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1. *The Individual and Others*

Chazal say that all *de'os* (views) are different. Each person has a different way to think; in addition, we all have a different makeup of *middos*, which gives each of us a unique personality.

Chazal say that man was created "individual". Our essence is to be "individual". When a person learns Torah alone, this is clear that he is a being an "individual", but even when he's among other people, he is also meant to be an "individual", even though it's not as obvious. One must be able to retain his unique individuality even as he is amongst others and not lose it.

In a Beis Midrash setting, where a person learns Torah amongst other people, there are two facets to it: the public part (*tzibbur*) and the individual (*yachid*) part. We need both to be involved with our individuality as well as with others. We cannot give up either one of them. Each of these aspects somewhat hampers the other aspect, but we still need both aspects.

The fact that a person learns in a Beis Midrash by *seder* with other people has a gain to it, in that he enables himself to **connect** with others. Connection to others is indeed a major part of success. One must connect with others through learning Torah and with them and through speaking about the *sugya* with others.

2) *The Difference Between First Seder and Second Seder*

This is the backbone behind *seder rishon* (first *seder*): the focus of this *seder* is to become involved with others as you learning Torah; to involve others in your learning and to connect with others through your Torah learning.

The idea behind *seder beis* (second *seder*), though, is to develop your individual side. Here the purpose is to develop your own individual strengths in your Torah learning, whatever they might be, and the focus here is not so much on connecting to others. The point here is to bring out your individuality.

3) *The Inner Reason of Why You Should Attend Seder Every Day, On Time*

Coming to *seder* every day and being there on time is not an obligation upon you solely for your own personal benefit. It is part of your obligation to connect to others, and it does not cater to your

individuality. It is an obligation upon you because *others* will gain from you; it is essentially what you owe to others.

If you cannot do this, then you are not part of this *tzibur*. When you neglect coming to seder each day, you are neglecting your obligation to the *tzibur*, and even more so, it causes this place to lose its status of *tzibur*, because then each person is just doing his own thing and nobody is caring about their obligation to others. If you don't realize your obligation to the *tzibur*, it resembles the transgression of *me'ilah* (deriving personal benefit from property of the Beis HaMikdash).

4) The Balance Between Your Individuality and Our Common Goal

People tend to think that an entire *tzibur* have to all learn Torah in the same exact way, think the same way, and to serve Hashem in the same way. This is a fantasy. You will never find yourself amongst others who think exactly like you; that exists only as a fantasy.

Sometimes you can find others who are a bit similar to you, **especially in this generation** where people tend to be superficial and copy others, without developing their own unique self; but you will never find anyone who is exactly like you. Therefore, there is no point in hoping that you will find someone here who is exactly like you in every aspect of your personality. There is no one here who thinks exactly like you.

If we are each unique and different, what, then, is the inner goal that all of us here should be aiming for? All of us have one common denominator: we all want to be immersed in Torah, and we all want to build and develop ourselves, each as we are. To be more precise, each of us needs to develop our individuality, our uniqueness, using our unique abilities.

Usually people think they have to build their entire individuality based on how *others* act and think, and they never experience their true self, because they are trying to fit the mold.

5) Bittul - Nullifying Yourself To Others

However, in spite of the fact that our inner goal here is that each of us should develop our own unique individual strengths in Torah, a person definitely has to have *bittul* (self-nullification) to others.

This is accomplished through coming to *seder* each day at the time you are supposed to come and being there, and also, by learning the assigned *sugya* that the *tzibur* is learning here - even if it doesn't fit your agenda. Although the assigned *sugya* [during any given *zman*] will not cater to every person's taste, each person here needs to be able to nullify himself in this aspect and to go along with the program.

6) Maintaining Your 'Individual' Aspect

However, although it is necessary for each person to be a part of a *tzibbur* and to nullify himself to it, in order for you to really succeed in your learning, you also need to be able to sit and learn even if theoretically there wouldn't be a *tzibbur*. This is due to your 'individual' aspect.

7) Dispelling The Notion That Everyone Should Be The Same

There might be 2 people within this *tzibur* who find themselves to be very similar in their personality, goals, and aspirations, but to find 3 people who are very similar is something very rare.

8) Your Obligation To The Kolel

You must know that you are obligated to this *tzibur*, and therefore, it's a question of transgressing *me'ilah* if you don't abide by the rules. This is not just a money issue, which is my responsibility to worry about – it is a question of transgressing *meilah* to your *tzibur* that you are obligated to.

9) Others Gain From You When You Are Being “Yourself”

Each person has a different *avodah* (task), therefore, each person can be himself, in a way that others can gain from him.

10) Finding Yourself Here

When you feel that you have found yourself a bit in a *tzibbur* that is learning an area of Torah that you want to learn, it is like a spark of freedom available on this dark world.

We should each want to “find ourselves” in Torah learning; that is where a person can find his true self.

11) Don't Expect To Get The Perfect Friend Here

How much we end up connecting *with each other*, though, is a different aspect, and it needs a lot of *siyata d'shmaya*. No two people find themselves and get their soul needs fulfilled in the same way; not every need here can be met. When you get to know each other you see how different you are; therefore, no 2 people are going to find a total friend in each other in all aspects.

12) More On Your Obligation Towards The “Tzibur”

When doesn't feel committed to the *tzibur*, this damages the *tzibur* as a whole, and this does not just mean that one must come on time to *seder*, but to realize your very obligation to the *tzibur*; the inner essence of it.

We are also saying that within the *tzibur*, you also need to find your own individuality.

13) Connecting With Each Other

How much will you find a friend in each other? If you find another who is similar to your goals, that's wonderful, but it's not necessary for success here. The necessity of this place is that it be a place of only Torah, only truth, and to find yourself in it.

Your own individuality does not have to cancel another person's individuality; another person can argue with you completely on how you think, and that is to be expected. That's the whole purpose. As long as you are all arguing with each other *l'sheim shomayim* (for the sake of Heaven) and not to be concerned over your ego.

You will gain personally from this, and others will also gain from this, in the totality of things.

We all need to “find ourselves” in our Torah learning and in areas of our *avodah*. As far as *how* connected we are to each other, and the quality of how much we will connect to each other here, as we said, this is a point that will depend on a lot of *siyata d'shmaya*. But the main point that each of us needs to be concerned with is, that each of us should make sure to be who “we” truly are and to use our individual strengths in Torah learning, and that each of us is concerned with doing our own unique *avodah*. Understandably, when each of us does this, this will benefit the others who are around us.

Therefore, we shouldn't get caught up in wishing that we all deeply connect with each other. If we can

do it, that's wonderful, but you would need a lot of *siyata d'shmaya* for that. The main point we need to be concerned about and put our efforts on is that there must be an atmosphere here that is in the spirit of Torah - with each person, on a personal and individual level. Therefore, we shouldn't be focusing on the need to find others who think like us. The main goal here should be about reaching more and more depth in Torah, in *avodah*, in *middos*, in getting close to Hashem - each on his own level and according to his unique abilities.

14) In Conclusion

I hope that you don't think that I am saying anything novel here.

If each person develops an inward spirit towards the Torah, *that* is what will give vitality to everyone else around him as a direct result. This is not '*chizuk*' (inspiration) that comes to others from merely knowing your obligation to come to *seder* (which is of course your obligation and it is need for the *tzibur* to survive), but because of an inner recognition that you must be aware of ("*hakarah*").

These words will gain more clarity as the years go on; sometimes it will get frustrating, but eventually, it becomes clearer. The perspective here has to carry over particularly into how you approach first *seder*.

May you all have *siyata d'shamaya* to have *hatzlacha*.

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