



SICHA – 10 SHEVAT, 5743-1983

*Free Translation**

We see here something novel: There is a basic difference in the way we use the intellect that G-d grants us.

In Egypt, the study of wisdom was limited to the “wise men and sorcerers” and to “Pharaoh’s astrologers.” For the ordinary people, it was as a “closed book.” All of the wisdom was hidden from them; it was not taught to them at all.

When something needed to be said to them, it was said as a command: “You must do this, without understanding, and you *will* not understand it.” Meditating on intellectual matters was the realm of the sorcerers of Egypt, the astronomers of Pharaoh – the elite, who were separated from the people, and dedicated themselves to studying their teachings. For everybody else, it was no more than blind action.

Immediately when the Jews left Egypt, however, “When you take the nation out of Egypt you will serve G-d on this mountain,” they were given the Torah, it was just the opposite: When G-d gave the Torah to the Jewish people, He instructed Moshe to descend from the mountain and stand amongst the Jews, and all six hundred thousand Jews – plus women and children and those who were less than twenty years old, – for the 600,000 include only those ready for the army, over 20 years old.

They all heard, simultaneously, the Ten Commandments, which include the entire Torah for all time. As the Jerusalem Talmud explains that “And G-d spoke all of these words, saying...” includes “all that a wise student will teach” until the end of all time.

This was given at the very same time to every Jew and to all Jews, even to the simplest one!

Furthermore: It later became one of the primary Mitzvot – the concept of Torah study. The exact opposite of the Egyptian path: It is incumbent on every Jew to study Torah, from “the heads of your tribes” to “your woodchoppers and water carriers.” As Maimonides puts it, even an old man, or someone who is suffering pain; no matter who it is, as it says in the Laws of Torah study; even an ignoramus.

*) Taken from the Subtitles that appear on the screen



חג השבועות

At least one verse of Torah in the morning and one in the evening, they too are obligated to study every day. And the recital must be in a manner — as the Talmud explains in Tractate Menachot, that “the words of this Torah will not move from you, day or night” — for they spread across and permeate his entire day, both the hours of light and the dark hours of the night, with all of the interpretations and allusions included in that.

As mentioned, as soon as the Jews became a nation, each and every one was commanded to study Torah, obligated to meditate upon “how great are Your actions, o G-d,” and “how manifold are your actions, o G-d,” through which he will attain love and fear of G-d.

This is exactly the opposite of how it was in the land where they had spent many generations, and in whose ways they should have, supposedly, become accustomed. Yet, they were immediately instructed that their behavior must be different. We must study Torah with children, with the elderly and with adults, without any distinction whatsoever.

Regardless of how difficult it may be, as soon as a child begins to speak, his father begins to teach him Torah. And the father tells the child that he is teaching him on his level. However, what is he being taught? “The Torah that Moshe commanded us, a heritage for the congregation of Jacob.” He knows it is only a beginning, which includes, as an inclusive rule that incorporates all the details of the entire Torah as received by Moshe from G-d.

And it is “a heritage for the congregation of Jacob,” inherited by every person who is part of “the congregation of Jacob,” and its study becomes his personal Mitzvah, and constant Mitzvah, both during the day and at night.

