



BUILDING A SANCTUARY IN THE HEART

SEEING REALITY

When one leaves behind the distorted way of seeing things and he can see reality as it is, he can then begin to understand the differing views of the brothers versus Yosef. One can then see that were different ways to understand the same reality, and that they were all valid ways. “Their words, and their words, are the words of the living G-d.”

The arguments of the Sages, though, are all differing ways to see the same reality, and they are all seeing reality from the lens of the Torah, and there are 70 valid ways of seeing reality - all rooted in the Torah. The arguments that take place between most people, though, are essentially an argument between two views of imagination.

In every *machlokes* we find ourselves in, we need to check how we are viewing the reality. If it is a *machlokes* between the Sages of the Torah, we need to see this as different ways to see reality, which each stem from the holy wisdom of the Torah. Each of the Sages can see reality in a different way, because there are “70 facets of understanding” in the Torah, and hence there are 70 valid ways to see reality, based on Torah wisdom (as explained earlier).

One needs to examine and see if he is viewing reality through either his perception based on imagination, or from a narrowed point of view, or from true vision, which sees the reality as it is. On a higher level, a person sees reality through the wisdom of the Torah. The more a person exerts himself in Torah, the better he can see reality.

This is also a way to prepare for the coming days of Chanukah. On Chanukah, the halachah is that “We may not use the Chanukah lights, except to see them.” In order to “see” properly, we need to clarify the way we are seeing things, and to keep clarifying it, until we reach the spiritual light that is radiates during this time of the year, which is also called a “flame that rises on its own” - the root of all vision, which is *chochmah*, wisdom. (Editor’s Note: Refer to Sfas Emes (Chanukah), and Kedushas Levi – Chanukah.) That is the depth of the lighting of the *menorah* – to “see” through a place of wisdom, rooted in the Torah. That is the depth of “seeing” the lights of the menorah, on Chanukah. ■
(from Bilvavi On The Parsha)

QUESTION What should a person do after lighting the *Menorah*? How much time should a person looking at the *neiros* (Chanukah lights), as well as singing and saying *divrei* Torah?

ANSWER The Mishnah Berurah says that *l'chatchilah* (ideally), it is proper for a person to stay with the Menorah for a half hour. The root of everything is the revelation of *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* in His Torah, and that is why it is proper for one to say Torah thoughts about Chanukah and about the *menorah*. The days of Chanukah are called “days of *hodaah*” (thanks), to give thanks and praise. That is why it is proper for a person to give *hodaah* (thanks) to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* for all of the miracles that happened during these days to the Jewish people as a whole, through singing, as well as thanking Hashem for one’s personal lot.

A hint to thanking Hashem for one’s personal lot is reflected in the *halachah* that a guest staying at another’s home for Chanukah needs to include himself in the *mitzvah* of lighting the *Menorah*, by donating a coin (*perutah*) to the one whom he is staying by. By donating a coin (*perutah*) to be included in the *mitzvah*, the guest “includes” his individual life, his “*peratios*”, with the collective whole of Klal Yisrael.

It is written, “The flame of Hashem is the soul of man.” More specifically, the word “light”, *ner*, is an acronym for the words *Nefesh, Ruach, Neshamah* [the three basic levels of the soul]. The flame, oil and wick of a *Menorah*, which in Hebrew is *ner* (flame), *shemen* (oil), *pesilah* (wick), which is an acronym for *NeFeSH* (the soul). This is because the light of a flame has the power to illuminate and awaken and reveal one’s soul – one’s *nefesh, ruach*, and *neshamah*. One needs to connect his perspective and his inner essence to the light of the *Menorah* and to the movements of the flame, by becoming inwardly connected to it. Looking at the *Menorah* lights, amidst inwardly connecting to it, has the power to awaken the *neshamah* (Divine soul).

This is a matter that is dependent on one’s personal spiritual level and it does not apply equally to every person. Each person individually should recognize his current level and according to his current level. To the extent that a person connects his soul to the spiritual illumination of the *Menorah’s* light, it becomes more appropriate for a person to sit with Chanukah *neiros*, according to his capabilities, and by remaining balanced in his other areas of *avodas Hashem*, such as his Torah learning and his *davening*, etc.

Even more so, some have the custom of making the wicks for the *Menorah* by using pieces of clothing, because the “*Chayah*” level of the soul is present on one’s clothing. And, even more so, the Chanukah lights are called “the light of a man and his home”, which is a hint that the Chanukah lights reveal the deepest level of the soul, the “*Yechidah*”, which is hidden in one’s house. This is the “spiritual light that is hidden away for the future”, the light of *Mashiach*, and for this reason there are those who said that Chanukah will not disappear in the future. There are rare individuals who have a spark of the *Yechidah* level of the soul revealed with them, and the light of the *Menorah* on Chanukah can awaken this spark further.

Going even further, one who merits the revelation of the “*Yechidah*” level of the soul can feel a tremendous pleasure when viewing the *Menorah* lights, as in the teaching of the *Gemara* that “The species has found its species”, like beloved friends who find each other. For a person who knows of such an experience, it is upon him to feel the light of the Infinite surrounding him on all sides, and that he is in the center and that he is nullified, to Hashem’s Infinite Light. And this is a very deep and intrinsic pleasure of the *neshamah* ■ from the Q&A

QUESTION Should we take the vaccine for corona or should we just focus on our *avodah* now of *Ein Od Milvado*, and not take the vaccine? (This question is regarding the vaccine in America which will soon be available, which is reportedly safe and which has a 90% effectiveness rate, and which reportedly does not have serious long-term side-effects).

ANSWER This question is being asked too early because it isn’t relevant yet, because in order to answer it we need to clarify all of the information about it. In the end, taking the vaccine or not will depend on the following factors: 1) On the different views that there are on how the vaccines work, 2) On the quality of the vaccine, 3) The dangers of taking it versus the benefits of not taking it, 4) Who is giving the vaccine, 5) The country that the vaccine is being given out in – Because there are all kinds of various calculations that are made in producing the vaccine (in addition to the intention of wanting to benefit those who take the vaccine), and these calculations are a mixture of different intentions that are not for our benefit.

As a rule, any individual who is not in the category of those who are at high risk danger [from the coronavirus] is not meant to take it. However, there is also the factor of doing what’s good for the community at large, and for that we will need the *Gedolim*, the “eyes of the congregation”, to guide us in what to do in each place and in each situation. ■ (from the Q&A archive)

When a person has the balance of the two abilities together of intellect\analysis and heart\yearning, he is connected to the Torah he learns, and at the same time, he always has a drive to ascend higher in his learning, by desiring more and more Torah. He will ignite a fire inside of himself that demands more and more ascension in his learning.

When one lives in this way, he will find that today is never the same as yesterday, and the next day, he will have a completely new day.

If a person ever feels that each day feels like the same day as the day before it, it is a sign that he is only learning Torah with his intellect alone. He is only connected to Torah because he has certain 'anchors' that make him feel obligated, such as coming on time to seder every day at 9:30 A.M. Baruch Hashem, he comes on time to seder, but that doesn't always mean that he connects his mind to Torah when he learns.

Everyone must deeply examine himself and ask himself if he really connects his mind to his learning when he learns, or if he is rather just obligating himself each day to learn.

However, even a connection of the mind to Torah is not enough, as it was explained above. When a person is only connected in his mind to Torah but his heart

isn't in it, each day of his learning will feel monotonous and it won't feel different than the day before. When one's heart isn't in his learning, he doesn't feel a desire to have renewal in his Torah learning, and he merely sticks to his monotonous route. He might feel that he is basically successful in his learning, for after all, he is immersed every day in the study of Torah, and he is learning *sugya* after *sugya*. Everything looks great. So what is he missing? He is missing a "heart that burns with love for Torah". When the heart burns with a love for Torah, it does not rest; it always wants more and more Torah.

Understandably, one must have a proper balance between his mind connection Torah and his heart connection to Torah. He should make sure that the yearning of his heart to know more Torah shouldn't impede on his thinking as he's in the middle of learning the *Gemara*, because while learning *Gemara*, a calm mind is required. (The seichel\intellect is called "mayim shekai-tim", 'calm waters').

Just as one thirsts to know of Hashem and to have *d'veykus* with Him ("My soul thirsts"), so must one desire to know of Torah. This is not only referring to the sweetness one feels when he sees the clarity and truth meaning as he is learning Torah, which is pleasurable to the intellect. It requires

the heart's yearning for Torah.

When one merits to have a burning love for Torah along with the involvement of his intellect in it, he is properly balanced between his intellect and heart in the study of Torah. On one hand, he will be able to analyze the most subtle of nuances in his learning, attaining a great connection of the intellect to the Torah he learns, and at the same time, he is never satisfied and complacent from this, for his heart yearns for more and more Torah.

If someone comes to tell him that he needs to yearn for more Torah, instead of taking this as an insult, he realizes that it is a true demand. The soul has a yearning to know all of the Torah, (in the three dimensions: length, width, and depth), and until a person gets there (and the truth is that no one has ever gotten there completely), the fire of the soul does not rest, and constantly demands more and more growth in Torah.

When this is the way one's learning looks, a person will be both intellectually immersed in Torah as well as full of yearnings for more and more growth in Torah. Instead of continuing each day from the place he stopped, he will instead be in a mode of constant ascension in the words of Torah, with true connection to Hashem and His Torah. ■

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