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[Adapted from "48 Ways To Acquire the Torah": Shiur #9 »](#) [1]

The Happiness Of Learning

One of the 48 qualities of the Torah is *simchah* – happiness. It is clear that Chazal were referring to happiness over the Torah and not any other happiness. What is happiness over the Torah?

We find such a thing as *Simchas Torah*, in which we are happy over completing the Torah. But this is not what the quality of *simchah* which Chazal are referring to; Chazal were speaking about a quality we need to **get** the Torah. This is a happiness in every detail and aspect in learning Torah.

What is this happiness?

“There Is No Happiness Like The Clarification Of Doubt”

The *Rema* (in *sefer Toras HaOlah*) says, “There is no happiness like the clarification of doubts.”

Why is this the greatest happiness? Why is getting rid of our doubts considered the epitome of happiness??

There is happiness between a husband and wife, as well as a *mitzvah* of *simchas Yom Tov*; is this not as great as when a person clarifies a doubt? What is so joyous about getting rid of one’s doubts?

When it comes to *shidduchim* we can understand why this is such a great *simchah*, because it is a very happy feeling to finally find your life partner. Here we can understand why being clear of a doubt brings a person happiness; it feels like a relief. But in the regular case, why is getting rid of one’s doubts considered the greatest happiness? By *simchas Yom Tov*, is there a clarification of doubt?!

It is written, “*The laws of Hashem gladden the heart.*” The Torah only gladdens a person’s heart when he is in doubt about something as he is learning, and when he finally gains clarity, the learning is very enjoyable to him. But if someone doesn’t think enough in learning, his questions don’t bother him so much, so he doesn’t experience this great happiness of getting rid of his doubts.

This great happiness is only possible for one who thinks and reflects and encounters difficulties in his learning.

We can see many people who learn Torah, yet they don't look happy. Why don't they look happy? Doesn't the Torah gladden a person's heart? The answer to this is because they aren't thinking enough as they learn, so they don't experience the happiness of a doubt that goes away. They never get to the happiness in learning the Torah.

Many times a person learning Torah for a long time feels that he isn't succeeding at learning. He thinks he is one of the people whom Chazal say "do not see blessing in their learning." Really the reason why a person doesn't see success in his learning is because he isn't really connected to learning and he's thus not learning in the right way. He knows of Torah, but his heart isn't in it. The Torah isn't a life giving connection to him; it's just knowledge to him. When the Torah is just knowledge to a person, and he isn't connected to it with his heart, he is apt to disconnect from the Torah.

But when a person is connected to the Torah with his heart - besides for his mind - he won't be able to pull away from it.

The Heart

"My heart has seen much wisdom." The wisest person of all, Shlomo HaMelech, states that only his heart was able to connect to wisdom. Our brain can know a lot, but it is our heart which really understands wisdom.

The heart "sees" the wisdom. What is the different between when our eyes sees something to when our heart sees something?

The Gemara says that "anyone who did not see the building of Hordes never saw beauty his whole life." When someone reads this Gemara, does he really see this beauty? He can imagine it, but he will never see it. But someone who saw it saw such beauty that when the Temple was destroyed, it bothered him, because he really knew how beautiful it was.

At the giving of the Torah, there was a great happiness. "The words of Torah should be to you as happy as they were at Har Sinai." What was this happiness? At Har Sinai, they were able to "see" the voice of Hashem. Seeing a voice is not the same as hearing a voice.

Responsibility And Happiness

We were forced to accept the Torah, yet we also said "We will do" and "We will hear". *Tosafos*^[1] asks, why did Hashem have to force us to accept the Torah, if we said that we will do and we will hear?

The answer to this, along the lines of our discussion, is that we need two kinds of connection to the Torah. We need a responsibility toward the Torah - to accept the yoke of Torah. For this reason we were forced to accept the Torah.

But we also need happiness in the Torah, and that is why we had to accept in our own - to show this. Without responsibility, our happiness would be frivolity. But without happiness, it would be impossible to survive.

Without happiness, it is impossible to learn Torah. This is not just another detail in our learning; it is not another nice quality to have. Without happiness in learning, a person won't be able to learn.

A Life Without A Heart

In order to reach this happiness, we need to live the right kind of life.

When a person is brain dead, he can still be considered alive, but when a person's heart ceases to function, it's all over. He's considered dead. In our own life, if a person lives without a heart connection to the Torah and to *ruchniyus*, his life is not a life. The feelings of love and happiness are in our heart; we must have those feelings, and without them, it's a deathlike kind of existence.

Since the first day a person enters yeshiva – all through the way through high school and *beis midrash*, and then to *kolel* – a person is taught more and more knowledge by his teachers. He is taught more and more – all the many *shittos* (opinions) of *Rishonim* and *Acharonim* that exist; his mind matures with the more knowledge he receives.

What about the heart? Does his heart mature as well?

The mind of a person matures as he gets older, but the heart often remains the same since a person was a child.

When a child is taught all the knowledge about the Torah, his heart often remains immature. Very often, in order to get a child to learn, he is offered more and more physical gratification in order to get him to want to learn. His heart is being more and more attached to materialism and he is expected to grow in his mind through this way!

In fact, often this is the intention of the teachers in the yeshiva: that he should just focus on developing his mind, not his heart. The heart is sacrificed so that the mind can grow. What results from this?

A person gets older and he knows more, but his heart is still the same immature as when he was a child, and many times it can be even more immature than when he was a child.

The person at some point feels a contradiction in his life, and deep down is thinking: "Everyone tells me that the main thing in life is Torah and mitzvos, but my heart feels differently. I know that the main thing is learning Torah and doing mitzvos, but I don't feel it...."

The people who taught him and raised him did this to him intentionally: Just focus on what you are learning. Your heart isn't important.

A person in this way grows up with a contradiction in himself. He knows in his mind what's important, but his heart feels differently. He knows a lot of Gemara with *Rishonim* and *Acharonim* and all the various opinions out there, but meanwhile, his heart wants many various worldly desires. He doesn't feel that *ruchniyus* of his mind's knowledge is his actual life.

We are not saying that a person has to cut himself off totally from physical desire and just eat bread and water. We are not speaking of high levels. We are speaking about simple feelings that a person needs to have – to feel that the Torah is our life, to feel a vitality from Shabbos and Yom Tov when it comes. Many people don't even have these simple feelings, and it is because they don't consider these matters to be what gives them life. It is all because people are raised with a contradiction between the heart and the mind.

The problem is not that people don't feel a *cheishek* (enthusiasm) for *ruchniyus* (spirituality) or that they don't feel like getting up on time in the morning to *daven*. Those are just the results of the problem; the root of the problem is that people have a heart of an infant. The heart is still immature and hasn't grown since the person was a child.

When The Heart Is More Than The Mind

Others have the opposite problem. Their hearts are very strong, but their mind is not. It can get to the point that a person only listens to what his heart feels, so if one day he just feels like going off the *derech*, he will choose to listen to his feelings over what he knows in his mind.

We can compare this to the following scenario. Imagine a person becomes a *Baal Teshuvah* and he wants to start learning. He comes to the *beis midrash* and he is told, "Figure out the difference between what Rav Chaim Brisker is saying to what Rav Shimon Shkop is saying." He has no idea what to do. Why not? Isn't he a smart and intelligent person? He is, but when it comes to Torah, his mind is the same as a child's mind.

Anyone who has learned with *Baalei Teshuvah* knows what this is. Many *Baalei Teshuvah* indeed fall back to their old ways because of this; their heart is strong, but their minds are lacking. There is a contradiction between the mind and the heart.

The first kind of contradiction we mentioned – a strong mind with a weak heart – is a problem that most people have. Only few individuals who have worked very hard on themselves don't have this problem.

Build Up Your Heart's Connection To The Torah

If we build our hearts, we will have a connection to the Torah through our heart, not just through our mind.

No one is perfect; no one has a heart that is perfectly in line with what they know in their mind. If someone's heart and mind is totally equal, he is probably one of the thirty six hidden *tzaddikim*. But we just need to build up our hearts more.

May we merit that these words should change our heart and to grow higher and higher, and to connect to the Torah with our heart – and through that, we will arrive at the great happiness that can be felt in learning the Torah.

[1] *Shabbos 88a*

Source: <https://bilvavi.net/english/getting-know-your-simcha-020-happiness-learning-torah>

Links

[1] <https://bilvavi.net/sugya/48.ways/4390?page=1#4390>