

SHEMA – ACCESSING THE HEART

שמע ישראל ה' אלוּקִיךָ – Regarding the *mitzvah* of *Kerias Shema*, the *Sefer HaChinuch* (42) says that the *mitzvah* to say the *Shema* is because (1) We have to be *mekabel ol malchus shomayim*, “accept the rule of Hashem”, and (2) To keep a distance from *aveirah* (sin).

Being *mekabel ol malchus shomayim* during *Shema* does not mean that we are simply reminding ourselves about Hashem. It is to accept Hashem’s rule over us, and we do this though our *nefesh*, our soul. Our *guf* (body) isn’t able to accept it. It is only our *nefesh* that can accept Hashem’s rule over us. Our soul wants to do the right thing, and it yearns to do only Hashem’s will.

Therefore, saying *Kerias Shema* is really meant for us to awaken the inner will in our *nefesh*: רצוננו לעשות רצונך, “It is our will to do Hashem’s will”. It is not some external, superficial remembrance of Hashem. It is not even about subjugating our *guf* to Hashem and forcing it to accept our responsibilities to Hashem. Rather, it is about awakening our inner will, to bring our *nefesh* to the fore.

When we say *Shema*, we need to be awakening the soul’s will to do Hashem’s will. There are deeper and deeper layers within our *nefesh*. Some people are in touch with the deeper layers of their *nefesh* when they *daven*, while others are only *davening* through their outermost layers of the *nefesh*. But in any case, whenever a person says *Shema*, he must say it from his deepest place. Although one fulfills the *mitzvah* of *Shema* halachically even without awakening his *nefesh*, he will be missing the whole point of *Shema*, if he doesn’t say the *Shema* from his deepest point that he is aware of.

Saying *Shema* is so that we can awaken our deepest point in ourselves that we are in touch with, and from that place inside ourselves, we can be *mekabel malchus shomayim*. When we are awakening our *nefesh* like this, our *guf* will also be influenced by this, and we will be aided in overcoming any of the rebellious desires of the *guf*. Many are not used to saying *Shema* with this awareness, but if one gets used to it on a daily basis, he will reveal an entirely new depth to his life. He will keep sharpening the inner point of his *nefesh*, as he continues to do this, until he can eventually reach the “innermost point of the heart”.

There are two major parts to our life: Our intellect, and our heart. Our intellect must become filled with the Torah, while our heart needs to be penetrated more and more, all of its “50 gates of understanding” that are in the heart, to keep getting further into our heart, until we finally get to its innermost point, where there is complete level of closeness with Hashem. צור לבבי וחלקי אלוּקִיךָ “*The rock of my heart and my portion is G-d*”.

At the outer layer of the heart dwells our *yetzer hora* (evil inclination), which pulls us towards material pursuits and all faulty character traits. We need to penetrate past this outer layer of the heart, by (1) Avoiding the pursuit of materialism, and (2) Finding out what our personal worst character trait is, and then working to repair it. And through that, we can get through to our hearts. Certainly, a person needs to *daven* constantly to Hashem for help with this.

After consistently overcoming our pull toward physicality and uprooting our worst *middah*, we can then reach the innermost point of the heart - and there, we are truly able to be *mekabel*

malchus shomayim. If a person doesn’t try to overcome physical desires and his worst *middah*, his heart remains out of reach, and he will not be able to truly be *mekabel ol malchus shomayim*.

Learning Torah and doing *mitzvos* is the first basic step to accomplish this, but in addition, saying *Shema* awakens our inner point of the heart, revealing it more and more. We can do this throughout the rest of day as well. This creates a deep awareness of Hashem on a much more constant basis, each person on his own level, and it transforms a person entirely.

Thus, besides for the *halachah* of concentrating on the words of the *Shema*, we should also have the awareness when we say *Shema* that we are trying to awaken our heart. **This is one of the greatest forms of *avodah* that there is.**

Most people do not feel that Hashem is watching everything that they do, because they live so deeply entrenched in materialism. But when one gets used to being *mekabel malchus shomayim*, it is an entry into a life where a person **clearly** recognizes that Hashem sees him all the time. Every day, if a person says *Shema* with this awareness of trying to awaken the inner will of his soul, he will be awakening the light of his *neshamah*. He will truly sense all the time that Hashem is watching him. And by default, he will constantly be running to do Hashem’s will.

When we say *Shema*, we can awaken our inner will that wants to do Hashem’s will, revealing forth the *kedushah* of our *neshamos*, which will illuminate our existence to help us pursue only that which Hashem wants.

Translated from the original hebrew shiur
 טעמי המצוות_020_שמע

Q&A – THE ULTIMATE CHOICE

QUESTION From all the different types of *tumah* there are, what specific *tumah* is the Internet?

ANSWER It is the *echad d'kelipah*, evil oneness, to counter the *echad d'kedushah*, holy oneness, which is the *ohr EinSof* (Hashem's infinite light). Through the Internet, a person can see from one end of the world to the other and it seems endless. Thus it is the *kelipah* which is fighting against Hashem's *ohr EinSof*.

QUESTION Is the *tumah* of the Internet and the smartphone the same *tumah*, or are they different kinds of *tumah*?

ANSWER Smartphones are far more *tamei*.

QUESTION Is owning a smartphone even if it can't get internet connection still considered to be a connection to the 50th level of *tumah*, from the mere fact that one has broken his boundaries by owning a smartphone and coming closer to the *Nachash* (the "Snake", the *yetzer hora*)? Or is it only internet-capable smartphones which connect a person to the 50th level of *tumah*? What are the parameters of how a smartphone connects a person to the 50th level of *tumah*?

ANSWER If a smartphone cannot connect to Internet at all, although it is still a very big **breach of boundaries** to own it and it brings one a lot **closer** to the *Nachash*, as long as it can't connect to any internet then it does not make one **connected** to the 50th level of *tumah*.

QUESTION According to all of the Rav's words about how severe the issue of using Internet is, and that people who don't give it up by the time Mashiach comes are joining with the "Erev Rav", how should we view all those who refuse to give up their smartphones and non-kosher Internet use?

ANSWER If at the very last moment before the *Geulah* there are any Jews who do not want to give up their Internet use, *chas v'shalom*, it is then that they have proven who they really are, by choosing with their own *bechirah* (free will) at that moment that their true will is to be eternally connected with evil, *chas v'shalom*. [So as long as the Redemption isn't here yet, you are still obligated to love every Jew and you cannot assume that he might be from the *Erev Rav*].

QUESTION How should we view a person who has a smartphone with internet? Does it mean he doesn't have *yiras shomayim*? Or that he's simply making a bad choice? Or that he's a *rachmanus* for owning a smartphone because of

all the damage and repercussions this will have on him?

ANSWER Become less interested in what others do, and instead, be focused on developing your own internal world of *ruchniyus*. But when you do take notice of others who are in this situation, yes, you should feel pity for them.

QUESTION What is the way that we can do *zikuy harabim*, benefitting many others, in order to save the generation?

ANSWER Explain to many others that we in this generation are found in the 50th level of *tumah*, and at the same time, we also have a powerful amount of holiness we can access, in order to counter all of the *tumah*, and that is by accessing the 50th level of *kedushah*, which is shining stronger in our world with the closer we get to end. Explain to others what the concept of the 50th level of *tumah* is, and how to separate from it, and also do them the benefit of explaining to them what the 50th level of *kedushah* is – and how to connect to it. Because this is the *avodah* of the generation!

QUESTION The more I absorb the words of the Rav about how Internet and smartphones connect a person to the "50th level of *tumah*", I am starting to feel that I am living in amidst a *Gehinnom* on this world, with *treif* smartphones everywhere we turn. Is that the appropriate feeling to have...?

ANSWER Yes.

QUESTION People don't take well to any of these words. Even after hearing all these words (i.e. it prevents a person from the *Geulah*, it holds a person back from *Olam HaBa*, etc), how can it be that they still don't want to give it up?

ANSWER You can only help those who are willing to listen.

QUESTION Can we really survive today without Internet? Looking up a telephone number on the Internet takes a second and saves me so much time!

ANSWER Using internet eases you emotionally, but the problem is that the Internet is dangerous for your soul, in a very palpable and clear way. It needs *mesirus nefesh* [it requires a sacrifice on your part]. Without *mesirus nefesh*, it is not possible for anyone in this generation to be saved from this 50th level of *tumah*.

QUESTION How can I motivate those I care about, to give up their Internet?

ANSWER Explain to them, calmly, and from your heart, what is at stake for them. *Daven* and cry to Hashem for them. (from the archive of Bilvavi Q & A)