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**WEEKLY PARSHA
ARCHIVE Q&A**

BS"D #339

בלבבי
משכן
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TZAV 5784

LEAVING EGYPT – AND THEN RECEIVING THE TORAH

First we left Egypt, and then we came to Har Sinai to receive the Torah. It is written, “*And you shall know today, and you shall return the matter to your heart.*” Our avodah is always first to know the facts, and then to internalize our mind’s knowledge into our heart.

The Egyptian exile deterred us from receiving the Torah. As long as we were in Egypt, we could not receive the Torah; we have to leave it in order to become purified at Har Sinai and receive the Torah. In Egypt, we would not have been able to internalize the Torah had we received it. In Egypt, there was “bricks and mortar”, and this personified the exile. What exactly are these “bricks and mortar” that held us back from receiving the Torah? It wasn’t just that we had cruel physical labor. It was a spiritual kind of bricks and mortar – a blockage that held us back from receiving the Torah.

There were two layers to the redemption. There was a physical redemption, which took place when we actually left Egypt, in the physical sense. But there was also a spiritual layer to the redemption: the redemption that took place in our souls, enabling us to receive the Torah.

Although the physical redemption happened a long time ago, the spiritual redemption to our souls happens every year. Let us learn how we can merit to have the yearly spiritual redemption during this time – to reach the level of receiving the Torah, the level of internalizing our knowledge.

REMOVING THE “BLOCKAGE OF THE HEART”

In the *Haggadah* we express, “*By your blood shall you live*” – which the Sages explain this to refer to the blood of the *korban pesach* (paschal sacrifice) and the blood of *bris milah* (circumcision) What is the connection between *korbon pesach* and *bris milah*? Simply it

is because in order to eat the *korban pesach*, one had to be circumcised, as the Gemara says. But the deeper meaning is that one has to circumcise his “*orlas halev*” – the blockage that is on his **heart**.

There exist two kinds of *orlah* (blockages) which we remove – a physical blockage which exists in the part of the body that is circumcised by *bris milah*, and a spiritual kind of blockage, which is present on the heart. This is called *orlas halev*. When our heart is blocked, the Torah knowledge in our mind isn’t able to penetrate into our heart.

On Pesach, we were commanded to become circumcised; the simple meaning of this, as we said, was because we need to undergo *bris milah* in order to eat from the *korbon pesach*. But the deeper meaning is that we had to remove our *orlas halev*, “blockage of our heart” that was on us – as it is written, “*And you shall circumcise the foreskin of your hearts.*”

We must remove the barrier between our mind and heart, so that our mind’s knowledge can settle in our heart. And it has to be “*in*” our heart, not just *on* our heart.

In order to eat the *korbon pesach*, we had to have a *bris milah*. As we explained, the deeper meaning of this is that we had to remove our “*orlas halev*” in order to eat the *korban pesach*. In Egypt, we removed some of the blockage as we began to cry out to Hashem from our heart, but this process was not yet complete until we left Egypt, when we actually received *bris milah* – which was not just a physical act of circumcision, but a removal of the blockage on our heart.

HOW WE CAN ACCOMPLISH INTERNALIZATION

How do we internalize the knowledge of our mind into our heart? We get to know the Torah by learning it well, but how do we inter-

nalize it into our heart? In the works of our Rabbis, there are two general ways described in how we can accomplish it.

THE FIRST WAY: DA'AS

One way is as follows. In our brain, we have three “minds” going on – three different mental abilities: *Chochmah*, *Tevunah*, and *Daas*. *Chochmah* is what one learns from his teacher. *Tevunah* is when we think on our own, and *Daas* is when we connect to our knowledge. *Daas* is when a person is always thinking about Torah, because he connects to the knowledge of his mind. *Daas* is an inner kind of thinking, not a superficial kind of thinking.

When a person merely intellectualizes about his learning, he’s either using *Chochmah* or *Tevunah*, but this isn’t yet *Daas*. *Daas* is only when a person thinks all the time about his learning because he is truly connected to his learning; from his deep connection to the Torah, he thinks about it as a result.

When a person uses his *Daas*, he is connected all the time to his learning as he thinks constantly of Torah – and in this way, his mind’s knowledge enters his heart. This is when a person learns Torah along with *emunah* in Hashem in his life. The Torah then penetrates into his heart.

THE SECOND WAY: VERBAL REPETITION

The second method brought by our Rabbis on how we can internalize is by making an direct imprint on our heart, and this is accomplished when we review matters repeatedly using our simple *emunah*. As it is written in the possuk, “*I believed, for I spoke.*” When we constantly repeat a fact, it eventually settles into our heart, where it becomes internalized knowledge.

Pharoah knew that Hashem existed, but he didn't internalize this information. Pharoah means *peh rah*, "evil mouth." In other words, he didn't use his mouth in the right way, and thus he didn't internalize his mind's knowledge.

So one way to internalize is to use *daas*, which is by learning Torah in a way that we connect to it; and this is accomplished when we learn Torah together with having *emunah* in Hashem. The second method to internalize is to use our power of speech, to affect our heart.

THE THIRD, DEEPER WAY: REPEATING FACTS OF OUR DA'AS TO OUR HEART

But there is also a third way, which is deeper than the above two ways, and it combines the two methods together: to *speak* to ourselves facts that we know from our *daas*, with the intention that it should affect our heart.

This is also the deeper meaning behind why we count *Sefiras HaOmer* for 49 days. It is because by repeating to ourselves that today is another day towards Shavuot, it eventually internalizes in our heart; through the power of constant verbal repetition, the facts of our brain settle into our heart and become internalized.

Most people when they learn Torah are only using the lower power of *Chochmah*, which is located in the brain. This is mere intellectual knowledge, and it doesn't always affect a person.

But the higher, deeper kind of *Chochmah* is called *Chochmas HaLev* – the wisdom of the heart – and it is rare. It is accessed when we verbalize our mind's knowledge to ourselves and we repeat the facts, over and over again, until it penetrates our heart. It then becomes *Chochmas HaLev*.

פסח 031 עבודת הלב תשע"ד

WOMEN & BRINGING THE GEULAH

QUESTION

What is the source that the Geulah (Redemption) will be in the merit of the women? And, in what way will women bring the Redemption?

ANSWER

The personifying trait of women is malchus (royalty) , which is also the trait of Dovid HaMelech. Mashiach ben Dovid (the Mashiach who will descend from Dovid HaMelech) is rooted in Rus – the “mother” of royalty (malchus).

A WOMAN'S EXTRA UNDERSTANDING

QUESTION

The Rav has explained that it is not a woman's task to serve Hashem through in-depth Torah study. But don't Chazal say that women have “binah yesairah” (understanding)? And although Chazal also say that “Women are light-minded”, to a certain degree women will still have this extra amount of understanding. Also, the Rav explains in the book “Getting To Know Your Feelings” that a woman's avodas Hashem does not involve knowing something on an intellectual level before internalizing it on the heart, because women have the avodah to begin from their heart, not from intellect. But how can a woman begin internalizing any knowledge in her heart, without first knowing of it intellectually? In other words, how can a woman build her own inner world correctly if she doesn't have the daas (intellectual awareness) which is supposed to eventually become internalized in the heart? And in general, is the book “Getting To Know Your Feelings” an appropriate avodah for women?

ANSWER

This is a lengthy concept explained in the works of Kaballah. The following is a brief and simple outline.

There are two kinds of knowing: *mochin d'gadlus*, a more mature level of understanding, which is to study knowledge for the sake of the knowledge itself. This is the root ability that is needed when learning Torah, and it continues when a person is in Gan Eden and it will also be the case in the future after the Redemption. Women lack the complete level of this kind of knowledge (*mochin d'gadlus*). The lower level of understanding is called *mochin d'katnus*, and it is about thinking in order to do something. Women are better at this kind of thinking [because women are naturally more action-oriented].

Getting more specific, women are better at grasping and understanding certain details (*prat*), but they are less gifted at seeing a more encompassing view of the information (*klal*).

Furthermore, there is *binah* (understanding) in both the intellect and the heart. Women do not have the quality of intellectual understanding, but they will have more “heart understanding”, which is about palpably recognizing and feeling their knowledge. This is the meaning of the statement in Chazal that women have a better understanding of a guest, more than their husband’s understanding.

Women feel the truth of a situation not by deeply analyzing the reality in front of them, but by using their feelings directly. In that way, women skip over the stage of “knowing”, which is the intellect, and they begin from the heart, by having a conversation in their own heart about their feelings, which in turn sharpens their feelings towards a matter.

This is the main ability which women need in order to learn about anything and it is the main ability which women need in their avodah in general. And, more specifically, it is needed in order to understand the book “Getting To Know Your Feelings”.

BRINGING MASHIACH CLOSER

QUESTION

Is the purpose of all of the Rav’s teachings about inner avodas Hashem so that we can bring Mashiach? It is hard for me to understand how the Rav’s approach will help people bring Mashiach, because I am under the impression that all of one’s avodas Hashem is supposed to excite a person and feel a great yearning that Mashiach should come. Yet I don’t see the Rav’s approach emphasizing this. Maybe I’m mistaken. Can the Rav help me understand?

ANSWER

When one reaches his individual revelation of the “Yechidah” part of his soul [one’s private connection with Hashem and being one and integrated with Hashem], from there one spreads the light of Mashiach to the rest of the world.

[As for excitement and passion versus inner calm:] Even after we become excited and passionate in our avodas Hashem, we also need inner silence and calm in our soul, because Hashem is not found amidst inner noise, but through a still, subtle sound (kol demamah dakah). Inner excitement and passion is inspiration for the soul, but it must be followed by inner calm. There is a whole different way of looking at life from the way you are looking at....