

# Bilvavi

בלבבי  
משכן  
אבנה

## TURNING DIRECTLY TO HASHEM

At Har Sinai, we rose to the level of Adam HaRishon before the *cheit*, and we had a direct connection with Hashem. At the *cheit haEigel*, we fell from this exalted level. Ever since then, our means of connection to Hashem cannot be reached directly, and our connection to Hashem is mostly attained through the mediums of Torah learning, *davening*, and connecting to *tzaddikim*, which are our primary bridges to Hashem.

But in the *Acharis HaYomim* (End of Days), there is a change. It is written **בצר לך ומצאוך** “*In your suffering, you will find*”, and *Chazal* said that this refers to the suffering in the *Acharis HaYomim*, where it is easier for us to “find” Hashem. In a time of suffering and *heseter panim*, a person can turn more “directly” to Hashem, without the use of any medium.

If a person is drowning in middle of the sea, he is not depending on a *tzaddik* to *daven* for him. He will scream, from the depths of his heart, directly to Hashem, to be saved. This is the situation of our generation! In the end of the exile we are drowning in the *shaar HaNun d'tumah* which surrounds us from all sides. We are drowning in the middle of the sea, with no one to save us but Hashem.

Our physical lives are not in that much danger but our spiritual lives are. We are surrounded

by *tumah*, the presence of evil, on all sides. This is what *Chazal* meant when they said that there will be much suffering in the *Acharis HaYomim*. The physical suffering today as is an offshoot of our dismal spiritual situation.

The evil today surrounds us from all sides is everywhere. It can make us feel similar to Rabbi Eliezer ben Dordaya, who *davened* to all of the universe to save him, until he realized, “The matter is not dependent on anything but me”, which meant that he reached the place in his *nefesh* which turns directly to Hashem. This is the revelation we can come to in the *Acharis HaYomim*: To uncover our power of directly connecting to Hashem, through having a very real relationship with Him. **We need to simply talk with Him, no less than how we talk to a friend** (in the words of the *Mesillas Yesharim*).

In the *Acharis HaYomim*, people will stop depending on others for help, and instead they will realize that their only answer is to turn, directly, to Hashem. May we be *zoche* to reach the depth of life, of turning directly to Hashem, and may the time come quickly when Hashem’s complete reality will be revealed, when everyone will turn, simply and clearly to Hashem Himself, *ailav Yisbarach*. ■ excerpt from the *sefer* Bilvavi on the Parshah.

Although we have tried in these columns to lay the foundations for successful child education, we must remember that there is no guaranteed success. The purpose here was to help us have some direction, of how to properly fulfill our obligation towards our Creator, in the matter of raising our children. But we must remember, and be aware, that success with our children is solely in the hands of the Creator. And therefore, our *tefillos* to Hashem, and begging Him for help with our children, is the very first and basic condition that we need, in order to see success and joy, in raising our children.

May Hashem accept our *tefillos* before Him, and may we all merit to come forth from us *doros yesharim u'mevorachim* (generations that are upright and blessed)!



One of the most painful issues that exist in our times is that of children who abandon *mitzvah* observance. To our great sorrow, it is not uncommon. Although we cannot cover every possible situation here, we will try, with *siyata d'shmaya*, to reflect into the root of this issue.

Children grow up with a certain social setting where there are general rules of behavior taught, and sometimes they even get individual guidance. But when they encounter difficulties in their life – whether it is in the physical side of life or in their *ruchniyus* - that is where they can begin to fall. The root of the problem, in these cases, is that we have not succeeded in building and developing the individual *nefesh* (soul) of this child.

In order to develop the *nefesh* of the child, a parent must form a bond with the *nefesh* of their child, and to become attuned to the subtle aspects of the child's particular *nefesh*. The first thing a parent must know is to learn about the child's particular personality and what his/her needs are, and this needs to be a continuous learning process. Understandably, this can only be done after the parents learn about their own *nefesh*. Learning about their child's *nefesh* can take several years.

After that learning process, the parents must learn how to connect to their child's *nefesh*. This is not only done through giving him gifts which express love (which is also very important), but in addition, through recognizing and feeling the subtle threads that run through the child's personality. Besides for intellectually recognizing the child's nature and attitudes, the parent needs to bond with the *nefesh* of their child. Parents must be able to feel their child, sensing him and breathing him.

In most cases where a young boy or girl has left the fold of Yiddishkeit, it was because the parent and child did not have a deep, soul connection with each other. Many parents do not know how to develop such a bond with their children, and the truth is that it requires much individualized guidance. But one thing everyone must know is that if the child does not have this soul connection with his parents, or with at least one of them, he is like an orphan in his parents' lifetime. ■ *from the hebrew sefer* אַתְּ יִלְדְךָ

**QUESTION** What level of *teshuvah* and *emes* (truth) is needed in order for one to experience the *Geulah*? **ANSWER** **One needs a genuine *ratzon* (will) to do the will of Hashem,** no matter how many various ups and downs he has been through.

**QUESTION** *Sefer Nesivos Shalom* and also *sefer Shem M'Shmuel* say that Mashiach ben Yosef will repair problems with *kedushah* (personal holiness), and afterwards Mashiach ben Dovid will come to repair problems with *emunah*. If so, why then does everyone need to do *teshuvah*, if the two Mashiachs will come fix the world anyhow? **ANSWER** **Because doing *teshuvah* draws the Redemption closer. The more that a person fixes with *teshuvah*, to that extent will a person merit the spiritual benefits that will come from the two Mashiachs,** on his own level and to the degree that he does *teshuvah*. Because even when Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben Dovid will arrive, not everyone will merit to equally partake of the spiritual benefits that they will bring.

**QUESTION** Now, when we are at the end of the *ikvesa d'meshicha* and Mashiach is so close, we have so much *teshuvah* to do, so much to work on! What do we mainly need to focus on improving? **ANSWER** **Each person, at his own level** [should work on whatever he can do]. One should set aside a few minutes to **talk to Hashem, simply and earnestly**. One should also **set aside time, according to his capabilities, for learning Torah until he uses up all his energy**. Usually this cannot be done by most people for the entire day, but only for specific times of the day

**QUESTION** Are we in the war of Gog and Magog? **ANSWER** We are found in the intensity of it.

**QUESTION** What does the Rav mean that we're in middle of Gog and Magog? Is the "war of Gog and Magog" already taking place on a spiritual level and it will then spread into the physical dimension, where it will become the actual, physical war of Gog and Magog? **ANSWER** Certainly. It cannot "spread" to the outer world – it is already going on! There have always been wars taking place in the final years of our world. But all of these wars are just the final outcome of something deeper and more internal. All of these wars have been the result of the internal "wars" that have been taking place inside people's souls. The war of Gog and Magog will be revealed outwardly [in our world] as it will be, and it should make no difference to us how it will happen. If a person is busy thinking about it, he is wasting his time.

**QUESTION** Do all of us need to go through the physical war of Gog and Magog in order to be *zoche* to the *Geulah*? And if we are in the midst of the intense part of the "war of Gog and Magog", does this mean what the Chofetz Chaim spoke about, that there will be three world wars before Mashiach, and that the final world war will be the war of Gog and Magog which will end with the *Geulah*? **ANSWER** Originally, had the generation been "entirely deserving of Redemption" (see *Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 98*), the Redemption would have come swiftly and suddenly, before its preordained time, and the war of Gog and Magog would have taken place in the blink of an eye – it would have all taken place

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in the inner dimension, within Torah learning. But now that we were not *zoche* to that, we are already found in a drawn out process of the final war, and we are all going through it. **This is the third world war which the Chofetz Chaim spoke about – and we are currently found in the intense part of it, and there have already been many casualties, mainly in the spiritual sense, *Rachmana Litzlan*.** It mainly affects people on a soul level, and very little on a physical level.

**QUESTION** What is the depth behind “Gog” and “Magog”? **ANSWER** Reb Tzadok HaKohen (in *sefer Machsheves Charotz: 9*) explains that “Gog” is from the word *gag*, “roof”, and also the concept of *gaavah*, conceitedness. He writes: “When the word Gog is spelled with the letter vov, it implies self-sufficiency, to be entirely conceited at the root.” (See also *Pri Tzaddik to Parshas Shemini: 9*). On a similar note, the *Zohar (II:57, II:75)* says that Hashem’s exaltedness and pride (*ga’on*) will reign supreme after the arrival of Gog and Magog. And Rav Tzadok further writes in *sefer Pri Tzaddik (Beraishis:12)* that the evil of denying G-d is represented by Gog and Magog, which is the collected evil of all 70 gentile nations, for the *gematria* (equivalent) of *Gog and Magog* totals 70 (*sefer Pri Tzaddik, Va’eira 2*, and based on *Midrash Tanchuma, parshas Korach, 12*).

**Gog** fights against Mashiach ben Yosef. As a hint, Gog has the letter *gimmel* twice in his name, which equals 3 and 3, totaling 6, and Yosef is represented by the number 6, for Yosef is the sixth

level [of the 10 *Sefiros*]. Rav Tzadok writes (in *Pri Tzaddik, Naso 15*) that Gog and Magog will fight against Mashiach ben Yosef. This is because Gog and Magog represent *gaavah* (conceitedness), which is also the root of immorality. Refer also to the *Gemara Succah 52a* about the war of Gog and Magog against Mashiach ben Yosef. **Magog** fights against Mashiach ben Dovid. The *sefer Pri Tzaddik (Rosh HaShanah, 11)* says, “The main evil of Gog and Magog is to counter the holiness of Mashiach ben Dovid. See also *Pri Tzaddik parshas Netzavim, 11*. This is the evil of heresy, denying G-d. As the *sefer Shem M’Shmuel (Chol HaMoed Succos)* states, “The concept of Gog and Magog is all about rebelling against G-d.” If we analyze it more closely, this is actually the evil of Magog, because the *sefer Shem M’Shmuel* states elsewhere that Magog is all about “throwing away the yoke of Heaven.”

**QUESTION** What should be the proper perspective with *Acharis HaYomim* approaching? How can we not be afraid of what might happen? **ANSWER** Repeat to yourself the *emunah peshutah*, the simple belief, that Hashem does everything and that there is nothing in the world which has any power, other than Him: ***Ain Od Milvado***, as discussed in *sefer Nefesh HaChaim shaar III*. By reviewing these facts, you will be spending your life being near Hashem and with Hashem, and instead of being rocked by all of the turbulent movements of this world, you will be moving all the time with Hashem. This is the way a true, inner life looks like, for anyone who seeks truth. ■ *from the Bilvavi Q & A archive*

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