What Makes You Feel Alive?

Yitzchak, Delight, and the Life Within Torah

Full revised teaching manuscript | Approximately 50-55 minutes

[1] Based on Rav Shimshon Dovid Pinkus, Tiferes Shimshon, Bereishis, Vayeira, printed pp. 225-235. Source numbers follow the accompanying two-page handout.

Opening: Six Questions

Before we begin, I want to put six questions on the table.[1]

On Monday night, we explored the laughter that comes when Hashem brings about something we thought impossible. This morning, we are exploring another dimension: **what we find delight in, and what that delight does to us.**

First: where do we see Yitzchak's laughter? We understand why his birth brought laughter and joy to Avraham and Sarah. After so many years, they finally had a child. But Yitzchak is his name. It must express something about his own life, beyond the joy his birth brought to his parents.

And the quality we associate with Yitzchak seems to point in another direction entirely:

פַּחַד יִצְחָק

"The Fear of Yitzchak."

His middah is gevurah. We think of awe, restraint, and the extraordinary seriousness of the Akeidah. **How does laughter belong at the centre of that life?** How do the Fear of Yitzchak and the name Yitzchak fit together?

Second: how does Hashem delight in His own Torah? Look at Source 1, the complete pasuk in Mishlei:

וָאֶהְיֶה אֶצְלוֹ אָמוֹן וָאֶהְיֶה שַׁעֲשׁוּעִים יוֹם יוֹם מְשַׂחֶקֶת לְפָנָיו בְּכָל עֵת׃

"I was beside Him as a master craftsman; I was a delight day after day, playing before Him at all times."

"Master craftsman" follows the Midrashic reading of the word amon. Chazal apply this description to the Torah.

We enjoy learning because we discover something or resolve a difficulty. Hashem already knows everything. **What does it mean that He delights in His own Torah?** And what does "playing before Him" mean?

Third: won't Olam Haba become boring? We are told that Olam Haba is the delight of being close to Hashem. We will be with Hashem forever.

A person may hesitate to ask this, but he wonders: "I understand that it must be wonderful. But forever? Won't I eventually become accustomed to it? Won't it become boring?"

In our experience, even something exciting becomes familiar. What are we missing? **What kind of delight can continue forever without being exhausted?**

Fourth: what should a child learn first? Suppose I asked you: "We are about to introduce a child to Torah. What should we teach first?" What would you suggest?

Perhaps practical things: how to make a brachah, keep Shabbos, or behave toward others. Give the child something understandable, something he can use.

Instead, Chazal tell us to begin a child's learning of Chumash with korbanos: offerings he cannot presently bring and procedures he cannot presently perform. And when we begin Bereishis, we encounter the creation of heaven and earth, darkness over the deep, and the spirit of Hashem hovering over the waters. Matters whose inner meaning is far beyond a young child.

Why begin with korbanos and the mysteries of creation? What are we trying to give the child through this first encounter with Torah?

Fifth: why didn't Chazal devote themselves to inventions? People ask: if Chazal possessed such extraordinary wisdom, why didn't they discover electricity or develop the car and airplane? These inventions transformed everyday life. They represent astonishing intelligence.

Why was developing inventions like these not the pursuit of our greatest chachamim? What were they seeking through their wisdom? **What does our question assume about what makes wisdom valuable?**

Sixth: why so much available time, and so much entertainment, before Mashiach? Think about how people once lived. So much of the day was consumed by obtaining food, preparing it, earning a livelihood, and attending to necessities that we can now manage far more easily.

Then darkness came. Before electric lighting, the night itself sharply limited activity. A person finished his work, ate, and went to sleep.

Now we have electric light and machines that perform work that once demanded hours of physical effort. People certainly still work hard. But we have extraordinary conveniences and opportunities to remain occupied long after the working day ends.

What have we done with that available time? An enormous world of entertainment has grown up to fill it. Games, films, screens: there is always another experience available. Brilliant people work to make the next game more absorbing, the next picture more vivid, the next experience harder to leave.

Why has Hashem brought the world to this point in the generations leading toward Mashiach? **What are we meant to understand, and do, with these possibilities?** We will examine how Chazal's description of that period illuminates the development, rather than pretend to explain every purpose of Divine history.

Pause.

These questions seem to lead in different directions. Let us begin with a child and a ball.

1. The Ball Has Not Become Lighter

A little boy is sitting in the garden. Ask him to take a ball from one end to the other. Then ask him to bring it back. Now take it there again. Now bring it back again.

He will soon want to know what you want from him. He has no strength for this. Why must he keep carrying your ball?

Now let him play with it. He runs after it, brings it back, throws it, and runs again. He may expend much more energy. And when you tell him to stop, he asks for a few more minutes.

The ball has not become lighter. His relationship to moving it has changed.

We adults recognize this too. A person is exhausted after work, but somehow finds energy for an absorbing game. Clearly, enjoyment cannot simply mean avoiding effort. Sometimes enjoyment makes us want the effort to continue.

What is the child enjoying? He is running, moving, using his powers. He is experiencing his own vitality. Beneath the activity is something we often overlook: **the pleasure of being alive.**

Imagine someone who almost drowned. At the last moment, he reaches the surface and takes a breath. What is so wonderful about that breath? He has been breathing all his life. But now he knows what he is receiving.

Or imagine a patient who has received a terrible diagnosis. Then the doctor discovers that the samples were confused: he is healthy. The world has not suddenly supplied him with a new luxury. Yet what joy! Life itself has become precious to him.

We usually fail to notice that pleasure because it is constant. Work, worries, and pain cover it over. A small child often experiences it more directly. He does not require an achievement to justify his happiness in moving and being alive.

We are beginning to identify something deeper than a taste for a particular game. **The game awakens a capacity that was already within him.**

2. What Does Sha'ashua Mean?

Let us define the word before we use it any further. Look at Source 2.

שַׁעֲשׁוּעַ

Delight; involvement treasured for itself.

The explanation connects the word to turning toward, as in:

וַיִּשַׁע ה׳ אֶל הֶבֶל וְאֶל מִנְחָתוֹ

"Hashem turned toward Hevel and his offering."

Ordinarily, I turn toward something because it will get me somewhere else. I work to receive wages. I use the wages to buy food. Each activity points toward a further result.

The doubled expression is explained here as turning toward the thing itself, within itself. I am not looking past it toward an outside benefit. Being involved is already what I want.

The child is not thinking: "I will endure this game so that afterward I can receive the real pleasure." He wants to play now.

That is the distinction. A game may have rules, a score, and a winner. But the pleasure need not wait for an accomplishment outside the game. The playing itself gives him the experience of his own powers and life.

> **In sha'ashua, the involvement itself is precious. It is not merely a price paid for something that comes afterward.**

Keep that definition in mind. We will need it when we speak about Torah. But first, why should life itself contain such sweetness?

3. You Cannot Store Tomorrow's Life

Hashem is called the living God. He is the Source of life. There is a difference between life's necessities and life itself.

You can put tomorrow's food in the refrigerator. You can store clothing, money, and even oxygen. But can you put tomorrow's life in a container? Can you tell Hashem: "I have enough life in reserve. I will manage on my own for a while"?

Every moment is newly received. Being alive this moment does not make me independent for the next.

The pleasure of life is rooted in its Source. Hashem is the source of goodness and delight; the sweetness of being alive is connected with the life we continually receive from Him.

That does not mean that the child running after a ball is consciously thinking about Hashem. Nor does it make every entertainment holy. **We must distinguish the source of a capacity from the direction in which we use it.**

There is a further point in Source 3. We know the expression:

וְהַחָכְמָה מֵ**אַיִן** תִּמָּצֵא

"But wisdom: from where can it be found?"

That is the straightforward question in the pasuk. Here we are developing another reading: **wisdom emerges from** אַיִן. What does that mean?

אַיִן can designate a Divine root beyond what our minds can grasp. It does not mean that nothing exists there. It means that our intellect cannot contain that reality in its categories.

In this spiritual order, the root of delight lies above the level of wisdom. Wisdom emerges from that higher source. We are not saying that every pleasant feeling we experience is lofty. We are describing the root of the capacity, before examining its expressions below.

So there is more to a person than what his mind has successfully worked out. There is a root of life and delight deeper than his intellectual comprehension. Now we can return to the Torah's description of itself as Hashem's delight.

4. Hashem's Delight in Torah

Our second question was: how does Hashem delight in His own Torah? He already knows everything.

Notice what that question assumes. It assumes that the pleasure of Torah must be the pleasure of acquiring information. Yesterday there was a gap; today it has been filled. But that cannot explain Hashem's delight.

Look at Source 4. What does the Torah's delight mean Above? Hashem delighted in Torah before creating the world. Its delight therefore cannot be explained only as a means of producing a useful result within creation.

Torah is profoundly united with Hashem. Just as play awakens the human experience of life itself, Hashem's delight in Torah is, **so to speak, delight in His own Divine reality.**

We must speak humbly. These words do not reduce Hashem to a human being enjoying a pastime. They do not suggest that He is bored, acquires new knowledge, or needs something outside Himself to complete Him.

They direct us beyond those assumptions. Torah is His delight in itself. Its deepest significance is not exhausted by a result beyond it.

That answers the question: we had imagined delight as receiving something missing. We are speaking about delight bound up with Torah's unity with Hashem Himself.

Now consider what it means that He has given us this Torah.

5. Learning in Order to Do - and Learning That Is Itself Life

We must make a distinction carefully.

A person must learn with a commitment to fulfil the Torah. If I learn that Hashem requires something of me, I do not say: "I enjoyed studying it, but I have no intention of doing it." Pleasure does not excuse disobedience.

But that does not mean every sugya must produce an immediately practical instruction before its learning has value.

A person learns the laws of an offering he cannot presently bring. He learns a difficult passage in Taharos. No practical ruling for his kitchen or business emerges that afternoon. Has he therefore accomplished nothing? Of course not. He has fulfilled the mitzvah of learning Torah.

And we are now discovering something about the inner life of that mitzvah.

> **Learning in order to do means that we must obey the Torah we learn. It does not mean learning is merely preparation for something more valuable than itself.**

Look at Source 5. When someone delights in Torah itself, without looking only toward a future benefit, he absorbs its essence into himself. He becomes attached to Torah; Torah begins to form the person he is.

There is intellectual pleasure in resolving a difficulty. That is real. But we must not reduce the whole experience to the successful answer. A person can love being involved in Torah even while the question remains difficult.

He wants to understand these words. He comes back to them. He treasures the opportunity to learn them. His involvement is becoming a relationship.

Because Torah is united with Hashem, this is more than enjoying an impressive subject. Through the Torah, he is becoming attached to Hashem.

We have answered more than why learning can be enjoyable. We have explained why its enjoyment can reach so deeply into the learner.

But that brings us to a disturbing question. If delight creates attachment, what happens when we invest it elsewhere?

6. What We Take Into Ourselves

Let us talk about the spiritual worlds. Our world contains a great diversity of particulars: time, place, living creatures, and the forces of nature. These have spiritual roots. Their existence is given through an ordered creation, not independently of Hashem.

The higher worlds are not simply distant locations. We are speaking about levels in the order through which Hashem gives existence. Begin here, with our physical world. Above it is the world of the malachim. Above that is the level called the Throne of Glory. The Throne expresses Hashem's kingship and the giving of existence through the malachim. And these levels are not the limit: the order extends higher, beyond our comprehension.

At each level there is a complete order, with the particulars appropriate to that world. The worlds are not independent sources of life. All receive from Hashem. As we ascend, the Divine root is less concealed; as the order descends toward physical existence, that root becomes increasingly hidden.

Now follow the capacity for delight through that descent. At its highest root, beyond our grasp, it belongs to Divine life and delight. At each level it appears according to that world's character. Here, where spirituality is concealed, the same capacity can attach a person with tremendous intensity to an experience of emptiness. Its power has not become trivial because its object has become trivial.

This matters because the capacity we have been discussing does not disappear when it descends into our physical experience. Delight can attach us to something at a very deep level. **We must therefore ask what we are becoming attached to.**

Consider how deeply this reaches. Empty amusement does not merely leave us with fewer minutes for learning. Through delighting in emptiness, the emptiness itself gains a place within us.

Compare that with Source 5: through delighting in Torah, Torah enters us. The structure of attachment can be similar while the contents and spiritual effects are opposite.

This does not mean that every moment of rest or every family game has the same character. Our subject is the absorbing pleasure in which something becomes an inward world of its own. Nor should we rename the Divine source of life as evil. The danger lies in attaching ourselves to a degraded expression of that capacity.

Now we are ready to understand why the inventions discussion belongs here.

7. How Delight Calls Forth Wisdom

Our fifth question asked why Chazal did not devote their extraordinary wisdom to the inventions that transformed everyday life.

First, acknowledge the wisdom involved. Discovering electricity and building sophisticated machines require tremendous intelligence. The wisdom is real. Dismissing technical achievement as stupidity would leave the question unanswered.

But technical wisdom concerns the powers and workings of this world. Torah wisdom has another reach and purpose: attachment to Hashem. We cannot measure the greatness of the chachamim merely by asking which machines their learning produced.

Then comes the deeper question: **what calls a person's intelligence into action? What does his heart want that his mind sets out to supply?**

Electric lighting extends the hours during which people can be active. That power can serve genuine needs. But the passage asks us to examine what fills the expanded time: idle talk, indulgence, and increasingly elaborate entertainment.

Once there is an appetite for a new experience, intelligence is recruited to produce it. Better communication, vivid pictures, films, and ways of travelling: technical power can multiply the opportunities for a person to immerse himself in the physical world.

This is a spiritual diagnosis of a use and direction of wisdom. It is not a complete historical account of every invention, and it does not deny their uses in healing, safety, and necessary work.

Now return to the pasuk in Source 6:

וְהַחָכְמָה מֵאַיִן תִּמָּצֵא

"Wisdom emerges from **אַיִן**_ *- the deeper reading we are examining.*

Earlier, **אַיִן**_ designated the Divine source beyond intellectual comprehension. Here, in the corresponding movement below, it describes amusement with no worthwhile end beyond itself. The desire for that experience brings forth ingenuity to supply it.

Above, wisdom emerges from a reality beyond our grasp. Below, remarkable wisdom can emerge in pursuit of spiritual emptiness.

The two meanings are not interchangeable. Hashem is not emptiness. The comparison concerns the pattern: delight stands at the root and draws wisdom into its service. The spiritual direction makes all the difference.

That answers our inventions question. Chazal's greatness was not measured by developing more mastery of physical experience. Their wisdom and delight were directed toward Torah and attachment to Hashem.

Now return to our sixth question. Chazal describe the period before Mashiach with these words:

בֵּית וַעַד יִהְיֶה לִזְנוּת

"The meeting house will become a place of immorality."

The place associated with the gathering of wisdom becomes an instrument of degraded pleasure. The claim goes beyond wisdom being absent. **Wisdom itself can be employed to multiply empty experience.**

Have we now answered why this appears before Mashiach? We have explained the pattern Chazal describe: the world can develop extraordinary wisdom while directing it toward increasingly empty pleasure. But identifying that pattern is not yet a complete explanation of why Hashem permits it at this particular point in history.

Here is a further thought I would suggest. The life toward which we are moving is not an eternity of producing and acquiring things. It is the delight of attachment to Hashem. Modern conveniences confront us, on a small and imperfect scale, with a revealing question: when some of the pressure of necessary work is removed, what do we want our lives to contain?

If we can imagine no answer except more stimulation, that exposes something we need to repair before we can understand the delight for which we hope. The capacity for sustained delight is visible all around us. The question is where it will become attached.

That is a suggested application, not a claim that Chazal explicitly give this as the reason for technological development. **The practical responsibility is clear: we must learn what to do with life when we are not merely struggling to maintain it.** More available time does not choose its own contents. Greater intelligence does not choose its own purpose.

> **The question is not only how brilliant we have become. What are we asking our brilliance to provide?**

That is why the entertainment world matters to this class. It reveals the strength of the appetite. And it forces us to ask where we are teaching that appetite to turn.

8. Perhaps We Have Misunderstood the Child

Now let us return to the child's first learning. Our fourth question was: why korbanos? Why the mysteries of Bereishis?

If the first objective were practical independence, we would select immediately useful instructions. If the only objective were an accessible moral lesson, we might begin with Avraham listening to Hashem.

But Chazal say:

יָבוֹאוּ טְהוֹרִים וְיִתְעַסְּקוּ בְּמַעֲשֵׂה טְהוֹרִים

"Let the pure ones come and engage in the matters of the pure."

Look at the fuller passage in Source 7. The child's involvement with korbanos brings their purity deeply into his neshamah. His learning is not exhausted by the information he can presently apply.

There is a question I would add about ourselves. When we decide what a child will enjoy, whose experience are we consulting?

We adults may have spent years becoming dependent on external stimulation. Something must be novel, immediately useful, entertaining, or rewarding before we will give it our attention. We then assume that the child must require the same thing.

But look at that little child running around. He can still delight in the exercise of life itself. Perhaps we should hesitate before making our acquired tastes the measure of his capacity for attachment.

We may be imposing our limitations on a neshamah that is still open to something we have become less able to feel.

This is not permission to teach badly. The child needs warmth, clarity, and teaching suited to his understanding. We do not make something more spiritual by making it needlessly incomprehensible.

But we also do not measure every Torah passage by its immediate practical usefulness. A child can become attached through the learning before he understands all its depth.

That is the answer to our question. Korbanos are not a mistaken choice because the child cannot presently perform them. Their Torah can bring purity into him now. And Bereishis is not empty of value because he cannot explain the mysteries of creation. Through involvement in those words, his neshamah encounters Torah whose depth far exceeds his present understanding.

This extends to adults learning Kodshim and Taharos throughout their lives. We do not ask only: "When will you finish so that you can use all this?" **The learning is already doing something to the learner.**

9. But I Am Not That Child Anymore

Here an adult may say: "That is beautiful. But I am not that child. I have spent decades developing other tastes. I know that Torah connects me to Hashem. When I open the sefer, I do not necessarily feel it.

"You are describing delight. I experience a duty. And sometimes I struggle even to concentrate. How do I get from here to there?"

We must take that seriously. We cannot answer by asking him to announce a feeling he does not possess. Nor should he conclude that his learning is worthless until the feeling arrives. **The mitzvah remains a mitzvah while we work on developing our taste.**

There is a teaching in Source 8:

אֵין אָדָם לוֹמֵד תּוֹרָה אֶלָּא מִמָּקוֹם שֶׁלִּבּוֹ חָפֵץ

"A person learns Torah only from the place his heart desires."

Interest is not the enemy of the attachment we are describing. It can be the entrance.

Choose a subject that draws you, a teacher who helps you understand, or a chavrusa with whom you can ask without embarrassment. We are not proving our spiritual seriousness by deliberately selecting material that we cannot enter.

But then we need a second movement. Once a question has attracted us, can we remain with the Torah beyond the first excitement?

Suppose you hear a beautiful explanation at a class. It catches your attention. Instead of immediately looking for the next interesting idea, open the source afterward. Read its words. Ask why it says this rather than that. Come back the next day and explain it to someone else.

At first, you wanted the answer. Now you are beginning to live with the passage.

This is where chazarah, review, becomes so important. We must distinguish encountering something new from developing a chiddush. If I hear an explanation I have never heard before, it is new to me. But developing a chiddush means discovering a depth or connection that I had not previously understood.

How does that happen? Often by returning to the very Torah I thought I already knew. I read the words again. A detail troubles me. I compare one line with another. I try to explain the passage and discover that I have not understood it as fully as I imagined.

I return again. Something opens.

The chiddush grows out of the chazarah. I have not merely collected another piece of information. Through sustained involvement, I have come to see more deeply into the Torah that was already before me.

> **Chazarah is not the opposite of chiddush. Returning to the Torah is a way of discovering the depth we had not yet reached.**

Not every review produces a new insight, and its value does not depend on doing so. But we should not describe review as though it excludes discovery. The deeper attachment itself can prepare the way for understanding that was previously beyond us.

Now we can connect this with **אַיִן**._We spoke about wisdom emerging from a root beyond the mind's present grasp. In our application, the chiddush is a moment when something previously concealed becomes accessible. Returning with attention, effort, and attachment can bring us to a depth that our first encounter did not disclose.

The new understanding is not created by ignoring the words or inventing whatever appeals to us. It must remain faithful to the Torah before us. But through that faithfulness, our understanding can grow beyond its previous boundaries.

Shabbos gives us a precious setting for this. During the week, we are so often concerned with what we must produce and what comes next. On Shabbos, we can return to a passage without treating it simply as another task to finish.

Take something you have learned. Review it slowly. Ask what it is really saying. Learning Chassidus can also help us return to familiar Torah and avodah with attention to their inward meaning, and then carry that awareness back into our learning of nigleh, the revealed Torah.

We are not saying that Shabbos excludes new material. **We are distinguishing the pursuit of another novelty from the development of a deeper understanding.** A chiddush can be born precisely through returning, contemplating, and becoming more deeply attached.

Think of love. A description can convey something real, but knowing its taste from within adds a dimension that description alone cannot supply. Likewise, learning can teach us that Torah connects us to Hashem before we recognize the taste of that connection in our own lives.

We do not wait outside until a feeling arrives. We learn, we return, and we keep Shabbos. Our faithful involvement already matters. Sometimes, through that involvement, the words we knew begin to reach us in a way we had not known.

> **The words were there before. Through returning to them, something previously hidden can open within us.**

This is our practical application. Begin with a small, manageable period of attentive learning. Let it have continuity. Not every minute must produce a fresh sensation. A difficulty is not necessarily a signal to change the subject. Sometimes it is an invitation to become more involved.

At the same time, do not confuse persistent confusion with spiritual greatness. Ask for help. Find a clearer explanation. The aim is real engagement, not endurance of avoidable bewilderment.

And make a little space around that learning. If every quiet moment has already been assigned to another stream of entertainment, Torah is being asked to compete on conditions that leave little room for another kind of taste. Choose one interval that will remain available for the sefer.

Finally, ask Hashem for what you lack. When we say, "Make Your Torah sweet in our mouths," we can mean: "I know where I am. I know what I have trained myself to enjoy. Please help me discover what I have not yet learned to taste."

These are beginnings, not a promise of an overnight transformation. Learning that interests the heart and learning that attaches us to Hashem need not be rivals. We begin through the doorway available to us, while seeking a relationship deeper than the next exciting idea.

10. Yitzchak's Life - and a Delight That Does Not End

Now we can return to our first and third questions together.

Where was Yitzchak's laughter? His name describes his own life of attachment to Hashem. He was not simply the child whose parents once laughed. His life was filled with the delight we have been discussing.

That does not require a frivolous temperament. Delight in Hashem can exist together with awe and gevurah. The name describes the inward object of his delight, not the absence of seriousness in his conduct. We are explaining why the two need not contradict; we are not pretending to exhaust the meaning of his gevurah.

Consider Yitzchak's extraordinary attachment: Hashem's name was associated with him during his lifetime, as though he already belonged to the life of Olam Haba while still here.

But won't Olam Haba become boring? Look at Source 9. The tzaddikim continue receiving more Torah and more kedushah. The delight is not one finite sensation played repeatedly after its contents have been exhausted. It is an attachment whose depth continues to unfold.

Let us take a very familiar example. Consider the ingenuity behind computer games. There are sounds, pictures, vivid colours, experiences, adventures, and the desire to win. Their designers study what holds a person's attention.

Someone becomes absorbed in the screen. Hours pass like a moment. He does not want to stop; he does not complain that he has spent too long in the experience.

We are not equating its spiritual value with Torah. We are being given a small comparison for the intensity of involvement. If we recognize such sustained absorption in a limited, manufactured experience, we have at least an entrance to imagining a far higher delight.

Yitzchak's attachment was to Hashem and His Torah. The pleasure of Olam Haba reaches immeasurably beyond the mashal. We should not assume that because our familiar pleasures become exhausted, attachment to Hashem must reach the same limit.

Our opening question about eternity assumed a finite attraction repeated forever. We are describing continuing enrichment through Torah and kedushah. That is a different kind of life.

Before we draw the final distinction, let us bring this back to two people. One story shows how a person can begin to taste Torah. The other shows how a daily responsibility can become a treasured privilege.

11. The Boy Who Had Not Yet Tasted It

Rav Shach had returned exhausted from giving a shiur. A group of prominent donors was waiting to meet him. Then a father arrived, asking for a brachah for his teenage son. The boy had no interest in learning.

Rav Shach asked to meet him.

The teenager explained that he neither understood nor enjoyed his learning. He wanted to leave yeshiva and go to work.

There was a sugya in Bava Metzia that he was studying. Rav Shach had a Gemara brought, and began learning it with him. Carefully. He drew the boy's attention to the words and the questions. They continued for an hour and a half.

Think about who was waiting outside. Think about the exhaustion with which he had returned. Yet he stayed with this boy and this Gemara.

Gradually, the teenager became absorbed in the learning. When Rav Shach afterward asked whether he enjoyed it, the boy said he wished he could always feel what he had felt then. Rav Shach kissed him and gave him a brachah for success.

Pause.

The Gemara had not been replaced. The boy had encountered this learning before. What had changed was his ability to enter it. Someone had helped him discover its questions, its precision, its life.

He had said that he did not enjoy learning. He had not yet discovered what there was to enjoy.

We should not turn one story into a promise that every difficulty disappears in an afternoon. But it gives us a very practical beginning. Before concluding that Torah cannot speak to us, have we found a way to enter it? Have we given ourselves the help that we would want that boy to receive?

12. A Gift Every Single Day

Rav Aryeh Elyashiv described helping his grandfather, Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, for eighteen years. He helped protect his grandfather's ability to learn. That included meals, medicines, keeping the apartment warm, and managing access to him.

These were recurring responsibilities. Meals had to be arranged again. Practical needs returned. There were pressures and difficult days.

Yet when he looked back, he described the opportunity this way:

> **"I felt like I won the lottery every single day."**

The same responsibilities could have been counted only as demands on his time. He experienced them as a gift. His account concerns service to his grandfather, rather than delight in a sugya. But it makes a human possibility vivid: **something repeated every day need not lose its preciousness.**

We are not claiming that every repetition feels fresh, or that fatigue disappears. We are asking whether familiarity must mean that the relationship has been exhausted.

That brings us back to chazarah. The page can be familiar and the connection can deepen. Through that returning, a new understanding can emerge. We need not constantly replace the object of our delight; we can discover more deeply what is already before us.

Now we can hear the final contrast.

13. What Enters You?

Look at Source 10, the concluding contrast.

The game can hold the person. Torah can hold the person. In both, something reaches deeply into him. **What enters him is radically different.**

In the empty amusement described here, the person becomes attached to its world. Its emptiness penetrates inward. Even kedushah acquired through Torah and mitzvos can be displaced. The concern is not merely a half hour that could have been spent more productively. Something has gained an inward hold.

Torah delight works in the opposite direction. It brings kedushah into the neshamah. And through that attachment, the spiritual dirt left by materiality and aveiros is driven out.

> **We do not merely enter the world of what absorbs us. Something of that world enters us.**

That is why we have taken such care over the meaning of delight. We are not discussing an optional decoration added to a life of mitzvos. We are discussing an attachment that can help determine what fills the person.

We may be far from Yitzchak's madreigah. But the direction is available to us. Begin with Torah you can enter. Give it attention. Return to it. Let the delight of understanding become an invitation to remain with the Torah itself.

Do not wait until you can claim to have arrived. We continue fulfilling our obligations, and we ask Hashem to help the inner relationship grow.

Now let us hear our daily request again:

וְהַעֲרֶב נָא ה׳ אֱלֹקֵינוּ אֶת דִּבְרֵי תוֹרָתְךָ בְּפִינוּ וּבְפִי עַמְּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל

"Please, Hashem our God, make the words of Your Torah sweet in our mouths and in the mouths of Your people, the House of Israel."

Hashem, help us taste the Torah You have given us. Help that sweetness draw us closer to You. Let Your Torah enter us deeply enough to change what we love, to cleanse what has clung to us, and to give us a life increasingly filled with Your presence.

Teacher's Notes - Not for Delivery

[1] Single source credit. Adapted from Rav Shimshon Dovid Pinkus, Tiferes Shimshon, Bereishis, Vayeira, "ושעשוע - הרגשת החיים בטהרתם שחוק," printed pp. רכה-רלה (225-235); the supplied PDF has export footers 238-248. Its opening page begins with the conclusion of a previous teaching; this class begins with the new heading near the bottom. Opening questions, their grouping, the explicit comparison with Monday night, adult-projection discussion, chazarah application, suggested pre-Mashiach application, and practical retraining steps are the speaker's arrangement and applications. The Hebrew passages on the source sheet are selected original excerpts with complete English translations, not a translation of the whole maamar. Ellipses mark omissions. Biblical punctuation and vowel points are supplied for reading; printed prose is retained without added vowel points.

Fidelity and terminology. The turning explanation of sha'ashua is the maamar's interpretive development, not a general lexical proof. Its higher ayin means the Divine root beyond comprehension; its lower application concerns amusement without a worthwhile purpose beyond itself. The discussion of delight preceding wisdom belongs to the spiritual framework of the text, not a universal psychological or historical proof. Its account of technology is presented as a spiritual critique, not a complete history of inventions or a denial of medical, practical, or constructive uses. The general spiritual-worlds section paraphrases printed pp. רכט-רל; its stronger claims about inward absorption and purification are preserved in sections 6 and 13. The source's distinction between higher and lower expressions must not identify Hashem with emptiness or every ordinary pleasure with sin.

Learning and doing. The explicit balance between learning for fulfilment and learning without immediate practical application is an editorial clarification consistent with the maamar's discussion of children and lifelong study of Kodshim and Taharos. The teaching about learning where the heart desires, Avodah Zarah 19a, is a supplementary source, not quoted in this maamar. Its application does not remove the obligation to acquire needed halachic knowledge. The practical adult section is our proposed application; it does not promise that interest or feeling alone measures the worth of learning.

Question-to-answer map. Question 1 (Yitzchak and awe): section 10. Question 2 (Hashem's delight): section 4, prepared by sections 2-3. Question 3 (Olam Haba): section 10. Question 4 (children): section 8, prepared by section 5. Question 5 (inventions): section 7. Question 6 (entertainment before Mashiach): section 7; its practical implication continues in section 9. The maamar does not give a complete account of Divine historical timing or a full derivation of the connection between gevurah and delight; the manuscript says so without promising those conclusions.

Source-sheet order. 1 Mishlei 8:30 (opening question); 2 definition of sha'ashua; 3 higher ayin; 4 Hashem's Torah delight; 5 absorption through Torah; 6 lower ayin and the pre-Mashiach passage; 7 children learning korbanos; 8 learning where the heart desires (supplementary); 9 Olam Haba; 10 final purification contrast. A short Birchos HaTorah line closes the sheet without a separate number. The longer computer-game mashal is retold in the transcript, section 10, from printed p. רלה; it is not replaced by the earlier chess example on p. רלא.

Source for the supplementary teaching. Avodah Zarah 19a, in the account of Levi and R. Shimon son of Rabbi: "אלא ממקום שלבו חפץ אין אדם לומד תורה." Public primary text: https://www.chabad.org/torah-texts/5459508/19a/default.htm . Mishlei 8:30 complete text: https://www.mgketer.org/tanach/28/8/30 . The English rendering "master craftsman" follows the Midrashic reading of amon; other commentaries explain the word differently.

Monday-night distinction. "Who Gets the Last Laugh?" explored laughter in recognition of chiddush and the limits of our predictions. This class explores delight in life itself, Torah as sha'ashua, the two directions of attachment, and purification. The shared Yitzchak and Olam Haba motifs are developed through that different argument.

Historical application boundary. Section 7 distinguishes the source's diagnosis of the pre-Mashiach misuse of wisdom from the speaker's additional suggestion that expanded available time challenges us to prepare our tastes for a life of attachment. The latter is a homiletic proposal, not an explicit explanation of Divine historical purpose in the source. Section 9's chazarah application is also the speaker's development. Section 6 names the malachim and Throne of Glory used on printed pp. 229-230; it does not substitute a complete named kabbalistic hierarchy for that passage.

Restored stories. Section 11 restores the Rav Shach account from the earlier approved class: Toras Reb Kalman, “A Giant in Torah A Giant in Sensitivity,” section “Not Just a Blessing,” recording A154. Retold without invented dialogue, motive, or an additional claimed outcome. Section 12 restores Rav Aryeh Elyashiv's first-person recollection in Yisroel Besser, “The Zeide I Knew,” Mishpacha, April 16, 2019, including the short lottery quotation used in the earlier class. Its application to chazarah is the speaker's comparison, not a statement attributed to the interview. Both accounts precede the source's final purification contrast so that there is one conclusion.

Chazarah, chiddush, and Shabbos. Section 9 develops Rabbi Michalowicz's distinction between encountering unfamiliar material and developing an insight through sustained review. Its connection to ayin is a homiletic application of the source's higher-root framework, not a claim that every subjective insight is a revelation or that chiddush arises only through review. Chassidus and the return to nigleh are presented as a possible learning practice. Shabbos is not described as prohibiting new material: Mishnah Berurah 290:3 cites the value of developing

chiddushei Torah on Shabbos. Love is used as an analogy for inward acquaintance; absence of a spiritual feeling does not negate emunah, mitzvah fulfilment, or attachment.