

BALANCING PNIMIYUS & AHAVAS YISRAEL

Parshas Naso discusses the *nazir*. The essence of being a *nazir* is the quality of *perishus*: abstaining from the materialism of our world. A *nazir* practiced the absolute level of *perishus*, but *perishus* is also a concept that we need to emulate at our own level, because it is one of the steps of growth laid out in *Mesillas Yesharim*.

There is outward *perishus*, as well as inward *perishus*. Outward *perishus* is to keep a distance from unnecessary physical pleasures, and one should separate from pleasures on the level that he can currently handle. But there is also an inward *perishus*, described in *Chovos HaLevovos* also in *Sefer HaMaspik*: A person can be amidst throngs of people, yet inwardly he is separated from them and from all that they do, for he is inwardly attached with Hashem. He is living in

the depth of the *neshamah*, where one realizes strongly that he has a *pnimiyus*, an inner world of his own.

There is a common misconception about *perishus*. Practicing *perishus* amongst people – feeling disconnected from the world and living in one's own *pnimiyus* – sounds like one doesn't have any feelings for others and doesn't care about them. That is not the way of the Torah. The truth about *perishus* is totally different. On one hand, it is when one can be around others yet he is disconnected from what they do and from their various mindsets and lifestyles, and at the very same time, he can still feel a deep connection to all other Jews, in the depths of his *neshamah*, with true *ahavas Yisrael*, for he recognizes that at our root, every *neshamah* is part of one unit.

When we live amongst others, we need

show an interest in others and show others that we care about them. It is all *chessed*, and it is part of *ahavas Yisrael*. It should be no different than how a parent must show an interest in his child's ball – although they do not care about the ball, they show interest in it because this is what the child needs in order to feel cared about.

Even as we show interest in others, we can still have our own internal *perishus*, feeling separate from anyone who is too attached to This World (such as those who follow the news because they don't want to feel 'out of it', who don't realize how much this attaches them to This World), living inwardly in our own *pnimiyus*. Each person can still find his own internal world, his *pnimiyus*, where he can be deeply connected to the *neshamah*, Torah, and Hashem. (from *Bilvavi On The Parsha*)

NURTURING YOUR CHILD'S NESHAMAH

Is the home a place to mainly work on ourselves, or can it also be a place where we have *menuchah* (serenity)? It can be both. If you work on yourself to express love in the home to your family (as explained in last week's column) and it is beginning to come naturally for you to do this, then you will find that there can be *menuchah* in your home.

When a person makes sure that expressing love in the home and creating a warm atmosphere in the home is his main priority in the home, he will find that the home doesn't have to a place of war. He will see the home as a place to reveal love, not as a place to engage in a 'war' with his family. And that will give him some *menuchah* (serenity) in his home.

When there is a basic level of love that is

expressed in the home, upon that, *ruchniyus* can thrive. Without basic emotions of love, our *ruchniyus* is not grounded properly and we aren't able to be spiritually healthy. It is impossible to emphasize only *ruchniyus* with no acknowledgment of our basic physical and emotional needs. The home cannot survive on this. So we first need to let our natural love flow from our simple emotions, before we embark on revealing more *ruchniyus* in the home.

What is the basis that we need to build the home upon? Should it be *derech eretz*, decent manners? Should it be neatness, order, and cleanliness? Should it be *kibbud av v'aim*, honoring parents? Some parents think that *kibbud av v'aim* is the most important atmosphere to convey to the family...

How many children feel that their father or mother doesn't love them! In fact, there are even parents who will admit it

openly that they do not love one of their children! Deep down, of course, we all love our children, because there is a natural ingrained love that every parent has for his child. But it can be pushed very deep into the subconscious, so it is not consciously revealed, and that is why the parent will feel like he does not love his child. Reb Yisrael Salanter wrote about this concept.

However, it's hard to suddenly start acting like a loving person and expressing love in the home, when one hasn't expressed any love throughout the day. It's too much of a shift. Therefore, every person, **before** he comes home, needs to take the time to think how he will express love in the home. You need to first let yourself feel your love for your family and concentrate on it, and then you can express it properly when you are home. (02_משפחתך)

Q&A – DEVELOPING OUR PNIMIYUS

QUESTION What is the source that our purpose on this world is to sense closeness with Hashem on this world [as described in sefer Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh]? **ANSWER** The Chovos HaLevovos elaborates about the concept of *hakarah*, recognizing Hashem, which is to feel and sense Hashem. The Mesillas Yesharim, in the level of *chassidus* (piety), says that one needs to talk to Hashem “as a man talks to his friend.” And there are many other such terminologies as well.

QUESTION How come we don't find any mention of the concepts of “revealing the *neshamah*” and “feeling Hashem's Presence in the heart” in any of our classical *sefarim*? It seems that this concept is largely being explained by the Rav and other recent authors of *sefarim*, which explains openly about revealing the soul and revealing the presence of Hashem in our heart, but our classical *sefarim* do not speak about it openly. What is the reason for this? **ANSWER** It is because only in our generation, where we are so close to Mashiach, that we can receive the ohro shel Mashiach, the “illumination of Mashiach”. The *sefarim* revealed that the closer we are to Mashiach, the more we can receive the “light” - the revelations - of Mashiach.

QUESTION What does it mean to build an *olam pnimi*, an “inner world” inside oneself? How does a person do this? **ANSWER** When a person needs to be around others all the time, when he feels his identity only around his family or friends, and he cannot “find himself” unless he is around others, this is an example of a person who has no inner world of his own. He has not yet built an *olam pnimi* within him. In contrast, when a person is able to sit with himself each day and reflect about the purpose of his life, and he makes an inventory on what he has done until now and his aspirations for the future, and how he would like to actualize them – this is an excellent way to begin building one's own “inner world”.

QUESTION How does one open the *neshamah* more? **ANSWER** 1. Believe in the purity of your *neshamah* no matter the situation. 2. Attach yourself, with utter simplicity, in the Creator. 3. See the inner dimension that is found within each thing, by learning in-depth the words of *Chazal* and the *sefarim hakedoshim*, about a matter.

QUESTION Which *sefer* can I learn which will help me relate to myself more as a *neshamah*? **ANSWER** Shaarei Kedushah of Rav Chaim Vital. See also *sefer* Michtav M'Elياهو vol.1, in the section called *Maamar Guf V'Neshamah* (Essay on the Body and Soul).

QUESTION How do we get past our *guf* (body) and subjugate it to the *neshamah*? **ANSWER** We overcome the hold of the *guf* on us by (1) Developing pure, unquestioning *emunah* in Hashem. (2) Connecting to the depth of the Torah's wisdom. (3) Crying out to Hashem for help, verbally, and also internally in one's heart, “Their hearts cried out to Hashem”). (4) By having quiet solitude, where a person can reach a calm, quiet place in his *nefesh* (soul). (5) Improving one's *middos*.

QUESTION How can one know what his unique *tafkid* (role) in life is? **ANSWER** By shedding one's extraneous desires, and by listening to one's pure *ratzon* (inner spiritual will) and sensing it, one can uncover it.

QUESTION Why is in-depth learning of Gemara the deepest kind of connection a person can have with Hashem, more than learning *mussar*? **ANSWER** Is learning Mesillas Yesharim a connection with Hashem, or with the Torah? It is a connection with Hashem. We must love Hashem - but we must also love His Torah. There is *ahavas* Hashem (love of Hashem) and there is *ahavas* HaTorah (love of the Torah). They are not two separate matters, though, and we should fuse them both together.

QUESTION What should a person do if he works and he doesn't have that much time to learn, and he also wants to feel a relationship with Hashem but he doesn't feel it from Gemara?

ANSWER When Rav Aharon Kotler *zt"l* first came to America, he had to convince parents to send their children to Yeshivos and learn Torah. They asked him, “What will come from our children? Will they become a Rav, a Rosh Yeshivah, a Dayan?” He told them, “Your child will become someone who learns Torah. That is what will come from him.” We need to change our perspective towards our life. Hashem gave us 24 hours a day so that we can devote our time to Him and to His Torah. There is a curse given to mankind called “*parnassah*” (having to earn a living), and we need to deal with that curse. But we must know what the essence of life is. We need to breathe what life actually is. Learning Torah is not something that takes up your time. It is your *neshamah* itself. It is a very deep connection... The *sefarim* bring a question: Who do you like more, your father or your mother? Hashem and the Torah are like our father and our mother, and to decide which of them we love more is like choosing if we love our father or mother more. For someone who feels like he's not enjoying his learning enough, I will tell you the following story. There were two people I met last week. One person told me that he had to leave Kolel in order to go to work. “I had no choice,” he said. I said to him, “Maybe it's true that you had no choice and you really had to go out to work. But did you at least cry on the day you closed your Gemara?” Another story: I met another person here whom I hadn't seen in about ten years. I said to him, “Nu, what's with you?” He said to me, “*Baruch Hashem*, I know Shas.” As I conversed with him, he mentioned to me that he's thinking about a certain business he is pursuing. I said to him, “If you know Shas, how can it be that you're thinking of going into business?!” He told me, “I learned all my years only so I could get *kavod* (honor). I got what I wanted, and now I am on to a different kind of prestige.” If a person never felt enjoyment in learning, did he ever cry about that to Hashem, that he doesn't have feelings of enjoyment in his learning? The Gemara says that if a student didn't see success after five years of learning, it is sign that he's not seeing blessing in his learning. Did a person really try for five years to learn, before deciding that he doesn't enjoy learning? Compare this to a person who loses his appetite for food and he doesn't want to eat. Should he stop eating just because he doesn't have an appetite?