



בלבבי  
משכן  
אבנה

# BUILDING A SANCTUARY IN THE HEART

## Rising From Our Earth & Entering Into Water

Just as an individual immerses in a *mikveh* when he is spiritually impure, and he is thereby cleansed from impurity by the waters of the *mikveh*, so is there a concept that the world as a whole can be purified by a “*mikveh*”, when the world has become entirely impure and it is need of being purified by water. That *mikveh* was the *Mabul*, which allowed for a new and purified world.

This purity that came to the world by the *Mabul* will once again come to the world at the time of the End of Days, as the prophet states, “*And the world will be filled with the knowledge of Hashem, like waters that cover.*” There will be purity that will come to the world, in the sense that everyone in the world will know of Hashem. This is in line with the words of the Rambam when he writes about the matter of *mikveh*: immersing in a *mikveh* means to immerse oneself in the “waters of *daas*”, which refers to the inner, spiritual knowledge of G-dliness.

In the future, death will be removed. Death was the curse given to mankind ever since the sin of Adam, and death causes the highest state of spiritual impurity; death is termed by our Sages as the “father of the father of all impurity”. In the future, when a great purity will come to the world, we will be purified from the great impurity that is

death, and we will then be able to live forever.

When we reflect on this, we can better understand the purity that water accomplishes, and more specifically, the purifying power of the *mikveh* which we have in our times.

Hashem created the world with four elements: fire, wind, water, and earth. Since man is created from the earth, the nature of man is to be drawn downwards, towards the earth. Just as an animal eats from the ground and lowers itself to the ground, so does man tend to be drawn towards lowliness, towards the “earth”. Although man is created with a soul which seeks to ascend to its Source in heaven, the initial and unrefined state of man causes him to descend to earth. Rabbeinu Yonah writes that “the spirit of the wicked causes him to descend further and further.” After the first sin in mankind, man was told “*You are earth, and to earth you shall return.*” This meant that ever since the first sin, man is drawn towards earth, towards lowliness, towards sin. Every time a person sins, he becomes more connected with the earth. ■ excerpt from the sefer *Bilvavi on the Parshah*

**2** First of all, before attempting to clarify these issues, there must exist a true desire to gain clarity in these matters. One must view life in a correct manner, understanding what our situation is in this world, namely, that our entire life is only for the purpose of serving HaShem. It is our obligation, as well as our privilege, to clarify the meaning of our life here. We must understand and appreciate that the place for our ultimate rest and pleasure is the world of reward, *Gan Eden, Olam Haba*. Our entire purpose here in this world is to serve Hashem. We must identify a clear, stable path which we will follow in order to serve Him.

The matters we will deal with here are not abstract ideas or the like, but a way of life in the most literal sense — a program of how to live a true life on earth, a life that brings a person to the desired goal. We will attempt to clarify the issues ascending from easier levels to more difficult ones, step by step, presenting a ladder of growth that is as clear to understand as possible. In this way, we will see before us a well established path for serving Hashem.

**3** If we would ask people: Considering your present state, what would you regard as the most worthwhile and appropriate area in which to start your *avodas Hashem*? One person might respond that it seems to him that his weak point is diligence in Torah study, and, that is the area he must start working on to rectify. Another will reply that upon self-inspection he finds *lashon hara* to be his vulnerable point. He feels that he is not careful enough about guarding his tongue. Here and there words that are improper or forbidden escape his lips. A third would say that the is-

sue he must begin with is *shalom bayis*. He feels that this is something that demands his immediate attention. He does not have enough patience with his family members. He does not include them sufficiently in his decision making process, and he does not provide adequate emotional support. ■

## Q & A

**QUESTION** Many of the general *Chareidi* public kept all of the *tefillos* and learning throughout Yom Tov and Chol HaMoed in the shuls, and they didn't give up *Simchas Beis HaShoievah* either. This angered the police, who applied force to stop the praying and festivities. The ensuing fighting caused the media to go wild with all the reports against *Chareidim* fighting with the police.

We can argue on one hand that it's a *chilul* Hashem when it's all over the media and news, because they say, "Look how *frum* people act." On other hand, we can argue that we don't need to care about secular opinion, because secular society doesn't understand religious values and it is not important to them. And, we should not compromise on even one bit of davening or learning just because of the "Erev Rav" government that rules in *Eretz Yisrael*. What is the right attitude to have about all this?

**ANSWER** All I can do is offer you an inner perspective on this present situation. Firstly, let us consider the following. Before the Holocaust, Jews were secularized with the gentiles. Part of the process of the Holocaust, as

it is well-known, was that a clear separation was made between Jews and goyim, to show the distinction of whoever was Jewish. The *Gedolim* explained this as well.

The same concept is taking place in *Eretz Yisrael* [we are being shown a clear distinction of who is a real Jew or not]. The Chazon Ish said that he is not afraid of the battle that we have to wage with those throw away the yoke of Torah and *mitzvos*, but he is afraid that maybe the Torah observant will become drawn towards the secular and fall in with them. The Chazon Ish said that the Israeli government will not be able to hold their power for more than 60-70 years. In current times, when so many have become close to the secular influence in *Eretz Yisrael*, Hashem has arranged that certain events should happen which are causing the Chareidim to be afraid and to feel a total sense of separation from the Israeli government. That is the process which is unfolding now. Therefore, the issue to be concerned with now should not be about *chilul Hashem*. Rather, it is the conduct of Hashem which is making a separation between those who sanctify with His Name with those who so far haven't been *zoche* (worthy) to do that yet.

We need to separate from the government: in what we do, in what we feel, and in how we think. And along with this, we need to do it all with a sense of *ahavas Yisrael* that must go very deep. This is the way for us to go in! ■ from the Q & A archive [www.question.bilvavi.net](http://www.question.bilvavi.net)

The reason for which Hashem has given us children is explained clearly in the Torah: “So that he will command his sons and daughters to follow him, and guard the way of Hashem, and perform charity and justice.” (*Beraishis 18:19*) If we wish to reach the goal of *chinuch* on our children, which is to “guard the way of Hashem, and perform charity and justice”, it is upon to reflect: How did Avraham *Avinu* get to this? It was Avraham *Avinu* who reached this understanding on his own. ...

In order to raise the next generation, our aspiration must be that our children reach the same conclusion that Avraham *Avinu* reached. We want them to realize that they have a *neshamah*, which is a “portion of G-d above”, and that this means that they are His servants. So when we nurture them in the realms of action, emotion, and thought, the common drive throughout all of this should be for one purpose alone: to help them understand that they exist as a *neshamah*, and that their *neshamah* can guide them in the areas of action, emotion, and thought.

But the child can realize he is a *neshamah* only if his parents see themselves as *neshamos*. Therefore, a parent first needs to internalize the knowledge that his existence is a *neshamah*, covered over by a physical body. Only after reaching this conclusion can the parent easily relate to his child as a *neshamah*, where he will see his child as being a *neshamah* that is covered by a body, and that it is upon the parent to help the child reveal his *neshamah*..

The *Nefesh HaChaim* (in *Gate IV*) explains that we must know our obligation in learning Torah, how great and precious it is, and that one who learns Torah must learn it as a “Torah of kindness” and to give a *nachas ruach* (satisfaction) to the Creator.

Thus, there are two matters: there is the Torah, and there is the person who learns it. Therefore, when we clarify how deeply we feel connected to the Torah (as we began to explain the previous chapter), it is a two-part process: we must clarify to ourselves what the power of *Torah* is, as well as how *we* are connecting to it.

If one does not make either of these introspections, it is not possible for him to really have true exertion in Torah study. Unless he learns Torah with absolute *mesirus nefesh* (dedication), it will be impossible for him to reach the desired goal of Torah learning, if he does not make this inner clarification process.

Practically speaking, the first step one needs to do is to clarify to himself what the depth of Torah is, and how he is trying to connect to it. In order for one to form an inward connection to Torah, one must have this two-step clarification.

The details of these two parts will be further explained, with the help of Hashem, in the coming chapters, but these are the two root basic points: to know what Torah is, and to know what specifically is connecting us with the Torah; and to combine these two factors together.

Anyone who sits and learns Torah must clarify to himself why exactly he learns Torah. If someone learns Torah simply because he was accustomed to learning Torah ever since he was a child, this is certainly better than nothing, but it is not enough for one to feel deeply connected to Torah. There are more levels that need to be traversed.

In general, there are three valid reasons to learn Torah that are all forms of *lishmah* (for non-ulterior motivations). One valid reason to learn Torah is to learn it for the sake of Torah itself. Another reason is to learn it for the sake of giving a *nachas ruach* (satisfaction) to Hashem. A third reason why a person would learn Torah, not as lofty as the above two reasons, is to learn it in order to teach it to others; this is called a “*Torah of kindness on his lips.*”

These are three of the root motivations to learn Torah. If a person never reflects, it is possible that he learns Torah not for any of the above reasons. He doesn't learn Torah for the sake of Torah, he doesn't learn it to give a *nachas ruach* to Hashem, and he doesn't learn it to teach it to others.

The fact that one is teaching Torah to others doesn't always mean that he is learning Torah for that reason. He might be teaching it for the sake of being able to explain his understanding to others, but this is not so that others should know the Torah; thus it does not qualify for *lishmah*. He simply likes to tell others his opinions and thoughts. After all, it is human nature that people like to give their own opinions on a subject. ■

Join our active email list: [subscribe@bilvavi.net](mailto:subscribe@bilvavi.net)

Contact the editor: [parsha@bilvavi.net](mailto:parsha@bilvavi.net) | Sponsor an issue: [sponsor@bilvavi.net](mailto:sponsor@bilvavi.net)

Original audio files available on "Kol haLashon" Israel 073.295.1245 | USA 718.521.5231

Questions on any subject in english or hebrew: [rav@bilvavi.net](mailto:rav@bilvavi.net) or online [www.question.bilvavi.net](http://www.question.bilvavi.net)

Audio classes, transcripts, translations online [www.bilvavi.net](http://www.bilvavi.net)