

The Torah that Moshe commanded us is the heritage of the congregation of Yaakov. (33:4)

The text of this *pasuk* is inconsistent. It begins by stating that the *Torah* has been commanded to us and ends by saying that it is the heritage of the congregation of Yaakov. Who is included in the words of "*Kehillas Yaakov*"? **Horav Chaim Elazary, zl**, suggests that the congregation of Yaakov is a reference to all Jews, even those who have not had the opportunity to study *Torah* and develop a proficiency in it. The *am haarertz*, so to speak illiterate Jew, who performs *mitzvos* is devoted to *Yiddishkeit*. He just does not learn, although he respects those who do. Thus he is included in the congregation of Yaakov.

Horav Elazary recounts a story which serves as an excellent analogy to emphasize this point. One *Simchas Torah* a simple Jew, whose level of *Torah* erudition was far from adept, came to the court of a great *Chasidic Rebbe*. He requested to dance with the *Rebbe* as he danced with the *Torah*. When the *Rebbe* heard this strange request, he asked the man, "Tell me, what is the source of your great joy? Did you study so much *Torah* during the past year that it warrants such an expression of happiness?" The simple Jew responded, "If the *Rebbe's* brother would marry off his daughter, would not the *Rebbe* participate in the *simchah* as an uncle? I am sharing in my relative's *simchah*!" What a remarkable response. All Jews are part of one great congregation. We should participate in each other's *simchos*, as well as in the tragedies. We should share a personal joy with each Jew who celebrates a milestone. The *Torah* is the heritage of all of *Klal Yisrael*. While many individuals devote their lives to its study and dissemination, this devotion is not theirs exclusively. It belongs to all of those who are a part of *Kehillas Yaakov*.