



# BUILDING A SANCTUARY IN THE HEART

## AVODAS HASHEM OF BEING SICK

In *Parshas Vayechi*, the brothers informed Yosef, “Behold, your father is ill.”

The word “*choli*”, illness, hints to *chullin* (mundane) and *chalal* (void), something incomplete and imperfect. But illness has also has a spiritual implication: Chazal say that the *Shechinah* resides above the head of one who is bedridden from illness.

When a person is ill, there are two parts to the illness. One part of it is that it weakens the body. This is a “void” that happens to the body, which weakens it and doesn’t allow it to perform as it should. The other part of illness, on the other hand, is that it brings the *Shechinah* with it, which hovers above the head of the one who is ill.

There is no person who doesn’t go through illness, and the only issue is what kind of illness he will go through. No one goes through this world without becoming sick. If a person is always living with Hashem in every situation, and he always wonders of how he can serve Hashem in any situation, he reflects about illness and he wonders how he can serve Hashem when he is ill. There is a unique *avodas Hashem* upon a person when he is ill, and this is what is meant by the words of the verse, “Behold, your father is ill.”

A person can reach a greater recognition of the Creator when he is ill. The clarity of the mind is weaker then, but the connection to the depths of Torah and to Hashem that he had until now will intensify, as he goes through the illness. His connection to Hashem and Torah that he has formed until now can become more clearly revealed - and this is the *Shechinah* that comes to the ill person. As we emphasized, this will only be true for one who has indeed begun to reveal the light of his soul, before the illness arrives.

This is a deep way to view illness: When one is ill, on one hand, he feels confined to his bed and that he cannot serve Hashem as much, but on the other hand, it is also an opportunity to reach higher spiritual levels, for the weakening of the body can enable the soul to shine more clearly, and this enables a person to discover companionship with Hashem. When illness arrives, it will not make him descend into emptiness, but the opposite: “The *Shechinah* is above the head of the ill”, meaning that the reality of Hashem’s Presence will become more revealed to him, as well as the light of his *neshamah*.

■ excerpt from the sefer *Bilvavi on the Parshah*

**QUESTION** In the series on practical guidance on the different ways of learning *Gemara*, the Rav mentions a concept that there are 12 root ways of learning a *sugya*, that are rooted in each of the 12 tribes. Can the Rav briefly explain what each of these are? And can a person learn according to a path of one tribe if he has a different soul root that that tribe (i.e. if his soul root is Shimon can he learn according to the path of Reuven)?

**ANSWER** The following is a brief explanation, and it is only one side to this matter.

Reuven: When one can see the possible outcomes. Reuven's name is from the word *reu*, to see, a hint to the teaching of the Sages "Who is wise? He who sees the outcome."

Shimon: When one can develop a *sevara* (comprehensible logic). As the *Gemara* says, "You don't hear me, you don't comprehend like me." Shimon's name is from the word *shemiah*, to "hear", and in the aforementioned statement of the Sages, "hearing", a hint to Shimon, is linked with developing *sevara* (comprehensible logic).

Levi: Formulating a logic that is aligned and connected with a corresponding view of his. The word "Levi" means to connect together. It is to be consistent with connecting the *sevara* (reasoning) and *cheshbon* (organization of facts in the *sugya*) - maintaining a consistent, underlying line of reasoning (*shitah*).

Yehudah: When one comprehends the very essence of a matter. The word Yehudah contains the four-letter name of *havayah*, which is a name of Hashem that is more connected with the very essence of Hashem.

Yissocher: When one uses the power of *binah* (detailed logic), which can be used to figure out matters of astronomy, as the *Gemara* says regarding

Yissocher, that Yissocher's blessing is that he "understands the knowledge about the times [the knowledge of astronomy]".

Zevulun: Connecting distant *sugyos* of *Gemara* together. This is because Zevulun's blessing is that he brings his sustenance from afar, which also refers to bringing Torah knowledge from afar [i.e. *sugyos* of *Gemara* that are seemingly very far from each other] and connecting it to the current *sugya*.

Gad: Extending abstract, theoretical ideas into the materialization of the ideas. [This is because Gad's name is from the words *Ba Gad*, *Ba Mazal*, and *mazal* means to flow and extend]. An example of this was the way of learning of Rav Shimon Shkop.

Asher: Having a clear, organized picture of the *sugya*, leaving no room for one to make mistakes in. This is the meaning of Asher's blessing that his produce brings "delicacies for the king."

Dan: Gathering together all the views on the *sugya*. This is the meaning of how Dan "gathers together all the camps". Another point: Since the tribe of Dan camped at the edge, next to the *Erev Rav* (the Mixed Multitude), Dan's role is to counter the evil "mixture" of the *Erev Rav*, by mixing together different aspects which do not create confusion, but which create a blend. Dan's role is to discern what can be mixed and combined together, and to avoid mixing together anything that shouldn't be mixed.

Naftali: Perseverance and exertion to understand the *sugya* until one plumbs to the end of the depth of a matter. The word "Naftali", Rashi explains, means "I stubbornly persevered."

Yosef: When one develops his own *chiddushim* (novel insights) and adds to those insights. This is hinted to in the term *shomeia umosef*, one who hears words of Torah and then adds it on to his own insights [one of the 48 ways to acquire the Torah].

**Binyamin:** Building and developing the structure of the sugya (*tzurasa d'shmaatsa*). A hint to this is that the Beis HaMikdash was “built” in Binyamin’s portion, alluding to Binyamin’s ability to “build” the overall, general picture of a *sugya*.

All of these abilities are contained in each person’s soul, and each person needs to clarify which way is meant to become his primary approach in learning Torah. Getting subtler, it is also known that each of these paths can really be a subdivision of another path. For example, one can have an approach in learning that looks like the approach of “Reuven” but it can really be part of a way of learning that is categorized as “Shimon”, and vice versa. But there is always a root approach for any of the approaches listed.

Each approach really contains all 12 approaches, so that there can be 12 branching paths to any of these 12 root approaches, but each person always has one root way of learning. This was all clearer when our souls were not yet placed in exile, when our souls were more aligned [with our particular soul roots]. Throughout exile, our souls have undergone different lifetimes, and therefore it is possible that one is learning in his current lifetime in a way that is not aligned with his correct soul root.

**QUESTION** The Rav explained that the way of learning Torah which is rooted in the tribe of “Naftali” is when one has unceasing exertion in Torah study. It seems that this is the way of the yeshivos. If so, the way of yeshivos today is taking the path of “Naftali”, encouraging persistent exertion in Torah learning from everyone - but if that is true, then it seems that this approach in the yeshivos would only work for those whose Torah learning is rooted in the path of “Naftali”.

**ANSWER** Correct. It is not possible to teach a

style of learning [in yeshivos or anywhere else] which will be appropriate for everyone.

**QUESTION** The Rav explained that the style of learning attributed to “Yosef” is to have constant *chiddushim*. It is well-known that Yosef is the root of the other brothers, and Yosef’s qualities are all-inclusive of the other brothers. If so, why would Yosef’s style of learning - constant *chiddushim* – specifically be the path that includes all of the other paths in learning?

**ANSWER** Yosef’s path of Torah learning is to constantly seek more understanding in Torah learning and find any additional insights pertaining to a topic. It is not a path of gaining additional insights as a result of learning the information [rather, it is a search for finding additional insights to begin with].

**QUESTION** Does Yosef’s path of Torah learning also divide into two more sub-paths, corresponding to his two sons, Ephraim and Menasheh?

**ANSWER** Yes. Ephraim’s path of Torah learning is to produce *chiddushim* in Torah learning based on clarifying and connecting together different sugyos of *Gemara* (As a hint, the name Ephraim is from the words *pru u'rvu*, to increase offspring, which also refers to *chiddushim* in Torah learning). Menashe’s path of Torah learning is to develop *chiddushim* as a result of reviewing (As a hint, the name Menashe is from the word *meshaneh*, to review).

**QUESTION** The Rav explained that the method of learning of Reb Shimon Shkop is rooted in the tribe of Gad. What about the two primary methods of Torah learning, Reb Chaim Brisker and the Rogotchover *Gaon*? Which tribes do their methods of learning correspond to?

**ANSWER** Reb Chaim Brisker’s approach is to

break everything down into details. This way of learning is rooted in the path of Yissocher, whose main quality was *binah*, analyzing by breaking everything down into details. The Rogotchover Gaon's approach is to connect different ways of reasoning with an underlying, consistent way of thinking (*shitah*), which is the path attributed to Levi.

**QUESTION** Which of the tribes are the roots of the approaches of Reb Baruch Ber, the Chazon Ish, and the Brisker Rov?

**ANSWER** Reb Baruch Ber's way of learning is rooted in Yosef, for he was a student who heard his rebbi's teachings and added on his own insights upon what he heard (like Yosef's quality, which is *shomeia umosef*, to hear teachings and then add on further insights).

The Chazon Ish's way of learning is rooted in Reuven, to view a matter through a certain perspective or viewpoint. The Brisker Rov's way of learning is rooted in Asher, who presents "delicacies for a king's table" – Torah insights and explanations that have been refined and sifted very well, like refined flour.

## Q&A - SHOAVIM

**QUESTION** How can one know if he has finished repairing *Shovavim*-related sins?

**ANSWER** When he feels that he is no longer pulled towards this [sin], and he always feels Hashem's presence. This was also said by the Admor of Munkatch.  
■ from the Bilvavi archive of Q & A

To our great pain, the situation today is that there are many young children, and even adults, who look dead. We can see it in many children who come to *shul*, who leave it in the same way they came in. (Actually, maybe they are a bit more energetic after leaving *shul*, because they got to doze off and take a nap....) We see before us a person walking on two feet, and we know he is alive, but his entire demeanor is screaming out to us that he is lacking any real vitality. Where does this stem from?

Since there are parts of the child's *neshamah* that aren't revealed, this allows him to feel extinguished inside himself. Therefore, if parents wish to prevent their child from this feeling of emptiness, and they are interested in acquiring a completely different perspective, they should know that the entire goal of *chinuch* is to reveal the *neshamah* as much as possible, and to raise the child with the attitude that he is a *neshamah*. When that is the approach, we will then see before us a child with a healthy soul, who has grown up with a sense of inner vitality, who isn't suffering internally.

What we have to bear in mind as we educate our children is that our children are *neshamos* that have been given to us to take care of. They are covered with a physical body, and for this reason, we do not actually see their *neshamos*. Our task as parents is to help them reveal their *neshamos*, and to give them the tools they need so that when they grow up, they will continue on their own this task of revealing their *neshamah*. ■ Chapter Six - printed for the first time from the sefer ילדך ילך

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