

## PNIMIYUS

When Rivkah felt the clash between Yaakov and Esav inside of her and she went to ask Shem about it, she was told that there were two nations inside of her who would be very different. One of them would inherit the World To Come, while the other would live for this physical world. This World is all about things that are physical, external, self-gratifying, and superficial, while the Next World is entirely about what's spiritual, internal, and real. Since Esav was meant to inherit This World, it meant that Esav's share would be superficiality, *chitzoniyyus*, to be focused on gratifying the *guf* (the body) and to live for materialism, while Yaakov's share is *pnimiyus*, inwardness – the life of the *neshamah* (soul).

The fight between Yaakov and Esav takes place inside our own *nefesh* (soul) as well, an internal battle that takes place within us – the battle of our *bechirah*, our free will, of what kind of life we will choose and what we really want deep down. Esav was all about *chitzoniyyus*, because even though he acted pious on the outside, on his inside he only lived for This World and all its materialism. He had no *pnimiyus*. A person might act like Esav too, if he acts good on his outside but on his inside he doesn't live for the next world, for *ruchniyyus*. Even if he learns and does mitzvos, if deep in his heart all that he truly desires is this materialistic world, then he is living his life like Esav.

Chazal said, "There is no day that is not more cursed than the day before it." This is the concept of *yeridas hadoros*, the descending level of *ruchniyyus* of each generation with the further away we are from the beginning and from when the Torah was given. With

each passing day, the world becomes more and more superficial, where people are becoming more and more focused on what's external, concerned only about *chitzoniyyus* (superficiality).

Esav is called a "man of the field", a person who lives for superficiality, who is only concerned about how he looks in his *chitzoniyyus*. We all have the free will to decide if we will live a life of *pnimiyus* or *chitzoniyyus*. What does it mean to live a life of *pnimiyus*? There are many levels to this. In Egypt, our people did not change their language, their clothing, or their names. It showed that their *pnimiyus* didn't get affected by Egypt. Why? Because the way a person talks has a lot to do with his *pnimiyus*. Many times people can be talking to each other, but the words they speak do not come from their *pnimiyus*. They speak one thing, but in their heart they desire something else. When we talk to others, either we are talking from our *pnimiyus*, from our *nefesh* (soul) or we are talking the language of our *guf*, the body, the language of *chitzoniyyus*. What type of language do we have? Do we talk with others from within our *nefesh*, or are we talking to them from the place of our various desires and wishes that are superficial? When a person only talks in an external manner, only talking about externalities and this world, or if he's only talking about *ruchniyyus* from his exterior and he doesn't really want it deep down - his heart is not in it all - he is living a life like Esav.

In order to change, we must make sure that we are fighting with our inner struggles, and not only with superficial things. Different things have to bother us. For example, when a person only talks about politics and the latest news, he is living for *chitzoniyyus*. When a woman only wonders if it's permitted to wear a certain kind of clothing or

not, it's really an issue that has to do with one's *pnimiyus*, of what she really wants. If all a person is concerned about is if it's permitted or forbidden, the person is only concerned with externalities.

What should we be talking about all the time with others? If we shouldn't be talking all the time about worldly matters, then what do we talk about? We need to speak about what our purpose on this world is, what we came here for. And that should be the kinds of conversations we should be having with others – to talk about *pnimiyus*, about the things that really matter.

It's possible when a person hears this, he will say, "This is impossible!" and he despairs from ever trying to implement such a change. But we must know that it's possible also *not* to give up. We all have a soul in us, and it really wants to grow. Many people really want to grow and aspire for greatness, but even more than this is that we have to realize, that we need to change our very conversations. We need to be focused in our daily life about what's really important to us deep down.

This is what life is about. If we change what bothers us, if we are bothered more by our spiritual problems than our materialistic problems, then we can have hope in surviving life on this world. The world is constantly changing, the problems grow more and more, and the world today (5769) is a different world than 15 years ago. The problems of this world keep growing, and the Sages said that "There is no day that is not more cursed than the day before it." If we are to have any hope in our life on this world, we need to change what bothers us, what we think about all the time, and what we talk about with others.

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Yet, in spite of all the *yeridas hadoros* (spiritual descent of the generations) that just gets worse and worse as the generations continue, we must know that this all the external side to the situation. There is also a totally different way to view our situation of the Final Days, which is taking place amidst all of the *yeridas hadoros*, and that is, that the closer we are to the end, the more the original ohr, the “light” of the beginning pure state of Creation, begins to return and shine again.

In spite of *yeridas hadoros* (spiritual descent of the generations) and what Chazal said that “Each day is more cursed than the day before it”, we must know that this is only the external layer of the situation taking place. There is a more inner layer underneath all of it [an opportunity like never before, which is only available in the final days, our current generation]. The *sefarim* give an analogy to this. When a person is traveling away from his town, his path becomes darker and darker, because the lights of the town are further and further away. But the closer he gets to ending his journey, the closer he is to finding the next town, he begins to see the lights of the town even before he gets there. The lights of the coming town begin to light up his path, even though he is not yet there yet.

Although we are far from the original light that was at the beginning of Creation, now that we are nearing the end – the coming of Moshiach, the rebuilding of the *Beis HaMikdash*, the resurrection of the dead, etc. – all the prophecies concerning the future – we are nearing the great light of the future. We are getting closer and closer to the great light of the future, and this will be an even greater light than the original light of Creation.

These are not my own ideas that I invented, they are the words of *Raboseinu HaKedoshim*, our holy teachers and Sages. These words always applied to every person in every generation, but they are especially applicable to today. We are in the lowest level generation since the start of Creation, but at the

same time, we are nearing Moshiach, the situation of Olam HaBa. We are nearing the end, which will be a greater light than the light at the beginning of Creation. With the closer we are to Moshiach, the more our soul can connect to that state.

The *yetzer hora* gets stronger and stronger with the further we descend into *yeridas hadoros*, and because of this, there are people who lose all their aspirations to grow. They think, “I’m in such a lowly generation anyway. After all, there’s *yeridas hadoros*. My *yetzer hora* gets stronger and stronger, so I can’t defeat it totally. All I can do is perhaps succeed a little bit and overcome a little bit of *yetzer hora*.” They think that it’s pointless to try to succeed in *ruchniyus* (spirituality), that it’s too hard in our generation, and that at best, we can only succeed “a little bit” in overcoming the *yetzer hora* at best. But such a perspective is childish. If a person views himself as a small, helpless person who feels “I’m so hopeless”, then of course he won’t succeed. From a logical perspective, we can’t win over the *yetzer hora* in a generation like this (unless a person possesses a quality to be very stubborn). It seems impossible for us to attain any high levels these days. A person might think that only in the past did we have it good, and only in the future will we have it good, but not now.

But the truthful perspective to have is that because we are nearing the end, we are more connected to the end, and thus we really do have the power to attain high levels. The light of the future is steadily approaching. If we connect ourselves inwardly to that light (of course, this does not mean that a person should be haughty that “I can succeed” due to my own abilities, but only because Hashem can help him succeed), that is the key to spiritual survival today.

How can we see the light of the future that is beginning to shine today? We can all see that there is so much Torah learning taking place today, much more than in the previous generation.

There is also an abundance of *chessed* and *tzedakah* like there never was before, certainly in the amount of it that is taking place. It is unprecedented.

Now of course, if we compare the quality of our Torah learning and *chessed* to the previous generations, it pales in comparison. If we just look at it all with a superficial perspective, that we’re simply nothing compared to the previous generations, then we can easily feel that all of our *ruchniyus* is worthless when compared to the quality of *ruchniyus* in previous generations. Such an attitude just focuses on the lowly state of this generation, and it is a lens of negativity. The more truthful perspective to have is that there is an abundance of Torah and *chessed* these days because the light of the future has begun, and therefore we are enjoying a great abundance of Torah and *chessed*. Of course, we still live in a generation that is on a low level, there is *tumah* and *shiflus* everywhere, and therefore our *ruchniyus* is not complete today. The light of the future cannot be fully revealed yet, because we are not yet at the *Geulah*. But, looking at the positive side of all this, there is still plenty of light from the future that has begun to shine now and which has begun to penetrate into our current dimension.

Look at how much Torah learning there is going on today. In addition to the amount of learning that is taking place today, there is also a lot more *Chiddushei Torah* today, and a person can arrive at *chiddushim* today with minimal effort, when in the past it required much more effort. This is all because the light of the future has begun to shine.

Each generation is tested with a particular choice to make. In our generation, the test is if we will choose to remain with the lowly state of generation, giving up and having no aspirations to rise above the situation of today, or if we will connect ourselves with the state of the future, of yearning for the times of Mashiach.

(תפילה.082.כשנים הטובות)

## TEFILLAH, EMUNAH & GEULAH

**QUESTION** How does a person utilize the heart during *davening*? **ANSWER** With *t'mimus* (earnestness) and *p'shitus* (simplicity). To daven with a simple sense of Hashem, a palpable recognition of Hashem, and with pouring out the heart when talking to Him.

**QUESTION** Why didn't Yitzchok daven for Rivkah until he saw that she was barren? **ANSWER** Certainly a person needs to daven at the beginning of every situation he finds himself in, and Yitzchok also did so. But later he increased his *tefillos* even more, because he saw that a greater level was needed in order for them to bear children. As Rashi says, ויעתר "Vaye'etar" means that he greatly increased his *tefillos*.

**QUESTION** Why does it take so long for my *tefillos* to get answered?? How can a person take all of this in stride and not give up from davening, when he's not being answered?? Is a person supposed to keep *davening* and just never give up, or does there come a point where a Jew is allowed to stop *davening*, because he understands that his requests from Hashem for a certain thing are not just being answered...? **ANSWER** There are several reasons [why a person's *tefillos* aren't being answered] and here are just a few of them. (1) It may be because [by not getting answered] he is acquiring more *emunah* (faith) in Hashem. (2) It may be because [by not getting answered] he is acquiring more and more depth to his *davening*. (3) It may be because he needs to go through a certain amount of pain which is purifying him more, and one needs to learn how to accept this with love. (4) It may be because it's not the right time now to get answered, and it will not be good for him if he gets answered now. (5) It can all be a test that he should learn how to not despair. (6) It can all be a test that he isn't supposed to be turning so much to doctors [and instead he should be turning more to Hashem for help]. A person always needs to *daven*,

unless he requires a miracle, because the Gemara says that it is pointless to *daven* for a miracle.

*Davening* should always be accompanied with *emunah*, and accepting any painful circumstances with love, and then returning back to *davening*, in a cycle of *tefillah*, then strengthening one's *emunah*, then back to *tefillah*.

**QUESTION** If a person has been crying all the time to the Ribono shel Olam for many years, to taste some real pleasure in *ruchniyus* and especially when it comes to his learning, but he feels that Hashem is rejecting him *chas v'shalom*, what should such a person do? Should he continue not giving up, and keep crying to Hashem, hoping that he'll soon get answered? **ANSWER** Sit with yourself and reflect, and write down **any of your accomplishments which you have so far been zoche to. Review this list every day, and thank Hashem, verbally.** Your very involvement in what you "have" will give you a sense of stability, strength, and encouragement. Right now, you are too focused on what you didn't yet accomplish, and you're not thinking enough about what you **do** have and what you have so far gained.

**QUESTION** What are things we should be *davening* for when we *daven* for our children? **ANSWER** *Daven* that your children should be *zocheh* to completely reach their unique *cheilek* on this world. And at any time, *daven* for whatever they need right now.

**QUESTION** Why is our main *avodah* in *Klal Yisrael* to separate from the Internet before the *Geulah*? Shouldn't our main *avodah* now be to *daven* that all of *Klal Yisrael* should be *zocheh* to the *Geulah*?? **ANSWER** There is what we need to do, and there is also what to *daven* for. At first we need to do our responsibility to Hashem, and only after that can we *daven*. Otherwise, we are like the person immersing in the *mikveh* while holding onto a *sheretz* (remaining impure). After a person cuts off all of his connection to anything to do with Internet, he is able to

then *daven* for the rest of *Klal Yisrael*, but a person cannot remain connected to the *tumah* of the Internet and at the same time *daven* for others.

**QUESTION** The *Gra* says that a person who commits serious *aveiros* but who has *bitachon* is better off than a person who learns Torah but who doesn't have *bitachon*. How can a person who commits *aveiros* also be a *baal bitachon*? How can it be that he recognizes Hashem is with him and even so he goes against His will? Isn't that a contradiction? **ANSWER** A person is a wondrous combination, a complex creation of both a soul and a body together – two opposites that are integrated together. Every person has opposite aspects and contradictions within him. It is therefore very common for a person to have *emunah* and *bitachon* in one area, with less *emunah* and *bitachon* in another area. This can either be because his role and his soul root is more connected with the area that he has *bitachon* in, or because his life circumstances brought him there. It is very common for businessmen to have *emunah* and *bitachon* that a financial deal will work out, and this is because their very work requires them to get used to taking risks and believing that they will succeed. It is like what Chazal say about sailors, who are called *tzaddikim*, because they naturally rely on Hashem since they often face storms at sea. Furthermore, sometimes a person can be a *rasha* regarding a particular aspect that he has a strong *yetzer hora* for. For example, in the generation of the wicked King Menasheh, there was a very strong *yetzer hora* to worship idols. Every person has a *yetzer hora* for a certain thing which he can easily fall in with. And regarding everyone collectively, Chazal said that all people stumble in the sin of *avak lashon hora* (conversations that can lead to gossiping about others), and anyone who regularly commits a certain sin is called a *rasha* [regarding that sin].

**QUESTION** What is the connection between the final *nisayon* (test) of *Klal Yisrael* which is in the area of *emunah*

(as the Gemara explains in Talmud Bavli Makkos 24a), with the nisayon of the Internet which is also called the final nisayon? What does the challenge of the internet have to do with a test to our emunah? **ANSWER** These [internet] devices give a person the feeling that he is in charge of everything, from wherever he is in the world. Through internet devices, a person can be sitting in one country and turning on an appliance in a different country. When a person lives like this, it is the opposite of feeling how everything is in the hands of Hashem.

**QUESTION** The *Gra* says that anyone who has *emunah* and *bitachon* will survive *chevlei Mashiach*. If a person has connection to a *treif* phone, can he still have *emunah* and *bitachon* and be saved from *chevlei Mashiach*? **ANSWER** No, because his *bitachon* is certainly weakened through owning these devices.

**QUESTION** My son came home today with a *treif* (unfiltered) smartphone. How can I deal with this? **ANSWER** I am pained over you, my dear friend, and I am joined in your pain over your precious son! Let us think, together, about our holy Avos. Avraham was *zocheh* on one hand to a holy son, Yitzchok. But he also had a Yishmael, who didn't go in the ways of Hashem. Still, Avraham didn't give up on trying to return Yishmael to teshuvah. Yitzchok was *zocheh* on one hand to a holy son, Yaakov, a pure man who sat in the tents learning Torah. But on the other hand he also has a wicked son Esav. How much pain did Avraham and Yitzchok have over their children...? In every generation our fathers were tested with the *nisayon* of children who didn't go in the ways of Hashem, but in our generation that *nisayon* is 70 times more, because in the homes of many Talmidei Chachomim and great *ovdei Hashem*, there are all types of children coming from their homes. Today it is very, very, very difficult to succeed in raising children properly. If someone does succeed at it today, it is not his own success, it is a gift from Heaven, and not everyone is

*zocheh* to it. When Hashem told Yitzchok that his son Esav is undeserving of the blessings because "Your children sinned!" Yitzchok said back to Hashem, "They are only *my* children? Are they not *Your* children?" It is upon us to feel that our children are not only our children, but Hashem's children. We must ask our main Father to take pity on His children in general, and on our particular child specifically. With that perspective one can feel that his child is not "My child" but Hashem's child, who has been given to him as a *pikadon* (item to watch) for a certain amount of years on this world. A parent needs to examine if he is watching the *pikadon* that he has been given, and if there are any aspects in which he isn't watching his *pikadon* carefully, he should try to take care of it. And mainly, a parent should give love and warmth to the child, and also teach the child about the subtle and refined truth of where the pure truth and real pleasure is found.

**QUESTION** How can I motivate my spouse and family members and married children to give up their Internet? I am worried for all of my family, relatives and friends, that they should all get into *Olam HaBa*, but they simply don't understand the severity and repercussions of Internet use. How can I save them for all of *netzach netzachim* (eternity)? **ANSWER** Explain to them pleasantly and gracefully about it, from the depth of your heart. And in addition to that, **daven to Hashem for them, with tears.**

**QUESTION** My wife has a smartphone that's totally unfiltered. She needs it for work. She has the option of having a more kosher phone and she would be able to work from it, but she doesn't want to. I tried several times to explain to her, gently, of the importance of not possessing such a phone, for the sake of her purity and for the purity of our home. Yet she is not prepared to give it up. (She's not looking at bad things on it and She is very careful never to

turn on her phone when the kids are around). I'm *davening* hard about this situation, but in the meantime, I am not seeing her making even the slightest change. **ANSWER** Cry to Hashem about this, from the deepest place in yourself. Cry about her situation, but don't only cry for your wife. Cry for the many other people in the world who are in her situation, *Hashem Yeracheim* (may G-d have compassion on all of them). It is not suggested that you pressure her about this. It won't help. If putting pressure on her would help her, then that would be thing for you to do. She needs to come to a point in which she feels that it's endangering you, in the actual sense! Don't pressure her to get her to realize this. Tell it to her from clarity and pure motivations, and tell it to her from the most truthful and innermost place in yourself.

**QUESTION** The reality that we see in front of us is not the true reality, because it's not aligned with Hashem's will. It so painful to even think about, that we are not living in the true reality. How do I deal with that realization?

**ANSWER** Strengthen yourself with the *emunah* (faith) that Hashem is running His world according to His understanding, as it were, and not according to the way we understand. We cannot comprehend logically all of the evil that is found in our world today and why the world has to come to what it is today, and we do not have all the profound, encompassing knowledge that this involves. The possuk says, ואמונתך בלילות, "Your faith at nights". Only from pure and clear *emunah* can we be calmed and feel reliant on *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* that He is doing everything according to His infinite thoughts.

**QUESTION** The Internet has already destroyed the generation, with its widespread use even in the Torah world. How can we not be heartbroken over this? What will the next generation do?

**ANSWER** *Emunah, emunah, emunah.*