



Likkutei Sichos

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Beyond Comprehension

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1.

RATIONAL OR BEYOND RATIONALITY?

As discussed many times,¹ the name of each *parshah*, as **designated** by **Torah** (at the very least, because “a Jewish custom is considered {to have the authority of} Torah”) expresses the content of that *parshah*.² As the name of the **entire** *parshah*, it clearly alludes to the inner meaning of **all** of the ideas mentioned in the *parshah*, including its final verse.

In light of this, we need to explain the name of our *parshah* — **Mishpatim**. It is true that the majority of this *parshah* deals with the laws and *halachos* of the Torah; however, the conclusion of the *parshah* describes the preparations made for *Matan Torah*,³ as well as Moshe’s ascent “to the mountain...,”⁴ which seemingly have no connection to the subject of *Mishpatim* {laws}.

Additionally: As known,⁵ *mitzvos* whose necessity is self-understood by human intellect are known as “*mishpatim*.” This is perplexing: Among the preparations for *Matan Torah* described at the end of our *parshah* were the Jewish people’s declarations, “We will observe,”⁶ and, “We will observe and we will understand.”⁷ Meaning, the Jewish people declared that they would **obey** (“we will observe”)⁸ Hashem, even **prior** to comprehending (“we will understand”), an approach that runs counter to the idea of *mishpatim* (**rational mitzvos**).

As such, the conclusion of this *parshah* is not only at variance with *mishpatim*, it runs counter to the idea of *mishpatim*.

¹ See at length *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 5, p. 57 ff.

² See *Shaar Hayichud VeHa’emunah*, ch. 1; et al.

³ *Shemos* 24:1 ff. (see Rashi).

⁴ *Shemos* 24:12 and Rashi’s commentary there.

⁵ Rashi’s commentary on *Shemos* 18:4, from *Toras Kohanim*; *Yoma* 67b; See the Torah commentaries on *Devarim* 6:20; commentaries on the *Haggadah* on the question of the Wise Son.

⁶ *Shemos* 24:3.

⁷ *Shemos* 24:7.

⁸ See *Shabbos* 88a ff.

This question is not limited to the narrative at the conclusion of the *parshah*; it even relates to the laws of the *parshah*. For the commandment, “Do not cook a young animal in its mother’s milk”⁹ is counted among these laws, yet this prohibition (of mixing milk and meat) is not a rational *mitzvah*,¹⁰ but rather, a *chok* {a suprarational decree}.¹¹

2.

ALL MITZVOS ARE BEYOND

In his commentary on the verse {beginning}, “And these are the laws,”¹² Rashi quotes the homiletic teaching of our Sages,¹³ “Just as the first {laws, i.e. the Ten Commandments} are from Sinai, these are also from Sinai.” The deeper meaning of this teaching is well known:¹⁴ “These also” — the *mishpatim* — should be observed because they are “**from Sinai**,” that is, because they are **commandments** of Hashem, and **not** (only) because they are rationally imperative.

On this basis, seemingly, we can explain why the Torah includes in this *parshah* — *Mishpatim* — the narrative in which the Jewish people say, “we will observe and we will understand,” and the prohibition of milk and meat, which is **not** one of the “*mishpatim*.” By including them in this *parshah*, the Torah hints that *mishpatim* (on a deeper level, similar to the prohibition concerning milk and meat) are beyond rationality — they are **decrees**. As such, their observance should be predicated on an acceptance of the yoke of Heaven (“we will observe and we will understand”) — for “I have enacted an edict,¹⁵ I have decreed a decree.”¹⁶

⁹ *Shemos* 23:19.

¹⁰ *Midrash Tanchuma*, “*Mishpatim*,” ch. 7 (end); *Behag*, end of “*Hilchos HaDayanim*”; *Rabbeinu Chananel*, “*Yoma*,” 67b; Rambam’s *Shemonah Perakim*, ch. 6 (quoted in *Derech Mitzvosecha*, “*Mitzvah Amah Ivriyah*” p. 84b), based on *Toras Kohanim*, “*Kedoshim*,” 20:26; *Mishneh Torah*, end of “*Hilchos Meilah*.”

¹¹ {*Chok* is singular, *chukim* is plural. The Hebrew terms are used throughout this translation.}

¹² *Shemos* 21:1. {These are the first words of this *parshah*.}

¹³ Rabbi Yishmael’s opinion in the *Mechilta*, at the beg. of our *parshah*.

¹⁴ See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 3, p. 899 ff.

¹⁵ {“*Chukah chakakti*” in the original Hebrew; *chukim* are suprarational decrees.}

¹⁶ *Midrash Rabbah*, beginning of *Chukas*.

3.

...BUT *MISHPATIM* ARE RATIONAL

However, in truth, this explanation is untenable for several reasons:

- a. A dissenting view is put forth in the *Mechilta*¹⁷ (and **only** this view is cited in *Midrash Rabbah*¹⁸ on our *parshah*) that “these laws were commanded at **Marah**.” According to this view, the Torah, at the beginning of our *parshah*, does not emphasize that “*mishpatim*” are “from Sinai” — and so the difficulty raised above remains.
- b. The **primary** issue: Even according to the view that “these also are from Sinai,” the name of this *parshah* is *Mishpatim*, a name that perforce emphasizes the rationality of these *mitzvos* (“*mishpatim*”) rather than their status as commandments “from Sinai” (“*chukim*”).

In other words, since the name of the entire *parshah* is *Mishpatim*, the nuance of this name leads to the opposite conclusion of the above explanation (that on a deeper level, “*mishpatim*” are “*chukim*”). Namely, on the contrary, the inner dimension of the prohibition concerning milk and meat, and moreso, of the general idea of the Jews’ declaration that “we will observe,” “we will observe and we will understand” also fall under the rubric of “*mishpatim*.”

4.

LAWS IN ORDER

We also need to clarify why *parshas Mishpatim* follows immediately after *parshas Yisro* {containing the narrative of}, *Matan Torah*, for seemingly:

¹⁷ Beg. of our *parshah* (Rabbi Yehudah’s opinion).

¹⁸ *Shemos Rabbah*, ch. 30, par. 3 (see commentary of *Maharzu*, loc. cit.); Similarly, see *Midrash Tanchuma*, “*Mishpatim*,” par. 3 (see commentary of *Eitz Yosef*, loc. cit.).

The primary novelty introduced by *Matan Torah* relates to *mitzvos* categorized as (“*eidos*”¹⁹ and) *chukim*, rather than *mishpatim*, for:

- a. Even if they would not have been commanded by Hashem, we would have had to observe *mishpatim* because they are necessary based on reason. As the *Gemara* says,²⁰ “{such commandments} which if they were not written {in Scripture}, it would have been proper to write them.”
- b. *Ramban* maintains that Noahides²¹ were obligated to uphold not only the appointment of judges, etc., but also “the laws of theft, price gouging, fraud, fair wages, guardianship, rape, seduction, the main categories of torts, personal injury, borrowing and lending, purchase and sale and the like.”²² Thus, according to *Ramban*, in particular, the Jewish people were previously commanded to observe the general category of *mishpatim*, including most of what *mishpatim* comprises, as **Noahides**.

[For this reason, the Torah was given by *Hashem descending upon Mt. Sinai*,²³ where “Hashem spoke all these words, to say”²⁴ {the Ten Commandments}, in a way that “all the people **saw** the sounds...,”²⁵ “seeing what is normally heard.”²⁶ Meaning, Torah was given through a Divine revelation that totally *transcended* human intellect.]

As such, *chukim* (and testimonial *mitzvos*), which express the novelty of *Matan Torah*, should have been commanded immediately after *Matan Torah*. Why does the Torah first begin with the *mishpatim*?

It is true that, in accordance with the first view of our Sages, the Torah has to present *mishpatim* first in order to emphasize that “these also are from Sinai.” Nonetheless, the emphasis of this teaching is that “these **also** are from Sinai.” As

¹⁹ {Testimonial *mitzvos*, which recall events in our history, such as eating *matzos* on Pesach.}

²⁰ *Yoma* 67b; *Toras Kohanim* and Rashi’s commentary on Vayikra 18:4.

²¹ {Lit., “children of Noah,” the halachic term for non-Jews. Prior to *Matan Torah*, the Jews also had the status of Noahides.}

²² *Ramban*’s commentary on the Torah to *Bereishis* 34:13.

²³ *Shemos* 19:20.

²⁴ *Shemos* 20:1.

²⁵ *Shemos* 20:15.

²⁶ Rashi’s commentary on *Shemos* 20:15.

such, the *mitzvos* with the primary characteristic reflecting “Sinai” (*chukim*) ought to have been written first.

This conundrum is more perplexing in light of what was mentioned above. Namely, at the end of *parshas Mishpatim* itself, the Torah describes events that took place both before and after *Matan Torah*, whereas the laws mentioned at the beginning of, and throughout most of, the *parshah*, were conveyed to Moshe only later (according to Rashi’s commentary), during his forty days on Mt. Sinai. So the laws in our *parshah* (following immediately after *Matan Torah*), described as “these are the *mishpatim*,” are **not** presented chronologically in the Torah [especially according to the view of the *Midrash* that “these are the *mishpatim*’ was said at *Marah*”].

In light of all of these points, the following points are clear:

- a. True, the revelation at *Matan Torah* itself does **not** share the same idea underlying “*mishpatim*,” for as mentioned, the Divine revelation at *Matan Torah* **transcended** human intellect. Nevertheless, the underlying idea of *Matan Torah* is expressed primarily in *mishpatim*.
- b. Conversely, following the discussion of {rational} *mishpatim*, the Torah presents {the suprarational element of} *Matan Torah* once again;
- c. Yet, this {suprarational element} itself is a component of the underlying idea of (*parshas*) *mishpatim*.

5.

FAITH FIRST?

We will understand this by prefacing with an explanation of the *Shelah*²⁷ on the verse,²⁸ “This is my G-d and I will enshrine Him {*ve’anvehu*}; my father's G-d and I will exalt Him” (which the Previous Rebbe cites in his talks). *Shelah*

²⁷ {Acronym for [Shnei Luchos HaBris](#), authored by Rabbi Yeshaya HaLevi Horowitz, c. 1555-1630.}

²⁸ *Shemos* 15:2.

explains:²⁹ “When He is “my G-d” — He becomes **my G-d** through grasping and comprehending Him, then, *ve’anvehu* {I will enshrine Him}, which can be read, *ani v’hu*.³⁰ Meaning, He and I are bound together, so to speak, for my knowledge of Him has been emotionally internalized. However, when my knowledge {of Hashem} is not based on reason, but rather on tradition, for He is *my father’s G-d*, then ‘I will exalt Him.’ Since He is lofty and exalted above me, I am distant from Him in the inner recesses of my heart.”³¹

This means that in addition to faith (which comes from “**my father**” — “the chain of tradition passed down from one person to the next”)³² a person must also possess “knowledge” {of Hashem}. With faith, a person’s sense is that Hashem is sublime and exalted above him (“I will exalt Him”), and (consequently) the person feels *distant from Him in the inner recesses of his heart*. Through “knowledge that is based on **comprehension, understanding** and comprehending Divinity (“**this** is my **G-d**”), a person achieves the state in which “He and I are **bound** together (“*ve’anvehu*”).”

This is also the intent of the verse, “Know the G-d of your father.”³³ Knowing that Hashem is the G-d of **your father** is insufficient; rather, you must “**know**” Him, “you yourself, based on *your* comprehension.”³⁴

Yet, this is still unclear: According to *Shelah’s* explanation, shouldn’t the order of the verse be reversed? “My father’s G-d — I will exalt Him,” should come first, followed by, “This is my G-d — I will enshrine Him.” For first and foremost, a person’s faith “comes from **my father**” — “the chain of tradition passed down from one person to the next,” and only afterward can a person attain “knowledge that is based on comprehension,” understanding of the Divine. (As *Shelah* puts it: “**In addition** to the faith in Hashem implanted in your heart by your father... you must know on your own by comprehension.”)

²⁹ *Likkutei Dibburim*, vol. 2, 341b. See also the *maamer Veyadaata* 5693 (in *Sefer HaMaamarim Kuntreisim* vol. 1, 264a. *Hemshech Ayin Beis*, ch. 163.

³⁰ {*Shelah* breaks up the word *v’anvehu* into *ani v’hu*, lit., “I and He.”}

³¹ *Shelah*, “*Asara Maamaros*,” first *maamar*.

³² *Shelah*, loc. cit.

³³ *Divrei Hayamim* I, 28:9.

³⁴ *Shelah*, loc. cit.

6.

FAITH BEFORE AND AFTER UNDERSTANDING

We can clarify this {order of the verses} based on the known concept³⁵ that even once a person integrates their faith with their “knowledge that comes from **comprehension**,” there must be (and there is) constantly a place for faith **beyond** comprehension. For since Hashem is infinite, as far as we can understand with our own intellect, there will always be levels of Divinity that lie beyond the pale of comprehension, and these levels can only be apprehended through faith.

This, then, is the meaning of the sequence of the verse, “This is my G-d — I will enshrine him; My father's G-d — I will exalt Him:” As mentioned, even after a person attains, “This is my G-d — I will enshrine him,” understanding, he must still maintain, “My father's G-d — I will exalt Him,” faith.

However, this is still not entirely satisfactory: While it is true that there is a level of faith to be attained **after** achieving “knowledge based on comprehension,” why is the {level of} faith that (**precedes** and) is the **basis** for one’s understanding not mentioned? This is the faith in “the G-d of my father” that a person will **thereafter** come to “**know**” (“This is my G-d”)!

7.

BRIDGING HEAVEN AND EARTH

The explanation of all the above: The purpose of *Matan Torah* was to annul the decree separating the spiritual and material realms. It was to facilitate “the material realm rising to the spiritual realm, and the spiritual realm descending to the material realm,”³⁶ fusing spirit and matter. The point is not for the material realm to have its {independent} existence **nullified** (by becoming spiritual), but for it to retain **its** existence as **material**, while at the same time, ascending and merging with the spiritual realm.

³⁵ See *Likkutei Torah*, “Va’eschanan,” 7b, ff.

³⁶ *Shemos Rabbah*, 12:3. *Tanchuma Va’era* 15.

This also explains why it did not suffice for “the spiritual realm to descend to the material realm” — “Hashem descended upon Mt. Sinai.” It was also necessary that “the material realm should rise to the spiritual realm.” What’s more, the *Midrash* makes a point to write that “the material realm should rise to the spiritual realm” first, **before** mentioning that “the spiritual realm should descend...” (though in practice, the sequence was reversed):

The spiritual realm’s descent to the material realm was initiated (not from within the material realm, but) by the spiritual realm (as the *Midrash* expressly emphasizes by saying that Hashem declared, “I am the initiator”). This caused the material realm to **relinquish** its reality, rather than bond {in its current state} with Divinity.

In particular, this nullification was true regarding the Jewish people: “The people **trembled...**”³⁷ “the people trembled when they saw it, and stood at a distance.”³⁸ And in general, this nullification affected the world at large: “The entire mountain trembled violently”³⁹ to the extent that “no bird chirped... the world was silent...”⁴⁰

In order for the aforementioned purpose of *Matan Torah* to be achieved — for the material realm, while retaining its **existence** as a lowly entity, to be connected and united with the spiritual realm — the material realm itself had to bring about the connection: “The material realm should **rise** to the spiritual realm.”

On the other hand, it was necessary for the process to begin with *the spiritual realm descending to the material realm* (as noted earlier in the *Midrash*, Hashem said “**I am the initiator,**’ as it says, ‘Hashem descended...’”), because the sense of surrender engendered thereby in the material realm enabled the material realm to ascend afterward to the spiritual realm through **its own efforts.**

³⁷ *Shemos* 19:16.

³⁸ *Shemos* 20:15.

³⁹ *Shemos* 19:18.

⁴⁰ *Shemos Rabbah*, end of ch. 29.

8.

BRIDGING FAITH AND UNDERSTANDING

These two points (“the spiritual realm descending to the material realm” and “the material realm rising to the spiritual realm”) correspond to a person’s *avodah* with *faith* and *understanding*:

Faith is not earned by a person’s (effort and toil); rather, it is gifted to a person from Above (or, as *Shelah* describes it, “the chain of tradition passed down from one person to the next”). Therefore, even when faith inspires a person, and motivates him to fulfill Hashem’s will, etc., he does not **unite** with Divinity as a result; his existence remains “distant from Him.”

Only when a person toils to understand G-dliness — meaning, he is self-motivated and on **his** terms — does he unify his own reality with Hashem, “He and I are bound together.”

Conversely, faith is the foundation of, and precursor to, the *avodah* of intellectual understanding — just as, “the spiritual realm descended...” is the precursor to, “the material realm ascended...,” as mentioned earlier. For the intellect, left to its own devices, is liable to err; a person’s self-love and his other biases can “bribe” him, swaying his intellect from the truth. Therefore, intellectual understanding must be grounded in faith and submission to Hashem, ensuring the veracity of a person’s understanding.

9.

FROM FAITH TO UNDERSTANDING

We can now understand the sequence of these *parshiyos*⁴¹ — *Parshas Yisro* and (afterwards) *parshas Mishpatim*: *Yisro* is the *parshah* of *Matan Torah*, focusing on what was granted **from Above**, “the spiritual realm descended to the material realm.” Concurrently, the Jewish people’s **faith** blossomed — expressed by their **surrender** to Hashem: “The people trembled.”

⁴¹ {Resolving the question in sec. 4.}

However, after the revelation from Above of (*parshas Yisro* and) *Matan Torah*, then the *avodah* of “the material realm should ascend to the spiritual realm” began (primarily), bringing about the **union** of the **reality** of Creation, with Divinity.

This process is reflected in the commandment-category of *mishpatim*, **rational mitzvos**, through which Hashem’s wisdom is grasped by mortal intellect. This {intellectual comprehension} brings about a “wondrous unity,”⁴² causing Hashem’s wisdom to permeate a person’s entire **being**.

By this **union** of the spiritual and material realms, the intent of *Matan Torah* is fulfilled.

10.

SUBMISSION VS. COMPREHENSION

This also explains the (deeper) distinction between the interpretation, “these also are from Sinai” — which is perforce consonant with the level of *pshat* since Rashi cites it in his Torah commentary — and the view of the *Midrash* that “these *mishpatim* were commanded at Marah”:

When a person begins his {Torah} study at the level of *pshat*, meaning, when he **begins** to serve Hashem, and (presently) has no grasp of Divinity, or feelings of love and awe, etc., then fulfilling the *mishpatim* based on his intellect is insufficient. Ultimately, too, it will be unbeneficial, since his animal soul is still in control.

Therefore, first and foremost, he must know and feel that “these also are from Sinai” — that even the *mishpatim* have the force of the Ten Commandments given at Sinai, accompanied by all the clamor of “thunder and

⁴² *Tanya*, ch. 5.

lightning....”⁴³ The tumult at *Matan Torah* caused the people to tremble; they were frightened, and lost their sense of self.

The parallel to this in a person’s *avodah* is expressed in the teaching, “A person should always incite⁴⁴ the good inclination to fight against the evil inclination”⁴⁵ — the shrieking of the Divine soul, and its “anger” at the animal soul, overwhelms the animal soul, making it surrender.

However, when a person advances and studies the homiletic layer of Torah exegesis — corresponding to advanced stages in his Divine service, characterized by feelings of love and awe, and contemplation {of Divinity}, etc.⁴⁶ — the opposite is true: The person must fulfill the *mishpatim* even without needing the incitement of the thunder and lightning of *Matan Torah*. Instead, he must be able to fulfill them because they were “commanded at *Marah*.” Meaning, his **intellect** dictates compliance with the *mishpatim*.

True, the *parshiyos* also follow the same **sequence** according to the *Midrash* — *parshas Yisro* precedes *parshas Mishpatim* because understanding must also be built on a foundation of faith and submission to Hashem (as explained above in section 8). However, this only relates to the **foundation** of our comprehension, which is based on “Sinai,” but the *avodah* called for by *mishpatim* is based (not on submission and “Sinai,” but) on the power of one’s **intellect**.

11.

“I DON’T WANT!”

Our Sages taught, “A person should not say, ‘I do not want to {violate various prohibitions}. Rather, ‘I want to, but what can I do? My Father in heaven

⁴³ *Shemos* 19:16.

⁴⁴ {In the Hebrew original, “יִרְגֵז .”}

⁴⁵ *Berachos* 5a.

⁴⁶ For homiletics and allusions (*drush* and *remez*) correspond to the spiritual worlds of *Beriah* and *Yetzirah*. See *Tanya* ch. 39, that love and awe are related to *Yetzirah*, and contemplation is related to *Beriah*.

has forbidden me.”⁴⁷ *Rambam*⁴⁸ says that this teaching only applies to *chukim*. Regarding *mishpatim*, however, a person must say, “I don’t want to,” for saying, “I want to” {transgress *mitzvos* compelled also by reason} indicates that a person’s character is corrupt.

Seemingly {this this begs the question}: Doesn’t *Chassidus* teach that a person must fulfill *mishpatim* out of a sense of disciplined obedience to Hashem, in the same way that he fulfills *chukim*?

However, this point is clarified based on what was discussed above: Our *avodah* must be based on disciplined obedience to Hashem; we dare not depend on mortal intellect and emotions. Moreover, were we to fulfill *mishpatim* solely because of their compelling rationale, the most central element of *mitzvah* observance would be lacking: **servicing Hashem**. Everything that a Jew is involved with must be predicated on the commandment, “I am Hashem your L-rd.”

Conversely, the intent of *mishpatim* is for these *mitzvos* to permeate all of a person’s inner faculties. Consequently, the person **himself** (not because of his **self-effacement**, but rather, because of who **he is**) becomes disgusted by evil, and declares loudly, “I don’t want to!”

12.

TOTAL INTEGRATION

True, there is an advantage in *avodah* that is grounded in “knowledge based on comprehension,” for only in this way can a person become **united** with Hashem’s wisdom. Nevertheless, since mortal intellect is finite, it is clear that this union is limited to the levels of Divinity that are accessible by a person and that a person’s intellect can grasp. However, the purpose of *Matan Torah* — the union of the spiritual and the material realms — is that spiritual levels beyond human comprehension, even those that are incomprehensible, should also be

⁴⁷ *Sifra*, ch. 9, par. 12.

⁴⁸ *Shmona Prakim*, ch. 6.

united with the material realm, And this union should happen without {the material realm} becoming **nullified**. Rather, **these** “spiritual realms” should (also) permeate the reality {of the material realm}.

This is the novelty introduced by {the stage}, “My father's G-d and I will exalt Him,” which follows {the stage}, “This is my G-d and I will enshrine Him”: A faith based on “the chain of tradition passed down from one person to the next” (and that serves as a prelude to, “this is my G-d and I will enshrine Him”) requires no effort on the person’s part; therefore, it does not become internalized, as explained earlier. Accordingly, it {the preliminary stage} is not mentioned in **the song of the Jewish people**, for it was not a product of **their own** effort (as was the “song”); rather, this ability was granted from Above.

In contrast, after a person achieves **utter** unity with Hashem’s wisdom — “He and I are **bound together**” both as one, to the point where they are {symbolized} together in **one** word (“*ve’anvehu*”) — the person reaches a stage where even those levels that are beyond human comprehension and can only be grasped when “I will exalt Him,” expressing faith, do not nullify his selfhood. Rather {the faith implicit in} “I will exalt Him” permeates his being. Since the person’s very being has become **united** with Divinity, he does not lose his sense of self, even in the face of levels that the intellect cannot grasp.

This explains⁴⁹ why the end of *parshas Mishpatim* speaks of *Matan Torah* (“We will do and we will understand”), and beforehand discusses the prohibition concerning milk and meat (a *chok*). For when the underlying concept of *mishpatim* is integrated by a person — when a person’s intellect is united with Hashem’s wisdom — then also *chukim* (even as expressed by, “We will do and we will understand,” and by *Matan Torah*) become “***mishpatim***” — united and integrated with a person’s very being.

⁴⁹ {Resolving the question of sec. 1.}

13.

CHASSIDUS CHABAD

This {order} applies, in general, to *Matan Torah: Parshas Yisro*, which describes revelation from Above, beyond the grasp of mortals, happens first. This is followed by *parshas Mishpatim* describing **man's avodah** on two levels: First comes *mishpatim* in their simple sense — **rational** mitzvos (but grounded in {the thematic elements of} *parshas Yisro*: faith and surrender to Hashem). This stage is followed by *chukim* and *Matan Torah* (not as they **nullify** a person's being, but rather) as they permeate a person's entire being (*mishpatim*).

Similarly, this was the order in which the inner dimension of Torah, the teachings of *Chassidus*, were revealed: First, the generality of *Chassidus* was revealed, such that it could not be grasped intellectually — as disclosed by the Baal Shem Tov. His primary emphasis was on the element of faith, “A righteous person lives by his faith,” as is known.

However, the goal of *Chassidus* is that Chassidus suffuse a person's very being — his intellect, and (thereby) his inner faculties. Thus, the teachings of *Chassidus Chabad* were subsequently revealed by the Alter Rebbe, who telescoped *Chassidus* into the intellectual faculties of the soul, so that everyone could **understand** these teachings, to the point that they would permeate a person's entire being.

[This is the meaning of the saying of the Berditchever Rav:⁵⁰ “We all ate from one plate, but the Litvak⁵¹ (the Alter Rebbe) took the cream.” For *Chassidus Chabad* accomplishes the aforementioned goal of *Chassidus* (similar to the above explanation of *mishpatim*).]

A person first obtains an understanding of Divinity to the extent that “He and I are **bound together**.” Then, he eventually realizes that “the ultimate

⁵⁰ *Toras Shalom* (by the Rebbe Rashab), p. 47. {Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, a colleague of the Alter Rebbe and fellow student of the *Maggid* of Mezeritch.}

⁵¹ {Yiddish for *Lithuanian*.}

knowledge is to know that You **cannot** be known”⁵² — even the concepts that he *does* understand are essentially **beyond** understanding. Moreover, even the concepts that to begin with are entirely beyond a person’s understanding do not remain abstract, but rather, they are keenly felt within him,⁵³ similar to *mishpatim*.

By toiling to comprehend Torah, in general, and *Chassidus Chabad*, in particular, we will merit to study the Torah of Moshiach, whose teaching will be in a manner of “sight,”⁵⁴ until, “the glory of Hashem shall be revealed, and all flesh together shall **see** it, for the mouth of Hashem has spoken.”⁵⁵

-From *sichos* delivered on Shabbos *parshas Mishpatim*, 5725 and 5736
(1965 and 1976)

⁵² See *Bechinos Olam*, sec. 7, ch. 2; *Ikkarim* (by R. Yosef Albo), “*Maamar 2*,” ch. 30; *Shelah* 191:2.

⁵³ Akin to what the Rebbe Rashab said (cited in *Sefer HaSichos* 5705 pg. 83): “When a person sits alone in his room together with *Likkutei Torah*, he senses the Essence, *Ein Sof*.” Though this is only feasible for extraordinary people, still, the fact that the Previous Rebbe disseminated this story and it was published, etc., makes it clear (similar to what it says in *Tanya*, ch. 44) that at some level, in some small way, it is applicable to every single one of us.

⁵⁴ *Shaar HaEmunah*, ch. 60; *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5699, 2nd discourse entitled, “*Vayedaber Elokim*.”

⁵⁵ *Yeshayah* 40:5.