



Israel 073.295.1245 4>163
USA 718.521.5231 2>4>12

בלבבי משכן אבנה



Ahavas Yisrael (loving the Jewish people) is one of the great fundamentals of the Torah. When we merge with another Jew, and when we are connected with the Jewish people collectively, we gain one of the greatest keys to perfecting our souls in this world and becoming closer to HaKadosh Baruch Hu. It is one of the three loves – to love Hashem, to love the Torah, and to love the souls of the Jewish people which actually begins with a healthy self-love, as explained in the author's Da Es Atzmecha, "Getting To Know Your Self".

In a powerful style that speaks to our hearts, the author shows us the way towards developing our powers of ahavas Yisrael and the emotion of loving another human being in general. By learning this sefer, we can heal ourselves and heal our relationships with others, as we grow in the process of what it means to love another Jew. We discover that there are levels upon levels of loving another, and that there is always room to grow further in this area. An additional chapter explains the necessity to hate evil and several chapters explain how to repair unwarranted hatred, so that our ahavas Yisrael will be pure, genuine, and aligned with the will of the Creator.

KEDOSHIM - FINDING HOLINESS TODAY

Kilayim – Forbidden Mixtures *Parshas Kedoshim* discusses the laws of "kilayim", forbidden mixtures. The Torah discusses the details of these laws regarding certain kinds of plants, clothing, and animals which may not be mixed together. The underlying theme of *kilayim* is that there are certain things which are meant to remain apart from each other, and thus the Torah doesn't want them together.

Certainly, there is also a higher point than this, where everything in Creation is integrated, and there is even a hint to this from the word "kilayim", which contains the word "kalul", "integrated". But in the current world, we are in an *alma d'piruda*, a "world of separation", where certain things must remain separate from each other and not be joined together.

The Root of Kilayim – Eitz HaDaas The concept of *kilayim* also has deeper roots. The entire Creation is a mixture of good and evil, ever since Adam ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. When Hashem placed Adam in *Gan Eden*, He showed him all the trees of *Gan Eden* and said to him, "Look at all of this beautiful handiwork I have made. Give thought to this, and don't ruin My world."¹ When Adam sinned by eating from the forbidden tree, not only did he sin and become removed from *Gan Eden*, but the state of the world was ruined also.

What was wrong with the *Eitz HaDaas*? It was a form of *kilayim*, a

forbidden mixture, because it contained a mixture of good and evil – two forces which are not meant to be together. *Kilayim* is therefore rooted in the evil mixture that was in the *Eitz HaDaas Tov V'Ra*, which contained the two ultimate forces that cannot be together – the forces of good and evil. Just as *kilayim* is forbidden, so was the *Eitz HaDaas* forbidden, for the same root reason – they were both forbidden mixtures.

This World – A Mixture of Good & Evil Adam ruined the world when he ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, by making the world into a place where good and evil were mixed with each other. This mixture spread to the rest of the world, and now the entire Creation became one giant form of "kilayim", a mixture of forces which is not the ideal state of Creation. This is the current world we are found in – the "world of action" where good and evil are mixed with each other all the time.

For this reason, we are always amidst a "sifting process", and we always need to clarify the good and bad parts of this world in anything we encounter. But, before we try to sift out the good from the bad, we need to first understand the very idea that there is a mixture of good and evil in everything.

Rav Chaim Volozhiner (in the *sefer Nefesh HaChaim*) explained that before the sin, the evil inclination was an external force. The Serpent was outside of Adam and Chavah and didn't yet enter into them. After the sin, the evil inclination, or the Serpent, entered into man. The evil

1 Koheles Rabbah 7:13

KEDOSHIM - FINDING HOLINESS TODAY

inclination resides in the heart, and is enmeshed with our soul, as the sefer Chovos HaLevovos describes.

Thus, we first need to be clear that each thing in Creation has become mixed with evil, ever since the sin. That is the reality today, and it is the result of the sin, not the ideal state of Creation as things were meant to be.

Connecting To The Eitz HaChaim - Through Torah and Hashem But when one merits a connection to the Torah, which is called the “Eitz HaChaim” (Tree of Life) – for the Torah is chayei olam, “eternal life” - he partakes of the Eitz HaChaim, and he is thereby connected with HaKadosh Baruch Hu. He is not simply partaking of a life that is externally good, in the same sense as partaking of the fruit of the Eitz HaDaas. Rather, he connects himself to the holy Torah, which is “A tree of life it is, to those who are steadfast in it”.² The Torah is the revelation of the Eitz HaChaim that was in Gan Eden.

Through connecting to the Torah, one becomes connected with Hashem, where no evil can occur, for it is written “In His place, evil shall not visit you.” Evil cannot affect the place where one stands with Hashem. The more that a person connects with the reality of Torah and with the reality of Hashem, with true, inner d’veikus, the more he enters into the innermost chambers with Hashem, where there is no mixture of good and evil. This is the state of the pure soul with which Hashem created man.

As long as a person has not as yet connected himself to the depths of Torah with d’veikus in Hashem, the life he lives is a mixture of good and evil, a life of “kilayim”. Within this mixture, one still has the avodah to sift out the good and evil. Even if he does sift out the good from the evil, he will always be found within a world that is a mix of good and evil, until Moshiach comes, may he come speedily in our days.

When one accesses the inner world, by connecting oneself to the world of Torah which is Hashem’s world, there is no mixture of good and evil. There

is only good there, for Torah is called “good”. It is a reality that is entirely good.

Influence of the “Erev Rav” Therefore, when a person lives in the external world, he lives in a world of kilayim, of mixtures. This was always true ever since the sin of Adam. Ever since the Jewish people left Egypt, the Torah says that there was also a group called the “Erev Rav” (Mixed Multitude), who followed the people out of Egypt.³ The word “Erev Rav” is from the word “taaruvos”, mixture. Simply speaking, they were a mixture of different nations. No slave ever left Egypt until the exodus, and therefore there was already a mixture of many nations in Egypt. That is why they are called the Erev Rav, because they were a taaruvos (mixture) of many nations together.

But the deeper understanding is that the Erev Rav are souls who contain an inherent mixture of good and evil (as explained by the Gra⁴, and later elaborated upon by Reb Elchonon Wasserman).

In that way, they are very different from the nation of Yisrael. The nation of Yisrael stood at Har Sinai to receive the Torah. This wasn’t just an event, but a revelation of the Eitz HaChaim to them, where they received a world which is free from the mixture of good and evil. But the Erev Rav didn’t join in this experience.

The Ramban says that the Erev Rav stood apart from the people when the Torah was being received at Har Sinai. Although they had the status of Jews, they didn’t actually stand together with the people at the foot of the mountain, choosing instead to stand apart from them.

After the exodus, the Erev Rav became mixed with the Jewish people up until the point where the Torah was received. At the very apex of the giving of the Torah, Hashem’s Presence was revealed – it was a sublime experience. It was the revelation of the Torah that is entirely life, with no mixture of good and evil. The spirit

of impurity of the Serpent was removed from them.

But the Erev Rav didn’t partake of this experience, because they were an inherent mixture of good and evil. When the rest of the Jewish people remained together with the Erev Rav afterwards, the mixture of good and evil affected them, and continues to affect us until today, obscuring the light of the Torah from completely elevating the Jewish people.

Therefore, it is clear, says the Ramban⁵ that the Erev Rav stands on their own as a “separate nation” [to the Jewish people]. Otherwise, their mixture with the Jewish people wouldn’t have allowed the “impurity of the Serpent” to have left the Jewish people at Har Sinai.

The Sages state that the “impurity of the Serpent” left the Jewish people at Har Sinai⁶, and therefore, the Ramban says, the Erev Rav must have stood apart from the Jewish people during that time, as their own independent reality.

This perspective offers us greater insight into these days before preparing to receive the Torah on Shavuos. When we received the Torah at Har Sinai, we separated from the external world around us, which is entirely a mixture, and we entered into an internal life, which is entirely life. But it is only accessed by one who is attached, in the depths of his soul, to the holy Torah and to Hashem.

When the people sinned with the golden calf, due to the influence of the Erev Rav (the other “nation” who influenced them to sin), the mixture of the Erev Rav re-entered the Jewish people. The very fact that the people became mixed with that external world, where there is good and evil mixed together, was a terrible decline in their entire spiritual world -they left their internal world where all is pure and good, and were now connected to a world where everything is mixed up.

[FROM BILVAVI ON THE PARSHAH]

5 The Rav further explained that although the Ramban doesn’t proof to his words, it is the “straightforward logic” (sevara yeshara) of the Ramban, and therefore we should honor it as the “straightforward logic of the Rishonim, which is self-explanatory.”

6 Shabbos 146a

3 Shemos 12:28

4 sefer Even Shelaimah 11:1, and Perush HaGra Tikkunei HaZohar 41a

2 Mishlei 3:18

SELF-RECOGNITION & SELF-ACTUALIZATION

The First Misconception There are people who erroneously think that although there is a need for self-recognition to better serve the Creator, they think they already recognize themselves enough, either because they learned some sefarim on it, or because they had certain personal experiences. There are also those who think that self-recognition is not necessary in order to serve the Creator, and it is simply an extra quality to have. Others have an even worse misconception: They think that there is no need at all for self-recognition in order to serve the Creator, and they think they can serve the Creator even without this knowledge.¹

Also, there are people whom Hashem has given a nature to easily recognize the soul, relatively speaking, when compared to others. These people feel that there is no need to learn about the soul, and they feel that it's enough for them to have a general awareness that they are a soul. However, although they are better at self-recognition than others are – and sometimes they are even considered to be the biggest experts on the human psyche – it won't be enough. In order to know how to use the soul for serving Hashem, the only way is to learn the words of our Sages about the soul. Without this knowledge, they can only have a very superficial knowledge of the soul. Compare this to a person who has a natural feel about the human body, but he never took a course on it. He might understand the body more than others do, but he cannot become an expert doctor until he actually learns studies the body very well, and for many years.

In any case, since the words of the Sages regarding the inner world of a person and the ways of self-recognition haven't yet been collected and gathered into one book, this subject has not yet been explained as much as it needs to be, and because of this ignorance, people do not see the mistakes they are making and they don't understand the need to recognize the soul. The truth is, though, that it is explained in many places in the holy Torah and in the words of the Sages.² The need to recognize the soul, in order to serve the Creator, is a very great need.

The Second Misconception It's clear that every mitzvah has its rules and when and where it applies, and every topic in halachah requires a lot of learning in order to understand it fully and get to the proper conclusion. In order to keep Shabbos properly, one must learn its halachos well, all of its rules and details, and if one doesn't learn it well, one will certainly stumble in them, as the *Mishnah Berurah* writes. But when it comes to working with our souls, there is a dearth of sefarim that explain the depths of the soul and anything about the inner world, and that is why there are people who think that the inner world is very general and

1 For this reason, when they are not finding satisfaction in their avodas Hashem or in trying to fix their middos, instead of realizing that this is because they haven't succeeded at self-knowledge of themselves and that they are not working on themselves according to their particular abilities and limitations, they will instead blame it on all kinds of external, superficial reasons.

2 The inner world of the soul is explained in the sefarim of mussar [i.e. Chovos HaLevovos, Mesillas Yesharim] and in the sefarim of pnimiyus (i.e. Michtav M'Eliyahu, Pachad Yitzchok, Nesivos Shalom, Nefesh Shimshon, and more).

simple to understand, and that there's no need to learn about it well.

For example, any person recognizes concepts such as loving Hashem, being afraid of Hashem, fixing the middos, and other such concepts. He may think that he has a basic understanding of these concepts, and that all he has to do is fulfill them practically. (And that is why many wonderful and good people have difficulty with mitzvos that involve the soul. They blame it on various factors, and they are unaware that it's really because they have never learned about these mitzvos). But the truth is that just as halachos are a vast study, so is the inner world a vast study, "longer than the earth and wider than the sea." In addition to this, the mussar sefarim explain many levels to the soul-related mitzvos, which are emunah, ahavas Hashem, yiras Hashem, etc. One needs to be in a constant process of growth, and therefore, one should recognize well his inner world and his current spiritual level. This is so that he can know what level he is found at right now, and what the next level he needs to be aspiring towards. Thus, in order to understand the inner world, one needs to learn about it well.

The Third Misconception Another error that results from the dearth of sefarim on this topic, which is a grave mistake that has unfortunately developed in the last few years: Since the ways of learning about and recognizing the soul (according to the Torah) aren't that known to the Torah communities at large, people think that the Torah isn't able to be the single source in their lives for self-recognition, self-actualization, and treating their issues.³ And for this reason, many good, wonderful Jews are "grazing in the strange fields", the knowledge of the nations of the world, in order to obtain self-recognition.⁴

But this is not the truth at all, for Hashem created the Torah first and then He created all the worlds from it, "He looked into the

3 Some even think that recognizing the soul doesn't even require the knowledge of the Torah at all and that it's a completely separate matter from the Torah. When they want to deal with issues in their soul, they turn directly to the views of the nations, to secular knowledge of psychology, without even thinking of what the Torah has to say about the issue. If you tell them that they can deal with the issue in a Torah way, they are baffled: "We have never seen anything in Chazal about how to deal with these issues. The solutions to these issues can only be found with the non-Jewish methods. Also, Chochmah b'goyim taamin, Chazal said to believe that there is wisdom among the nations!" But the truth is that they are ignorant of basic knowledge taught by Chazal which has been around for all the generations. And, the mefarshim (commentaries) explained that "wisdom among the nations" is referring to the study of nature – not the study of the Jew's soul. The Jew's soul comes from the holy Torah, and of the Torah it is said, "Torah among the nations, do not believe!"

4 There is not one single reason for this, but several. The Jewish people being exiled among the nations has taken its toll on them, causing them to be heavily influenced by the non-Jewish thinking. There is also a dominance of tumah (immorality) and denial of G-d in the world. Also, Hashem wants people to have these challenges and overcome them, to see if the person will be loyal to the Torah or not.

SELF-RECOGNITION & SELF-ACTUALIZATION

Torah and created the world”⁵, and therefore the root of the existence of anything is in the Torah, for there is nothing that doesn't have a source in the Torah. The Torah is the source for anything we wish to learn about in Creation, and all the more so if we want to understand the inner world in a person.⁶ Any of the true ways of self-recognition and self-actualization that exist are rooted in the Torah, and **the solutions to all issues, including issues of the soul, are found in the Torah**, the source of all knowledge. Just as “Hashem looked into the Torah and created the world from it”, so must a person look to the Torah in order to recognize himself and build his internal world.

Although there are methods in the non-Jewish world which can treat the issues of the soul of a non-Jew, these are mostly not compatible for a Jew's soul. This is because **the internal makeup of a Jew's soul and a non-Jew's soul are very different**.⁷ What works for a non-Jew will not necessarily work for a Jew.⁸ Just as we

5 Zohar Shemos 161a

6 Besides for the fact that everything Hashem created was from looking into the Torah, He made the soul into a complete world which is all-inclusive of the entire Creation within it, as the Zohar says in many places, that man is called a “miniature universe”, the soul is a microcosm of the entire universe.

7 This is an exhaustive topic and we cannot cover it entirely here, but briefly, it is because a Jew's soul is multi-layered with levels of the soul, starting from the nefesh hebeheimis, then the nefesh Elohis, Ruach, Neshamah, Chayah, and Yechidah. A non-Jew's soul only has a nefesh hebeheimis – and it only bears a resemblance to the nefesh hebeheimis of a Jew. And the structure of the nefesh hebeheimis of a Jew is different than the structure of the nefesh hebeheimis of a non-Jew.

8 One of the basic differences is, that most of the ways of the gentiles cannot help a Jew serve Hashem and live properly like a Jew. Rather, non-Jewish psychology is about getting what you want – that is, the desires of the nefesh hebeheimis. It is about what do “I” want and how “I” can get it – what does my nefesh hebeheimis want? And it is about how to obtain one's base desires. For example, a person goes to treat his fears. He wasn't successful at making money (according to his perception). Some non-Jewish methods will coach him that he needs to convince himself that everything depends on his willpower and that he really can become rich, if he wants to. They go along with his presumption that being rich is good for him, and that all he has to do is remove the obstacles getting in his way. In contrast to this, the way of the Torah is that one needs to first check into his desires and see: “Why do I want to be rich? Where is this desire coming from? Why am I afraid that I can't succeed?” With this kind of probing, a person uncovers that there's a much deeper part of himself than just the wants and wishes of the nefesh hebeheimis, the unrefined part of the soul. He discovers why he wants to be rich, how it's coming from a deeper spiritual desire that he needs to channel in the right direction, and he also discovers what he really needs to be afraid of, as opposed to being

understand from the Torah that certain foods are fine for a gentile to eat but they are not kosher for a Jew to eat, so should we understand that there are non-Jewish methods which can work for a non-Jew but which will not be appropriate for a Jew.⁹

afraid that he can't be successful at making money. In the process, he also becomes closer to Hashem and aligns his life more with the Torah, and he directs himself towards fulfilling his inner and spiritual desires, what he really wants deep down.

9 Many sefarim today explain which of the methods are permissible according to halachah, and which methods are forbidden. Many Gedolim refused to permit using these methods, and they even forbade certain methods, halachically and also ethically. Yet there were certain situations where some Gedolim deemed it acceptable to be treated with non-Jewish psychology, either for one of the following two reasons: (1) In some cases, it was a life-or-death issue. (In a life-and-death issue, a Jew is still not allowed to use methods that will involve transgressing any of the three cardinal sins). (2) In other cases, the Gedolim permitted non-Jewish therapy which is halachically permissible, which are beneficial to the nefesh hebeheimis of a Jew. This is because there is a commonality between the nefesh hebeheimis of a Jew and gentile, and that commonality is based on the 7 Noachide Laws, which are meant to be kept by both gentiles and Jews. However, even when non-Jewish methods of therapy are halachically permitted, there are three main drawbacks that exist. (1) The therapy/healing can only help for the nefesh hebeheimis part of the Jew's soul and it cannot help his nefesh Elohis, and it certainly cannot help the higher areas of the soul, i.e. the Ruach, the Neshamah, etc. And even if a method repairs a problem in the nefesh hebeheimis, it can be damaging to these higher and more spiritual parts of the soul. (2) Also, even when it helps the nefesh hebeheimis of a Jew, it can only help certain aspects of the nefesh hebeheimis, the parts which also exist in a non-Jew's. But it cannot treat the entire nefesh hebeheimis of the Jew. It may even be damaging to other parts of the Jew's nefesh hebeheimis, or it may treat one particular issue but it can still damage the general emotional health of the nefesh hebeheimis, getting rid of a particular problem but creating a different and larger issue. (3) Also, once a Jew is healed from non-Jewish methods and not from a Torah source, the loss will be great. Although the Gedolim permitted going for therapy in certain situations, this was because they concluded that the necessity for the person to get helped was so great that it outweighed any other factor. It is like when a person is forced to get a part of his body amputated, which can save his life. One limb of the body can be put at risk so that the rest of the body will be saved. The doctor decides that the gain is worth the loss. Therefore, we can't conclude from any of the permitted scenarios that it's acceptable to use non-Jewish methods to treat our souls. Practically speaking, each case has to be judged separately, and a person should ask a well-known Posek (halachic authority) who understands these issues, in order to be free from doubt. [מהספר הכרה עצמית והעצמת הנפש]

Audio files available on "KOL HALASHON"

Israel 073.295.1245 | USA 718.521.5231 2>4>12

Israeli & Worldwide Deliveries 03.578.2270 | books2770@gmail.com

Sifrei Meah Shearim, 15 Meah Shearim St., Yerushalyim 02.502.2567

Sifrei Abromovitch, 5 Kotler St., Bnei Brak 03.579.3829

Hafatza Sifrei Kodesh 2 Dovid Street, Jerusalem 02.623.0294

Join our active email list: subscribe@bilvavi.net

