most precious commodity. Truly if they would merit peace of mind they would realize that today or tomorrow they will have to leave this mundane world. “What will I answer the gatekeeper when he asks about the Torah and *Mishna* I have learned?” [*Shabbos* 31a].

Our Sages of blessed memory said (*Ketubot* 59a), “Idleness leads to licentiousness; idleness leads



to lunacy.” You must make the utmost effort to rid yourself of idleness. If you’ll accustom yourself to learn in the way of the Rebbe, of blessed memory, perfectly and simply, you will forever want to learn. If any confusion or disturbance arises you will not become distressed or depressed but will wait until it passes. Then you will continue learning, knowing that this is your portion forever. Every *Mishna*, chapter of Psalms, or word that is addressed to G-d, will never be lost. Every day, every hour, and every moment of Torah goes up above. The days are spiritual spheres of G-dliness, and will be shown to every one in the World to come.

Therefore, when you come home after a day of hard work, open the *Mishnayos* and recite a couple of chapters. Similarly do so with the *Gemara* and *Shulchan Aruch*. Learn anything you choose. Use the original Hebrew text if you have a background of understanding Hebrew. If not use an English translation. (Today, almost every basic Hebrew work is available in English.) Start from the beginning and continue on sequentially. Recite page after page, making an effort to understand as much as possible at the moment. What you still do not understand

don't ponder too much. Just recite the words sequentially and continue on. By reading on and gaining more general knowledge, you will eventually understand all the things you did not understand previously. Should you think "this is only a joke and isn't considered learning at all" - think again. Just because you don't understand every word are you to throw everything away and take into your hands a newspaper, put on the radio, or sit with scoffers and talk idle? Quite the opposite! If you train yourself in this wondrous way of learning, you will merit feeling all kinds of illumination in the study of our holy Torah. As our Sages of blessed memory said (*Yevomos* 117), on the verse "Like the water reflects a face to a face, so is the heart of man to another." [Proverbs 27] This refers to the words of the Torah. Rashi explains, "To the degree that you put your face and heart into it, so will you understand it." Our Rebbe said (*Sichos Haran* 17), "When the Torah will show you love, you will not want any reward in the future world; you will just want the Torah itself."

How you show yourself to the Torah is the way the Torah will show itself to you. Whatever attitude you adopt toward the Torah, the Torah will reflect to you.



Our Sages of blessed memory said (*Gittin* 43a) “A man doesn’t understand the Torah’s words unless he errs in them”, meaning, only if the learning comes hard to him. Difficulty in learning may be a result of many things. Here are just a few examples. A young man who was tainted with much immorality, G-d forbid, and his mind is very much confused; a newlywed who is worried about earning a living and is working hard all day long; an older person whose days until now have been in darkness and does not feel hope for his future. Let them all remember the statement of our Sages of blessed memory (*Sanhedrin* 100a) “Whoever blackens his face over the words of Torah in this world, G-d will make His glory shine upon them in the future world. Our Sages also said (*Avodah Zorah* 2a) “In the future G-d will hold a Torah-scroll in His bosom and say, “Whoever occupied himself with Torah shall come and get his reward.”

So why get so depressed? Why not heed the words of Rebbe Nachman? When you will train yourself in this holy and powerful way of learning, you will forever be busy with some Torah lesson. Whether it is *Tanach* or *Mishnayos*, *Gemara* or *Midrash*, *Shulchan Aruch* or the *Zohar*, you will always be involved in



learning. Even when you are in transit on a train or bus – even if you are sitting in your store, the Torah will always be waiting for you. And remember, this is your portion forever.

Midrash Raba (Parshas Vayachi 97:5) teaches, that just as fish – which live in water – when a raindrop falls from above they take it with thirst as if they had never tasted a drop of water before. So too the Jews – who live in the waters of the Torah – when they hear something new, they accept it with thirst as if they hadn't heard a word of Torah before. Therefore, what does it matter if you forget? Through your many reviews of the Torah you will time after time merit to finish all the scriptures, *Mishnayos*, *Gemara*, and *Midrashim*. Ultimately you will receive the Torah as a gift, as our Sages of blessed memory said (*Yerushalmi Horayos*, 111:5 with *P'ney Moshe*), "All the forty days that Moshe was on the mountain, he kept learning Torah and forgetting it. Finally it was given to him as a gift. Why was it made so difficult for him? To provide a reply to those who learn and forget, that they should not say, 'Why toil for nothing?' Their reply is from Moshe who reviewed and learned even though he forgot, until finally it was given to him as a gift."

The Sages said (*Sanhedrin* 100a), “Whoever starves himself for words of Torah in this world, G-d will satiate him in the World-to-come, as it says in Psalms (36), ‘They will be nurtured from the abundance of Your house, and from a pleasant brook will You cause them to drink.’” The simile is to a hungry person who eats with a hearty appetite. The hungrier he is, the more he eats. So too with Torah-study. You must feel yourself hungry as if you have never learned before. This way you will learn with renewed desire every time. Through learning this way, you will merit to have the light of G-d shine upon you – from the bounty of the heavenly stream in the World-to-come. This will be your delight and reward. And there in the world above, you will be privileged to understand everything you failed to understand in this world. Not only that, but also the depths of the Torah will be revealed to you. Your eyes will shine with the secrets hidden in the holy Torah. Therefore it is very wrong for you to grow depressed at all, even if you forget what you have learned.

My beloved son, learn diligently, and go on to read through our entire holy Torah – the Scriptures, the *Mishnayos*, *Talmud Bavli*, *Yerushalmi*, *Tosefta*, all the



Midrashim and all the books of the holy *Zohar*. Learn through all the great Halachic works: the *Rambam*, *Tur*, and *Shulchan Aruch*. Even if there are many matters that you don't understand or that you forget — know that nothing is lost. In the World to come you will merit to understand it all, together with its inner meaning. The Sages said in the *Midrash* (*Koheles Rabba* 2:1): Rabbi *Chizkiya* said in the name of Rabbi *Shimon ben Zavdi*, “All the Torah you learn in this world is like vapor compared to the Torah of the World-to-come. In the present world a man learns and forgets. But about the future world it is written, (*Yirmiyahu* 31), “I have put the Torah inside them.”

They say in *Midrash Tanchuma*: Rabbi *Abba* said, “It wasn't necessary for the Torah to be given to Israel in this world. Why? Because everyone will learn it from G-d in the World-to-come. Why was it given in this world? So that when G-d comes to teach them in the World-to-come, they will all be familiar with it. Thus if you heard the Torah in this world, you will hear it from G-d in the World-to-come

They also say, (*Yalkut Yeshaya* 479): G-d said, “In this world Israel learns Torah from mortals, therefore

they forget it. It was given through Moshe who was mortal, and just as a mortal passes away, so does his learning. As it is written, (Proverbs 23:5) ‘As quickly as you look at it, it is gone.’ But in the future, Israel will learn only from the mouth of G-d, as is said, (*Yeshaya* 54:13) ‘All your children are students of G-d.’ Just as G-d is eternal so is His teaching. Whatever they learn from Him they will never forget, as is said, (Ob. 1:17) ‘The House of Jacob will inherit its inheritance,’ – meaning the Torah – about which was said, (Dt. 33:4) ‘The Torah was commanded to us by Moshe, as an inheritance to the gatherings of Jacob.’ Therefore, never become depressed when you forget what you have learned, since this is how G-d created man.

Likewise, do not worry and say “There is so much to learn! When will I merit to learn all this?” Our Sages of blessed memory said (*Vayikra Rabba*, 19:2): The fool says, “Who can learn the whole Torah? *Nezikin* has thirty chapters! *Keilim* has thirty chapters! When will I ever end it all?” The smart fellow says, “I will learn two laws today and two laws tomorrow until I’ll have learnt the entire Torah.” Similarly (*Bamidbar Rabba* 13:11): Why is the Torah compared to a fig tree? [The fruits of] most trees – the olive, the grape, the



date-palm – are harvested in a single harvest. But figs are plucked little by little. So too, is the Torah. Today you learn a little and so again tomorrow, for the Torah is not completed in a single year nor in two.”

In *Sifrey (Parshas Eykev)* we read: A scholar learns two or three things at a time – two or three chapters a day, two or three sections on a Sabbath. After a while he becomes wealthy. About him is written (Proverbs 13), “He who gathered piecemeal will have a lot.” But if you will say, “Today I won’t read Scriptures, today I won’t study *Mishnayos*, but rather tomorrow I will learn,” you will remain with nothing. About him it is said (Proverbs 10) “He who slumbers at the time of harvest is a spoiled child.”

Now, my very dear friend, after all the elementary truth related above, and after carefully considering what you’ve done until now and how your mind has been harmed – flee from all the illusions, falsehoods, and temptations of the evil inclination! Flee to the Torah – as the Rebbe taught us – with purity and absolute simplicity. Learn Torah for its own sake, which is for the sake of your soul and for no other

purpose. Learn strictly so that your soul should cling to G-d with great love and desire. For G-d and the Torah are one. As our Sages of blessed memory said in *Midrash Shemos Rabba* (33:1), “G-d said to Israel, ‘I sold you My Torah, and it is as if I sold Myself along with it as it says, ‘They will take *Me* a Terumah’.”

The Torah is the means of revealing His G-dliness. Therefore, when you learn Torah with love and desire you reveal your love and desire for G-d. This is the perfection of learning. *Sifrey (Parshas Eikev)* says: Perhaps you will say, “I am learning Torah so that I will be called a sage, that I will head a yeshiva, or that I will earn longevity in the World-to-come?” The Torah declares “To love Hashem your G-d” – just learn; honor will ultimately come.

Set yourself times for regular learning sessions in Scripture, *Mishna*, *Gemara*, *Midrash* and whatever else you may choose. At first it will be hard for you. Physically, because you are accustomed to taking it easy and wasting your time with idle talk. Now, when you want to learn Torah and serve G-d, it is contrary to your habits, and the change is very difficult for you. It may also be hard for you psychologically,

because of scoffers who will oppose you both from within and from without. People with crooked minds offer opinions that are the opposite of truth, and thereby uproot souls from G-d and the holy Torah.

In any case, if you train yourself to learn in the way shown by our Rebbe of blessed memory – with purity and absolute simplicity – reciting in sequence Scripture, *Mishna*, *Gemara*, *Midrash*, etc. then even if you don't understand everything at first, but you keep on repeating the cycle, you will come to feel the greatest satisfaction and pleasure of your life. There is no greater pleasure than learning the holy Torah in purity and complete simplicity for the sake of G-d. And our Sages of blessed memory said (*Zohar Chadash* to Ruth) “if you merit the holy Torah, every letter will be an angel to help you.” [See *Zohar Parshas Achrai* 73:]

Even if you have become defiled, specifically through masturbation, G-d forbid, don't let that depress you. The Rebbe of blessed memory once said to our teacher Rav Nosson of blessed memory [See *Sichos Haran* 19], “Do you know the power of the Torah? If a man sets time every day to learn so much and so much Torah, the Torah itself will take him

out of the mud. There is a tradition among Breslover Chasidim that the Rebbe was specifically referring to the reciting of 18 chapters of *Mishnayos* a day. [See *S'fas HaNachal* to *Likutei Moharan* 1:1]" The holy *Zohar* declares, "A man can only attain permanent purification, through words of Torah; since the words of the Torah cannot be defiled." *Eliyahu* the prophet said, (*Tana Davey Eliyahu Rabba* 18): "Words of Torah are a *mikveh* [Ritualarium], purifying the Jews wherever they live. Come and see how great the power of Torah is. It purifies the sinners of Israel when they repent, even from worshipping other gods, as is said, [*Yechezkael* 36:25] "I will throw pure water on you and you will become purified, from all your defilement and from all your idol worship I will purify you." Water means words of Torah, as is said, [*Yeshaya* 55:1 See *Baba Kama* 17a] "All those who are thirsty for water, come and drink."

Specifically, if you are still young and don't yet bear the burden of making a living, if you will train yourself in this way to review very many chapters of *Mishnayos*, pages of *Gemara*, sections of *Shulchan Aruch* and whatever else you may set for yourself, you will be forever in the habit of doing this even

until you reach an old age. *Midrash Koheles Rabba* (11:14) quotes the verse, – “Be happy, chosen one, with your youth,” and explains it: “What caused you to be the chosen one in your elder? The Torah you learned in your youth!”

We have seen among our colleagues, that those who heeded our Rebbe of blessed memory and trained themselves to recite Torah constantly, merited over the years to finish many times the whole Torah – *Tanach, Mishnayos, Talmud Bavli, Yerushalmi, Tosefta*, the *Midrashim*, the holy *Zohar* and the *Tikunim*. Through much reviewing, they remember everything. And if some do not merit remembering everything, at least in the World-to-come they have waiting for them the pleasures which await them. Fortunate are they and fortunate are their portions.

Eliyahu the prophet said (*Tana Dvey Eliyahu Rabba* 4): “There was no prophet like Moshe who knew G-d face to face. Just as the light emanating from G-d remains forever and ever, so too did the light emanating from Moshe’s face accompany him to the grave, as is said, [Det. 34:8] “Moshe was one hundred and twenty years old; his eyes hadn’t dimmed nor



had his face lost its freshness.” [This is true] not only [of] Moshe but also of every scholar who occupies himself with Torah from his childhood unto old age. He does not truly die but lives forever as is said (1 Samuel, 25), “My master’s soul will be bound in the bonds of life with Hashem your G-d.” The righteous scholar is always linked to G-d; just as G-d – may His name be blessed – is alive forever and ever, so too, a scholar who busies himself with Torah all his life is still among the living, and is never [considered] dead. Where is his soul? Under the Divine Throne.”

So, why be so influenced by what people say or laugh? You must worry about yourself, as no one else will worry about you. Remember, no one understands you as you do yourself. You watch the days and nights fly by, and you can’t stop them for one single moment. In a little while, you’ll be approaching the next world, as this is the way of all man. So reflect: Just because you don’t have such a good head, are you free from learning Torah? Train yourself to learn in the wondrous way of our Rebbe of blessed memory. Then you will have it good from your youth thru your old age. As our Sages of blessed memory said (*Soferim* 16), “The Torah watches you



from all evil, from childhood until old age, and gives you good future and hope.” Even though it seems difficult for you at the beginning and it appears as if it isn’t considered learning at all, my dear brother, before you can feel the sweetness of the Torah, you must accept the Torah upon yourself as if it were a burden.

Our Sages of blessed memory say in *Devarim Rabba* (50:3) “Just like [olives] are at first bitter and ultimately their oil is sweet, so are the words of Torah; a man struggles with them at first and ultimately tastes their sweetness, as it says (*Iyov* 8) “Your beginning will be cramped and your end will be very great.” Surely at first, many kinds of bitterness are felt, and it seems as if the Torah is bitter. However, the reason it seems bitter is because one feels the bitterness of his sins. Especially breaches of the sexual covenant, through which one sullied his soul, causing great feelings of bitterness. Now that one begins to cleanse his soul, he begins to feel pain and agony, in the form of many doubts and questions, especially concerning this advice: “Is this considered learning? Is this a system?”



But when you merit perceiving and realizing what you have done until now, you will easily understand that you cannot immediately feel the sweetness and pleasantness of the Torah. If you will set aside your own personal opinion, and undertake the Torah 'like an ox to its burden' [*Tana D'vei Eliyahu* Chapter 1], you will ultimately merit love of the Torah, and will never want to part from it, as you will feel your soul afire.

The Torah will bring you to humility, especially when you learn with simplicity – following the system of our Rebbe of blessed memory. Your very own being will become insignificant and you will merit clinging to the light of G-d which is clothed in the letters of the Torah. When you attain true humility, you will attain a strong desire to feel the pleasantness of G-d and to visit His palace. An abundance of knowledge will shine upon you with powerful illumination, and you will come to love every Jew. You will not be an “angry scholar” [See *Sichos Haran* 249] who uproots men from this world and from the World-to-come – by causing dispute and arguments; by showing others that they don't know anything at all; by proclaiming that others don't even come up to their ankles in Torah knowledge – despising whomever they

encounter. Not so the person who learns Torah for its' own sake. He sits in his corner studying, with no one even aware of him. He privileges to finish book after book, exploring through all parts of the holy Torah. The light of the Torah encompasses him and illuminates his soul. Fortunate is he and fortunate is his lot.

There is much to be said on this topic, and it is fitting to be spoken of at length, as the Torah is our life and lengthens our days. G-d granting there will be further opportunity to discourse at length, good words and clear proof to heed the words of the Rebbe of blessed memory. My dear brother, what has past has past. Now however, arise upon your feet and run to the holy Torah. Set for yourself a simple program in *Mishnayos*, *Shas*, the four volumes of the *Shulchan Aruch*, and whatever more you choose. Recite and recite page after page until you merit finishing the complete work. Then begin again. Don't be discouraged that many years have already passed before you merited the privilege of doing this. Don't worry and don't be discouraged, for our Sages of blessed memory in *Shemos Rabba* (33:8) said: "Moshe commanded the Torah to us as an

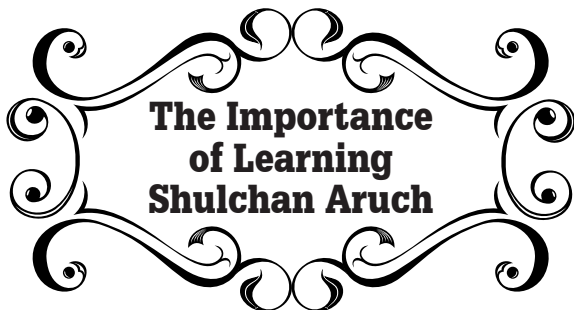
inheritance.” [Det. 33:4] It is an inheritance for Jewry forever. A parable: A prince was captured and taken to a foreign land. After many years he was finally released. He is not ashamed to return home even after many years because he says, “I am returning to my parents’ inheritance.” Similarly, a scholar who left the Torah and busied himself with other things even for many years, when he wants to return is not embarrassed, because he says, “I am going back to my parents’ inheritance.”

So let us make a new beginning right now, to utilize every spare moment that we have. Time is a precious commodity that must be carefully guarded, for there is no loss like the loss of time. One can’t buy back time for any amount of money. When man comes to the final day and hour of his life, he would pay all the money in the world to be able to live some more. But nothing helps then. Time was created for learning Torah and service of G-d, as our Sages of blessed memory said in *Midrash Shocher Tov* (Psalms 39): “The cure for the tongue is the tree of life” [Proverbs 15:4] – that is the Torah which is called “The tree of life for those who uphold it.” [ibid 3:18] From here you learn that G-d gave the Torah to the



Jews that they should not busy themselves with gossip or idle talk. As King David said, “who wants to buy the World-to-come?” The people asked him, “How can one buy it?” He replied, “Very uncostly.” As it says, “Who is the man who wants life? Who wishes to see good? guard your tongue from evil.” [Psalms 34:12] Whoever has a strong mind of his own will perceive and comprehend that the way of our Rebbe of blessed memory is true, easy, and pleasant. May G-d grant us the strength and ability to occupy ourselves with Torah always, Amen.





The Importance of Learning Shulchan Aruch

Rebbe Nachman of blessed memory placed great emphasis on the learning of the *Poskim* - the codifiers of the *Halacha* [Jewish Law] – more than on any other books of study. He said it is fitting to learn all four parts of the *Shulchan Aruch* from beginning to end in sequence. If you can study the four parts of the *Shulchan Aruch* with all its commentaries, fine. If not, at least learn the four parts of the “small” *Shulchan Aruch* – the edition that was published in small volumes containing the *Mechaber* [The name given to the work of Rabbi Yosef Cairo – the main author of the *Shulchan Aruch*. *Mechaber* literally means author], *Rama* [An abbreviation for Rabbi Moshe Issarles – the second great codifier of the *Shulchan Aruch*. It can easily be distinguished between the words of the *Mechaber* and the *Rama*, for the

formers words are always in larger type as the latter's are much smaller] and the *Ba'eir Heiteiv* [The *Ba'eir Heiteiv* was written by Rabbi Yehuda Ashkenazi of Tiktin, and it is a condensed work of all the final rulings of the later Poskim]. (Again, we are referring to the original Hebrew text for those who understand it or to an English translation for those who don't.) Learning *Poskim* is a very good remedy for clarifying the confusion of good and bad that has resulted from one's sins. By studying a *posek* who clarifies what is kosher and what is not, what is permitted and what forbidden, the pure and the defiled – the good is separated from the bad. The Rebbe said [See *Sichot Horan* 29], "Every Jew is obligated to learn *Poskim* every single day without exception." Even if you are short of time, you must learn at least one paragraph of *Shulchan Aruch* wherever it may be – that is even if it is out of the sequence of your regular *Shulchan Aruch* study. For you must learn some law of the *Shulchan Aruch* every single day of your life. When you aren't pressed for time, learn in sequence all four parts of the *Shulchan Aruch* day after day. When you finish all four, start again, continuing in sequence as before. (See *Sichot Horan* 29.)

Likutei Moharan (1:8) states that there are four



elements to creation: fire, wind, water, and earth. Their Divine roots are the four letters of the Divine Name [*Yod, Keh, Vav, Keh*] and when they enter the physical world, are mixed of good and bad. Man's main service is to separate the evil from the good and to eliminate it, so that the four letters of the Divine Name will illuminate before him constantly. Separating the bad from the good and eliminating it is done through prayer and Torah study, and specifically through entering the depths of *Halacha* by studying the *Poskim*. Aspects of both good and evil are reflected in the Torah in terms of the permitted and the forbidden, the undefiled and the defiled, the kosher and the unfit. As long as you haven't clarified the *Halacha*, the creation is a mixture of good and bad, and you cannot separate the bad to eliminate it. This is an aspect of the verse, [Proverbs 11] "He who seeks out evil will find it" – until one merits studying and clarifying the *Halacha* and determining what is forbidden and what is permissible. Then the separation of good from evil is accomplished [*Zohar* III :73a].

Rabbi Nossan of blessed memory writes in *Likutei Halachos* (*Pesach* #4) "The main function of the exile to

Egypt was to amend the sin of Adam who damaged the “*Eitz HaDaas*” – the tree that distinguishes between good and evil. The redemption from Egypt took place in the merit of the Torah as is written, (*Shemos* 3), “When you take this nation out from Egypt, you will worship G-d on this mountain” – meaning Mount Sinai where the Torah was given. Then, at Mount Sinai, the delight of the World-to-come – which are the laws of the Torah – shone upon them. For the laws of the Torah which one learns, particularly if one merits to make a new discovery within them, are an aspect of the delight of the World-to-come. When a new *Halacha* is discovered, new insights and knowledge are gained. Knowledge is the main delight of the World-to-come (See *Likutei Moharan* II:2). Also know, that “G-d and the Torah are one.” To the degree that you draw to yourself to the laws of the Torah, you draw to yourself the pleasant sweetness of the World-to-come – a perception of G-dliness. Our Sages of blessed memory said, (*Shemos Rabba* 33:1) “G-d said to the Jews, I sold you My Torah, I sold Myself, as it were, along with it – ‘They will take *Me a Terumah*. [*Shemos* 25:2]’

When the Jews were still in Egypt subject to harsh

servitude, it is said, (*Shemos* 1) “They embittered their lives with hard labor, with mortar and bricks.” Our Sages of blessed memory explained this [See *Tikunai Zohar* 147a], as alluding to Torah study. “With hard labor” alludes to the difficulty created by questions; “with mortar” alludes to the difficulty of the Talmud’s discussions; and “[with the] bricks” alludes to clarifying the *Halacha*. Everything was confused – good with bad and bad with good – which is the worst part of the bitter exile. The Torah is *only* good as is said (*Proverbs* 4), “I have given you a good portion, My Torah do not leave” and G-d is *only* good, as is said, (*Psalms* 25), “Good and upright is G-d.” Likewise it says, (*Psalms* 34) “Taste and see that G-d is good.”

Our main task regarding the *Halachos* of the Torah is to discover and reveal the G-dliness that is hidden in every detail of creation. “The Torah is called “light” as it illuminates man what he must do. And because the Torah teaches man how to fulfill G-d’s will, the reward for learning Torah is very great.” (*Bamidbar Rabba* 22) When Israel was still in Egypt, before they received the Torah, they hadn’t yet merited clear halachic rulings. Thus the exile was lengthened and their lives embittered, causing them to feel the

harshness of their enslavement and their distance from G-d.

G-d was generous to us and illuminated our path by giving us the Torah. We were privileged to leave Egypt and to receive the Torah, which includes clarification of the Halacha, teaching us how to act in every aspect of this world.

G-d granted us a great favor and provided us with the illumination that emits from our acceptance of the Torah. The intellectual pursuit, derivative from accepting the Torah, is the clarification of *Halacha*. *Halacha* teaches us how to proceed and behave in every minute detail on this world, linking it to G-d blessed is He, and perceiving His divinity from every detail of creation. Through the *Halachos* of the Torah one turns ordinary physical materials into spirituality. Wool becomes *tzitzis* [The fringes, made of wool, mandatory to be placed on all four cornered garments], and animal hides become *tefillin* [The phylacteries] and *Siferay Torah* [Torah scrolls]. A rams horn becomes, a *shofar* [The rams horn which is sounded on Rosh Hashana – the Jewish New Year], and so on. Through the *Halachos* of the Torah, the entire world sings the praises of G-d.



For *Halacha* reveals that the worlds ultimate purpose is His service – to demonstrate that there is no other power than He. The ultimate method of repairing all breaches caused by sin both by the first man Adam, as well as by all other people throughout history seeking to making amends for their transgressions – is by clarifying for oneself the clear Halacha – G-d’s will. This is called “selecting the good from the bad.” By fulfilling the Torah, the “good” – which is the Divine illumination, remains – whereas the “evil” which is the obscuring of the Divine illumination, is eliminated. This is why our Rebbe of blessed memory warned so much about the importance of studying *Halacha*. About this our Sages said (*Mechilta to Beshalach*), “‘You shall study all of his statutes. [Shmos 13:10]’ – these are the *Halachos*.” Similarly they said (*Tosefta Sota 8*), “‘You shall build your house [Det. 22:8]’ – these are the *Halachos*.” Achieving the clarification of *Halacha*, and even more so, achieving the clarity required to rule on *Halacha*, is the basic principle of G-d’s statutes. So too must one’s home be built upon the foundation of *Halacha*. For in this way one will not deviate from the path of the Torah all the days of his life.



Likutei Moharan (II:21) states, that when you create *chidushai* Torah [new insights in Torah] you must set up soldiers before and after your *chidushim*. This is necessary in order that your *chidushim* do not come to harm. This is done through the studying of the *Poskim*. One must learn the *Poskim* before one's own novella as well as afterwards. In the work *S'fas HaNachal* [A most wondrous and thorough commentary on all of the *Likutei Moharan*] we learn the meaning of this. One, who seeks to create new *chidushim* in Torah, must have a firm grasp on the *Shulchan Aruch*. He must see to it that there is not the least contradiction between his *chidushim* and the *Shulchan Aruch*. Nor should one seek to create a new *Halacha* not based in *Shulchan Aruch*. The Rebbe of blessed memory cautioned strongly, that many scholars have an evil desire to come up with new *Halachos*. This leads to many problems and ultimately to great dissension among Jews. Those who study Torah and are creative in their study must be careful to put the *Shulchan Aruch* in front and in back of them, using it as their guideline, and not moving from its basic *Halachos*.

The main purpose and goal of creating *chidushai*

Torah should be to renew and refresh the individual – to support, strengthen, and uplift him in fulfilling the *Shulchan Aruch*. The *chidushim* should be geared in bringing the individual as close as possible to Hashem. When one places the *Shulchan Aruch* as his goal, and uses it as his support as well, he is confident that he is traveling on the right path.

Entering the depths of Halacha is achieved through prayer. *Likutei Moharan* (I:8) discusses in length how the main source of intelligence is obtained through prayer. [See *S'fas HaNachal* there] On the concept of prayer, our Rebbe of blessed memory very often counseled, that a person should spend time alone with G-d every single day. Find yourself a special place where people aren't around and tell G-d everything that's on your heart. Tell Him everything till the very minutest detail. Plead with G-d and talk to Him as you would to a friend, or as a son to his father. The Rebbe said explicitly (*Likutei Moharan* II:100), "No one, big or small, can be a true Jew if he does not speak to G-d." Get into the habit of talking to G-d openly and in complete simplicity. Beg and plead before Him that you merit fulfilling the entire Torah. This prayer rises to an extremely high and



awesome place, and arouses incomparably great delight up Above. [See *Likutei Moharan* II:25] Meriting to engage in this precious prayer depends on the extent of your faith – on how much you realize that nothing exists without G-d, and that G-d's presence is everywhere. Once this concept becomes clear to you, you will forever be engaged in speaking to G-d and pouring out your heart before Him. Every movement you make indicates G-d's presence, for everything is G-dliness, only garbed in the forms our eyes perceive. This garb leads to the dissension between the two inclinations. (See *Likutei Moharan* 1:62). The good inclination brings faith into the heart of man; that he believe in G-d and place his trust in Him. The evil inclination, on the other hand, brings heresy and doubt into the heart of man. When one merits to believe and feel wholeheartedly how 'G-d's glory fills the entire world' [*Yeshaya* 6], and that He listens to every word, then one will surely pray with great enthusiasm, and be very careful in directing his words. [See *Likutei Moharan* I:62. Also see *Sanhedrin* 22a "One who prays should regard himself as if the *Shechina* (Divine Presence) is before him, as it says (Psalms 16) 'I put G-d before me always'] But because a man is not fully aware of this, he is not enthusiastic nor precise in



his prayers. The level of one's intellect, knowledge, and faith, determines his enthusiasm and caution in prayer. Knowledge and faith emerge from the good inclination in one's heart, whereas concealment of knowledge – heresies and doubts – emerge from the evil inclination. These doubts and confusions harden man's heart and ensnare him in evil.

The remedy for this dissension of the heart is to cure it at its root. This dissension of the *yeitzer tov* and *yeitzer horah* [The good and evil inclinations], has its root in a division within sanctity itself. This is a reference to the levels of sanctity, which begin at the highest sphere, and descends step by step until our lower world. Division of opinion within sanctity is the division between the *Tanaim* and *Amoraim* [The Sages of the Mishna and Talmud], where one forbids and the other permits. This is at the highest level. As this power of division descends into materialistic things of this lower world, it results in the argumentativeness of the evil inclination. It causes people to think heretical thoughts and hides from them rational paths, denying them the ability to respond. This is at the lowest level. When one remedies the divisiveness within sanctity, he automatically cures



and rids himself of the divisiveness brought about by the evil inclination. The evil inclination has no grip without the sacred divisiveness. The remedy for divisiveness, or division in sanctity, is to study firm halachic rulings. Halachic ruling means that peace has been made – a decision has been reached in a debate between the *Tanaim* or *Amoraim*. Through studying the rulings of the *Poskim* one has linked himself with sanctified peace, and thus remedies sanctified divisiveness. This leads to the elimination of the evil inclination's divisiveness in ones' own mind, thus permitting him to serve G-d with his entire heart. The gates of intellect are then opened before him as indicated by the words of the Psalmist (119:8), "I praise you with the straightness of my heart when I study your righteous statutes." The word 'heart' is written *leyvov* (plural), rather than *leiv* (singular), which implies utilizing both hearts – both inclinations. When is this possible? 'When I study your righteous statutes' – studying of the *Poskim*. By studying the *Poskim* – G-d's righteous statutes – one merits to unite the fragments of his heart. As a result, he no longer has questions about G-d's actions. By the studying of *Shulchan Aruch*, and by speaking with G-d each day, one merits to acquire a



true and pure heart. These two essential practices are the two major pillars of Breslover Chassidus.

Our Rebbe of blessed memory spoke at great length of these two pillars, and requested of all his followers as well as of all Jewry, to fulfill them every day. [See *Sichos Horan* (29) and *Likutei Moharan* II:25] That is to study the Shulchan Aruch consecutively, and to speak privately with G-d every day. In essence, both of the two are directly dependent on one another. Insofar as one merits being able to communicate whenever necessary with G-d, and speaks to Him with absolute sincerity and simplicity – to that degree is his mind purified and his intellect clarified meriting attaining the depths of the *Halacha*. He will also find answers to all his general and specific questions. One will neither have questions about G-d nor about His Torah. He will know that G-d's ways are righteous and upright, and the *Halacha* will be clear before him. He will likewise not have any questions about any Jew, nor will he be confused by any creature in the entire world. His heart and his mind will be constantly linked and dedicated to G-d.

Through studying the *Halachos* of the Torah, based

on the 13 Principles by which Torah law is derived [The *Braitha D'Reb Yishmael*, which is the introduction to the *Safrah (Toras Kohanim)*], one draws upon himself illumination from G-d's 13 Attributes of Mercy. [See the *Kisvai HaAri'zal – Pri Etz Chaim Sha'ar T'filas Hashachar*] There, G-d revealed his elementary Oneness, that all is one, and there is no disunity at all. For He is capable of unifying two opposites in one, just as He makes peace in the heavens between two absolute contradictions, as our Sages stated (*Chagiga* 12a) “Why are the heavens called *Shomayim*? For they are a combination of fire – *aish* and water – *mayim*. This teaches us that G-d blended them with one another and made the sky of them.” We find a similar statement in *Bereshis Rabba* (4:9), “The Holy One blessed is He took fire and water and blended them and from them created the sky – *Shomayim*.”

This is why the last of the 13 Principles by which Torah law is derived, is the principle of two verses that contradict one another until a third verse decides between them. This principle is the basic remedy achieved by the preceding 12 Principles. They are aspects of the *Halachos*, which lead a man to attain illumination from the 13 Attributes of Mercy. All the

questions, and the changes found in different parts of Torah, all the divisions within sanctity that exists between the *Tanaim* or *Amoraim* or between any two righteous Jews, serves to reveal that all different actions derive from one pure Unity, blessed is He. For all the various activities throughout creation, all derive from the letters of the Torah. And just as every letter has a distinct form of its own, and every combination of letters shape words of their own, analogously, all the various creatures in the world have each an identity of their own. The truth however is, that all the letters, words, and paragraphs of the Torah, by their very differences from one another, make it possible to recognize G-d, blessed be He. For the Torah was given to reveal the presence of our Creator – as the Torah is the name of G-d. (See *Tikuney Zohar, Tikun 10*) It is impossible to appreciate perfect unity of the Creator without His Torah, in its present shape of letters and words. And because it is very difficult to fully comprehend the depths of the Torah, it therefore seems at times that there are modifications, questions, or contradictions within the Torah. Such as the example of two verses that contradict one another. Before the third verse comes to decide in favor of one of the original two, it seems

to us as if – G-d forbid – there was a mistake in the Torah. All this is because of our limited perception, for we do not fully comprehend the Torah. This is why Hashem had mercy upon us, and through His Sages, gave us the approach ways to the Torah. By applying the 13 Principles of deriving Torah law, they resolved all the conflicts and contradictions. We hereby obtain the power to believe and to know, that just as the entire Torah is ultimately unified, despite all the questions we previously had, the same is true for all the queries we might have had about the existing things in this world. No matter how different they seem from one another, they all are one and relate back to the First Source – a concept that is incomprehensible for our limited intelligences. In this lies the advantage of studying *Shulchan Aruch* – the *Halacha* – which is called ‘the word of G-d’, as stated by our Sages (*Shabbos* 138b), ‘The word of G-d’ [Amos 8] – this is *Halacha*.” The more one studies Halacha, the closer one draws himself to G-d, as they are the words of G-d Himself.

How even more so, when you also merit to cling to Hashem blessed is He, through isolation and prayer. You then attract divinity to yourself. This is stated by

our Sages in *Sifrey* (to *Parshas Naso*), “‘May G-d raise his face to you [*Bamidbar* 6:26]’ – when you stand in prayer.” For prayer means drawing G-d’s illumination upon yourself. And by having divinity with you, you merit the privilege of clarifying the *Halacha*. This is corroborated by a statement of our Sages (*Sanhedrin* 93b), “‘And G-d is with him [*Samuel* 1 18:14]’ – the *Halacha* is as *he* says.” By drawing divinity towards yourself, you are privileged to be accurate in determining the *Halacha*. This was especially true of King David (who was the subject of the *Gemara* in *Sanhedrin*). Because he prayed so very much, he thereby drew divinity to himself, as a result of which the *Halacha* was as he determined it. In truth, the privilege of having G-d with you, and the *Halacha* being as you say, is a direct function of labor and toil in serving G-d through Torah study and prayer. This is true, provided it is done for His sake without any personal intentions. Torah study requires absolute dedication and great perseverance as indicated by our Sages (*Berachos* 63b) “ ‘This is the Torah of a man who dies in a tent [*Bamidbar* 19:14] – the Torah only lasts by a person who puts himself to death for it.” Similarly (*Vayikra* 26), “If you will walk in my statutes,” to which Rashi comments, “on condition that you labor in the



study of Torah.” Labor is the key word. The main part of laboring in Torah is to first clarify one’s personal occupation with the Torah – that its purpose should be solely to perform G-d’s will. One should not learn Torah for his own personal advantage, to show off or to antagonize others. Nor should he make it a means for his personal aggrandizement, spiritual or physical. This is especially true in the study of *Halacha*, which one must study solely to fulfill G-d’s will, not to deviate even an iota from the *Shulchan Aruch*. For if one learns not for the sake of performing what he learns, it were better that he had never been created. (*Yerushalmi Shabbos* Ch. 1). Our Sages remarked (*Bamidbar Rabba* 10:14), “The learning is not as important as the action, for the action atones for the person’s misdeeds.”

One must beg greatly of G-d that he may be granted the privilege of determining the final conclusion of the *Gemara*, which in other words, is the *Halacha*. This can only be done with G-d’s help, as our Sages stated (*Megillah* 6b), “Accurate learning requires Divine assistance.” When one learns this way, he will truly merit Divine assistance and the *Halacha* will be as he says. Not only will he cling to G-d

through his study of Torah, but he will also arouse other Jewish souls to the Torah and to their Creator. He will teach them how they too can study Torah in order that they may fulfill it. King David's major activity all his life was in prayer and praises to G-d, and in teaching Torah to the public, which is why he merited to determine the Halachic conclusions of the Oral Torah.

King David asked for this, (Psalms 119), "By what means does a young person clarify the path he is to take, [in order] to fulfill [the commandments] as You have stated?" In other words, how does one who is distant from G-d, merit attaining a way of life that leads to Him? King David labored at this all his life, seeking to increase Divine glory and to bring the distant back to Him. He was therefore granted the privilege of locating the place on which the Holy Temple was built, for from there was where the Halachic instruction emerged. This our Sages noted (*Taanis* 16a), "The Temple Mount was called *Har HaMoriah* – because from there instruction went out to the world." [*Moriah* literally means "instruction."] This is indicated by the verse, "G-d loves the gates of Zion more than all the tents of Jacob [Psalms 87:2]",

which our Sages interpreted (*Berachos* 8a), “G-d loves the gates that excel in *Halacha* more than all the houses of prayer and study.” This is rather striking because after all, the houses of study *are* the places where the *Halacha* is studied. The point however is, that the purpose of studying *Halacha* should be to stir Jewish souls to their roots and bring them back to Jewish behavior. That is, to have them fulfill the Torah and the *Halacha*, which is G-d’s word. Getting them to live according to the laws of Torah as found in the *Shulchan Aruch*, is the task of the loftiest *Tzadikim* [The righteous] who cling to G-d constantly, and open fresh portals in the perception of His Divinity. Ultimately, they bring them all back to good, even the worst of the worst, illuminating their way to the roads of Torah and *Halacha*. The term “gates that excel in *Halacha*” refers to the *Halachos* of the Torah which become roadmarks for recognizing the gates that lead to perceptions of divinity. In other words, the *Tzadikim* study the laws of Torah in such a wondrous way, and create such wondrous *chidushim*, which eventually lead all penitents back to G-d. By revealing the inner meanings of the *Halacha*, they show the *Halachos* to be extraordinary – how the *Halachos* open fresh

portals to perception of divinity. And G-d loves these discoveries more than the studying done in the houses of prayer and study. For it is not the study that is primary, but rather the action. G-d loves the study of Torah which leads to action – when a person through his occupation with Torah and Halacha sets up milestones and guideposts which lead others back to G-d. These portals are similar to the gateways of the Holy Temple, which led people to the knowledge of G-d.

Our Sages of blessed memory spoke so highly of those who occupy themselves with *Halacha* that they said (*Yerushalmi Moed Katan* 3:5) “Who is a scholar? One who learns *Halachos*.” Especially when two people merit studying *Halacha* together, the greatness of this is beyond words. As our Sages of blessed memory said (*Shabbos* 63a), “Two scholars who sharpen each other in *Halacha*, G-d causes them to be successful. Two scholars who are pleasant to each other in *Halacha*, G-d listens to them. Two scholars who listen to each other on halachic matters, G-d heeds them. Two scholars who give each other credit in *Halacha*, G-d loves them.” And above all when you help a fellow Jew fulfill a *Halacha* – this is foremost.

As King Solomon said, (*Koheles* 4) “Two are better than one and they receive great reward in their toil, for if one falls the other will reestablish him – whereas one [alone] who falls there is no one to reestablish him.” Our Sages of blessed memory interpreted this (*Koheles Rabba* 4), “If he forgot a *Halacha*, his colleague will restore it.” The main advantage of two people learning *Halacha* together is, when one supports the other and looks at him with a good and helpful eye, wanting only the best for him. For “Torah is acquired only in a group” (*Berachos* 63a). The Sages said (*Derech Eretz Zuta*, 2), “Listen to the words of your friend, and if you want to cling to your friend’s love, seek ways of helping him.” What greater eternal good is there than to support your friend and bring him back to the way of good – to the way of the *Halacha*. All the more so when you arouse him to learn *Halachos* every day. This is truly the will of G-d!

When our Sages of blessed memory said, (*Berachos* 8a), “From the day the Holy Temple was destroyed G-d has only four cubits of *Halacha* in this world,” – the word “*Halacha*” is referring to going in the ways of G-d. (To go, is the literal interpretation of the word *halacha*.) The four cubits represent the four letters of



the Divine Holy Name, which is the space allotted every man – wherever he may be – in approaching G-d. You will merit G-d's illumination, the light of His Holy Name in your four cubits, by studying *Halacha* and praying in isolation. This will purify your thick materiality and separate the evil from the good, and G-d's pleasurable illumination will shine upon you. Know that you can come close to G-d from wherever you may be. For the major aspect of G-d's greatness is that even the distant ones may come closer to Him. "The study of *Shulchan Aruch* banishes thoughts of idolatry" (*Sefer Hamidos "Posek"* 3), and one merits faithfulness, as mentioned before. When you have faith you will always fear G-d. It is also mentioned in *Sefer Hamidos* ("Yirrah" 2) "A place where *Halacha* is decided is good for developing fear of G-d." Also, (*ibid* 3) "Through learning *Shulchan Aruch* one attains fear of G-d."

Therefore one should ask G-d every day to grant him the privilege of learning *Shulchan Aruch* daily – and in particular, to fulfill it – certainly not to deviate from it at all. See *Yoreh Dei'ah* [The second section of the *Shulchan Aruch*] Chapter 246 (in *Shach* par. 5 citing *Perisha*), that those laymen who only learn three or four hours

a day should not learn only *Gemara*, but should also learn halachic rulings so that they will know how to conduct themselves. The Sages said (*Megillah* 28b), “One who learns *Halachos* every day is assured a place in the World-to-come.” This is particularly true for those laws which are needed regularly such as the laws of the Sabbath, which you must learn diligently. For our Sages of blessed memory said (*Chagiga* 10a), “The laws of the Sabbath are like mountains hanging by a hair – they have a small amount of Scripture and many laws.” Likewise it is most important to study the laws of the holidays before the holidays – so that you may fulfill them correctly and at their proper time. Blessed is the person who merits to teach *Halacha* in public; he ranks with those who bring the public to righteousness. Especially when the subject matter is needed by the many. And never be embarrassed with public Torah learning. So did our Sages say in *Vayikra Rabba* (19:3), “The sections of the Torah, even though they may seem repulsive to the one who teaches them in public – such as the *Halachos* of body emissions, spots, menstruation, and maternity – G-d says, ‘They are pleasing to Me.’”

In any event be sure to learn a regular lesson of



Shulchan Aruch in sequence every day. Start from the beginning of *Orach Chayim* straight ahead until you complete it. Then continue onto *Yoreh Dei'ah* – afterwards *Even Hoezer*, and finally *Choshen Mishpot*. When you finish it all, begin again, and so on for the rest of your life. Our Rebbe of blessed memory insisted on this very strongly and said that it is a great remedy and an essential activity for all Jews. Surely the Rebbe meant that we should learn so that we may observe and fulfill, although there is definitely more meaning to it than that. For our Rebbe said explicitly about the instructions he gave to our colleagues (See *Sichos Horan* 115), “Every instruction I command you is a treasure – a remedy that helps for the past and for the future, after a man passes on, and for the days of *Moshiach's* coming; for the resurrection of the dead and for the future world.” It is truly amazing how far-reaching this is. So if you care for your soul and wish to perfect it, heed the Rebbe of blessed memory, and set for yourself a firmly fixed time to learn *Shulchan Aruch* every day. It is best to set for yourself two sessions: One an ordinary lesson studying *Mechaber*, *Rama*, and *Baair Heiteiv* immediately after the morning prayers while you are still wearing *tallis* and *tefillin D'Rabeinu Taam*



[*Tefilin D'Rabeinu Taam* are the second pair of tefillin that is customarily put on by many every day, after the mandatory *tefillin D'Rashi*. See *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* chapter 34. The Rebbe stressed the importance of putting on the *tefillin D'Rabeinu Taam* every day, and instructed all to do so from the day of Bar-Mitzvah on. See *Likutay Halachos Tefilin* 5:28]. Keep a small *Shulchan Aruch* in your *tallis* bag so that you can learn *Halachos* every day while still wearing the *tefillin D'Rabeinu Taam*. This is a great thing as you are fulfilling two very essential teachings of the Rebbe, for the Rebbe also advised us to put on *tefillin D'Rabeinu Taam* every day. This lesson will be sequential – studying some sections every day as much as time allows – until you merit completing all four parts of the *Shulchan Aruch*. Then begin again, and continue this way for the rest of your life. Don't try to grab everything at once – just learn some *Halachos* every day. As *Vayikra Rabba* (19:2) teaches, “The smart man says, ‘I will learn two *Halachos* today, and two *Halachos* tomorrow until I will finish them all.”

The second lesson should be an in-depth lesson: *Tur* with *Beis Yoseif* [The *Tur* was the first edition of the *Shulchan Aruch*, written by Rabbi Yaakov ben HoRosh. It



was later commentated on by Rabbi Yosef Cairo (the author of our present *Shulchan Aruch*), in his work, the *Bais Yosef*, together with the *Shulchan Aruch* and its major commentaries. Choose any area of *Halacha* that you wish to know – such as the *Halachos* of *Shabbos*, *Nidah* etc. or a specific holiday before it arrives. Review them well until you master them. Our Sages said (*Shabbos* 114a), “Who is a scholar which may be appointed a communal leader? Someone who can be asked any *Halacha*, and can reply. One can only attain this by much review – as our Sages of blessed memory said in *Vayikra Rabba* (3:1), “One who learns *Halachos* and reviews them is much superior to one who learns *Halachos* and does not review them.” Through much review and familiarity with *Halacha* you will also ultimately merit to fulfill them.

Even so, much prayer is needed – to pour out one’s soul before G-d – as our Sages of blessed memory said (*Eirubin* 65a) “*Halacha* requires ‘*tzilusa*’.” [Although the word “*tzilusa*” is usually translated “clarity,” some works explain that it means “prayer”] – that one must ask G-d greatly to enable him to fulfill the Torah simply and forthrightly without any preconceived notions. And our Sages of blessed memory said (*Midrash Tanchuma*



to *Emor*), ‘in the merit of the Torah that you will occupy yourselves with, I will hear and answer your prayers. Amen.





הספר הקדוש הזה נדפס

לעילו נשמת
נחמה לאה

ע"ה

בת רבי
פנחס אליעזר

נ"י