



בלבי משכן אבנה

Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh

WE WANT TO SEE OUR KING

Rashi says that when the people stood at Har Sinai, they requested of Moshe, רצונו לראות את מלכנו “It is our will to see our King.” In other words, the inner core of the giving of the Torah was this desire of desiring to see Hashem. This was only possible at Har Sinai, but after that, we can no longer have this revelation of “It is our will to see our King.”

However, our Sages teach explicitly that there is some continuation of this revelation. The *Chovos HaLevovos* says that one has an obligation to recognize the Creator in various ways, and one these ways is ראוהו בעין שכלו, “to see Him through the eyes of the intellect (*einei haseichel*).” Every generation has a *mitzvah* to remember the event of standing at Sinai - and to continue this revelation of “It is our desire to see our King”. We cannot see Hashem of course, because “No man can see me and live”, but in the depths of our *seichel* (higher intellect) we can uncover our *einei haseichel*, which can “see” Hashem (so to speak).

When a person exerts himself in Torah, he can reach the higher part of the *seichel*, which is a spark of the *neshamah*, contained inside the *seichel* [as explained in *sefer Nefesh HaChaim*, the part of the *neshamah* resides

in the mind]. A person forms a connection to Torah through two different ways – through the mind, and through the heart. The external part of our connection to Torah, which is the necessary first step, is to exert our minds in the Torah. The internal part of our connection to Torah is to awaken our heart’s love for the Hashem’s Torah.

One’s mind becomes attached to Torah when one trains his thoughts to think and concentrate about a certain Torah thought. As a person perseveres with this, the mind slowly becomes attached to the words of Torah he is learning. Even if someone was not born with particularly gifted mental abilities, after training himself to exert his thoughts in Torah, he gains the ability called “*seichel hamishtokek*” (in the words of the *Ramchal*). His mind becomes connected to Torah, in its yearning and longing for more and more of the Torah’s wisdom.

The heart becomes attached to Torah in a different way than the mind does: through *tefillah*, and through *ahavas haTorah*, which awakens the heart’s yearning for Hashem and for His Torah. This enables the *neshamah* to shine in our minds, and that is how we can “see” our King, through the *einei haseichel*.

■ excerpt from the *sefer Bilvavi on the Parshah*

There are parents who very much want to raise their children with the values of Torah and mitzvos, but they may have some false notions about child education, which are hampering the progress. Parents may train a child to keep the *mitzvos* and they will do anything to make sure that their children learn Torah, and they may even spend much energy trying to develop good *middos* in their children, but they must understand that the level of deed alone is not enough to fulfill the will of Hashem (though its importance is immeasurable).

Rather, they must remind themselves that there is one common thread that must run through everything: A deep bond with the Creator, throughout the day.

In order for this knowledge to penetrate into the awareness of the children, it will not happen just through singing *Yedid Nefesh* by *Shalosh Seudos*. Rather, this is an awareness must envelope the atmosphere inside the home, throughout the day, and in a way that the children can sense it well.

The way to build our homes has been taught to us by Avraham Avinu: “*For I have loved him, because he commands his children and his household after him that they keep the way of Hashem.*” (*Beraishis 18:19*) After Avraham Avinu merited recognizing the Creator, the only matter that filled his being was to be close to Hashem, and as a result, that is what he desired to inherit and bestow to his children.

Therefore, bonding with Hashem, developing a relationship with Him, should not be reserved only for when problems arise, i.e. when there is an illness or any of the various

other difficulties and challenges that life can bring. Rather, bonding with Hashem must become a staple need in a person’s life, in the same way that we need bread and water to live. One should understand well that this is the true purpose of our life, and that this is the way a Jew needs to live like.

It is so painful that there are young boys and girls today who roam the world in the search of trying to find themselves. We must know that the central cause for this is because they have never been raised to form a *neshamah* connection with the One who made this world, and as a result of this awful void, children become tangled inside themselves and they are not finding themselves. And when that is the case, the chances of them falling into an abysmal descent are closely within their reach.

But on a more subtle level, even when children are still found within the “system” and they look fine in their external appearance and in how they are behaving, that is still not proof that they have formed a deep and true connection to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*.

In contrast, when the parents strive for the goal of bringing their children to an understanding that our life has great meaning and depth to it, and that a bond with *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* is necessary for one’s existence, that will be the surest path to success (and of course, parents always need to *daven* for their children), which will greatly reduce all of these lost, searching *neshamos* today.

■ Chapter Six - printed for the first time from the hebrew sefer *אֵת יְלֵדָךְ*

QUESTION What is the practical difference between the *avodas Hashem* we have had throughout the duration of *galus* (exile), versus the *avodas Hashem* of current times?

ANSWER The unique *avodah* of today's generation is to connect to Hashem earnestly and simply (with unquestioning loyalty), and from this we will merit the light of the Torah's wisdom, because wisdom comes from ayin (the spiritual), for the Torah's wisdom is longer than the land, wider than the sea, and vastly deep. In our times, besides for attaining the Torah's wisdom by warring against the impure forces, the Torah's wisdom is also attained through the pleasantness of this earnest and simple connection with Hashem.

QUESTION How important is it in our times to be connected to *tzaddikim* of the past by learning their *sefarim*? Is more needed than this, or is learning *sefarim* of *tzaddikim* enough in order to have true *aliyah* in *avodas Hashem*?

ANSWER The *sefarim* explain that there two "beginning points" to start from: *Keser* and *Chochmah*. When one starts with *Keser*, it is by beginning from a simple, direct bond with HaKadosh Baruch Hu, without using any intermediaries to get there. This is also known as the "*ohr* (illumination) of Mashiach ben Dovid". The other beginning point is called *Chochmah*. When one begins with *Chochmah*, he connects to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* through the wisdom of *tzaddikim*. This is the "*ohr* of Mashiach ben Yosef". Every person needs both of these aspects in his *avodas Hashem*, but in the final generations, the main way of connecting to Hashem is through the *ohr* of Mashiach ben Dovid [by starting from *Keser*, which is to

form a simple, earnest bond with Hashem].

QUESTION Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben Dovid are growing up in this generation, where the *yeridas hadoros* is at its lowest point. How then is it possible they will be the greatest *tzaddikim* in history, even more than the *Avos* and Moshe?

ANSWER It is because since there is so much *tumah* in the final generations, the rule is that *Les nehora ela m'gav chasheicha*, "There is no light like the light that follows darkness." [the darkness and low level of *ruchniyus* in the final generation makes the *tzaddikim* of the final generation even more righteous than the previous *tzaddikim* of our history]. Even more so, the spiritual level of the two Mashiach's will be a gift from Heaven to them, like what the *Mesillas Yesharim* says about *kedushah* (holiness), that "At first it is work, and in the end it is receives as a reward". At first a person works hard to achieve *kedushah*, but in the end, he receives it as a gift from Hashem.

QUESTION *Chazal* taught that Eliyahu *HaNavi* will arouse everyone to do *teshuvah* before Mashiach comes, which seems to imply that Eliyahu will enable each person to be redeemed even from the worst levels of *tumah*. Today we do not have a *navi* to rebuke Klal Yisrael and therefore perhaps we can give everyone the benefit of the doubt for falling into the "50th Gate of Impurity" through being connected to media and internet. And perhaps we can also say that Eliyahu and Mashiach will help all of *Klal Yisrael* be worthy of the Redemption, even if there is no mass *teshuvah* of the *tzibbur*. Does that make sense?

ANSWER Eliyahu will not return everyone

to doing *teshuvah*. This is because *Chazal* state (*Eduyos* 8:7) that “Eliyahu does not come to contaminate or purify, to distance or to draw close, only to distance with the arm those who are close, and to draw close with the arm those who are distant.” [In other words, only those who are already close to Hashem are the ones who will gain from Eliyahu’s revelation before the *Geulah*.] See also the Gemara *Kiddushin* 71a. Eliyahu will come to “return the hearts of the fathers on their children”, and it is certainly going to depend on each person’s particular level in *ruchniyus*, and *chas v’shalom* should a person say that we don’t need to do *teshuvah* before Eliyahu’s arrival. To the extent that one does personal self-work, that is how much one will merit the great *ohr* (the illumination) of the revelations of Eliyahu, followed by the revelations of the *Geulah*.

QUESTION How can a person do *teshuvah* in a joyous way and stay positive, instead of falling into worry and sadness from all of his *aveiros* and personal shortcomings?

ANSWER The suggested advice for this is that first, you should always see what positive gains you have had in your life so far, recognizing the value of what you have, and then thank Hashem for whatever good you have. Only after that should you reflect on your shortcomings. In this way, the beginning of your connection to Hashem will be coming from recognizing what you have, from actualizing your gratitude to Hashem about your good points and achievements - and from that positive state, you are now ready to do *teshuvah* for whatever areas you fall short in.

This will turn your fears about your *aveiros* and personal shortcomings, into *pachad d’kedushah* (“holy fear”). When your fears about your past *aveiros* and personal shortcomings are appearing to you *after* have actively established a relationship with Hashem, only *then* can you recognize clearly whatever it is that you need to fix, and only from that healthier perspective towards yourself can you go about fixing your past.

QUESTION Will the *Geulah* come only when we do *teshuvah*?

ANSWER The *Geulah* is able to come even when the generation is entirely undeserving of it, as the Gemara says [Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 98b]. When that is the case, there are no conditions to be deserving of *Geulah* [i.e. we can merit the *Geulah* even if we don’t separate from the sins of *lashon hora*, *sinas chinam*, excessive pursuit of luxuries, materialism and food, etc.]. But even more so, the *Geulah* will be an *ohr* (spiritual illumination) that is above our comprehension. And since it cannot be comprehended, you should not try to understand how it will happen. As *Chazal* taught: “Mashiach will only with *hesech hadaas*” (absence of understanding). Therefore, there is no place for making any calculations regarding the *Geulah*, and all we need to do [with regards to the words of our Sages about the conditions necessary for Redemption] is to be *mechazeik* (inspire) ourselves to improve, but we must not use any of the statements of our Sages to make any calculations of when and how the *Geulah* will come. ■ *from the Bilvavi Q & A archive*

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