

VAYIGASH - SEEING THE TRUTH

“WOE TO US FROM THE DAY OF JUDGMENT, WOE TO US FROM THE DAY OF REBUKE”: WHEN THE TRUE PERSPECTIVE IS REVEALED

In *Parshas Vayigash*, Yosef reveals to his brothers: “*I am Yosef, is my father still alive?*” The brothers were so ashamed that they could not answer him. The words of Chazal about this verse are well-known: “Woe to us from the Day of Judgment, woe to us from the Day of Rebuke. If Yosef was only the youngest of the brothers, yet they could not face him, surely this will be by the Day of Judgment, where man will have to give an accounting before Hashem.”

The brothers became ashamed over the sale of Yosef, in spite of the fact that they had reasoned at that time that it was permitted to sell him. But from a deeper understanding, they became ashamed because they had thought they had been speaking all this time to just an Egyptian king, and when they were informed that they were really speaking with Yosef, they realized that the reality wasn't how it had seemed to them.

It quickly dawned on them that their opinion of Yosef had been incorrect. They had thought that Yosef was a slanderer, and therefore they did not speak with him, for they felt hatred towards him. Now that they realized that this Egyptian

king was really Yosef, they realized that Hashem was showing them that their opinion about Yosef had been incorrect all along.

This is the depth behind why they couldn't answer him, because they were ashamed - in spite of the fact that Yosef was the youngest of the twelve brothers and he had seemed the least important, it was now apparent to them that the reality was not how it seemed on the surface.

This is the depth of the realization, “Woe to us from the Day of Judgment, Woe to us from the Day of Rebuke.”

SEEING THE REALITY

When a person starts out life, he is a child, and he comprehends things based on how they appear superficially. An infant can only eat and nurse. He thinks that everything he sees is food, so whatever he finds he puts in his mouth. Slowly as he grows and develops, he sees things differently. But instead of seeing everything as food, he will see everything as a game. Everything becomes like a toy for him to play with; life to him is like one big game to have fun in. Slowly he gets older and he sees things differently. After maturing, not only physically but in his mind, he begins to see a different world than what he saw until now. He sees more and more worlds, as

he develops.

When he becomes 13 years of age and he gains *daas*, he sees one world, and when he matures after that, he sees another world, now that he has seen and understood a little more about life, based on what he has absorbed until now. When getting married, his perspective has changed by now; everyone is at a different level when it comes to this, but he definitely has a more mature perspective towards life than beforehand. It seems that as a person grows older and matures through life, he absorbs more about life and he comes to understand better the reality that is before him.

But the truth is: “Woe to us from the Day of Judgment”. If a person didn't merit the light of Torah, and the light of the *neshamah* (his portion of G-d Above), he never sees what is really in front of him. Instead, he will see other things. Just as the brothers thought they were speaking to an Egyptian king and then they realized it was Yosef, and their initial perspective towards Yosef was instantly changed, from distaste towards him to awe and embarrassment from him – it is the same with how our view can change towards life. There are deeper and deeper layers to life which we can see, for Hashem has created the word with depth upon depth.

Even when people gain a more mature perspective towards life, they don't always see the truth in front of them. Even if a person merited to grow up in a Torah home and he knows that the purpose of life is to do Hashem's will and to learn Torah with exertion and to do the mitzvos, he doesn't always see the truth of what is in front of him.

Chazal say, "Woe to the creations who are seeing, but they don't even know what they are seeing." It seems to a person that he is seeing the world, when he views it with his physical eyes. But he does not realize that he is not even seeing the reality that is really in front of him. He is seeing a different world than the real one that is in front of him. The physical world in front of us, and the spiritual world within it, are two totally different worlds.

It is clear that nobody sees what's in Heaven. Physical eyes cannot see it. But upon deeper analysis, most people don't even see the world in front of them – not even This World itself!

When one comes to the Day of Judgment, he will be "judged" for his deeds, but it is also the "Day of Rebuke" - what is this 'rebuke'? It will be a "rebuke" when he is shown his own reality. He had thought that his own reality had been a certain kind of reality, and he will be shown that his actual reality is totally different.

There is a statement in Chazal, "A judge does not see except what

his eyes see", and the Alter of Kelm explained sharply: "He is not blamed for what he has decided now that he has seen it that way, but he is blamed for seeing it that way."

When a person has true exertion in Torah and he is doing Hashem's will, and his being becomes purified through his Torah and mitzvos, and he is not just learning Torah to acquire its knowledge, but it has truly become absorbed in his innards and it has entered him - his entire reality becomes enlightened through the light of the holy Torah. He receives holiness from Hashem, and his he changes within himself. He doesn't just become more of a Torah scholar. He doesn't just become more pure and holier. Rather, he will see a different world now than beforehand.

If he continues to see reality in the same way as before, it means that he hasn't changed on his inside. He is standing outside of the inner layer of life, so he is only viewing the world with a superficial lens. Even if he merits to learn Torah and he does all of the mitzvos, although he will certainly get rewarded by Hashem for this, he won't uncover an inner kind of life.

The inner layer of life is to keep seeing deeper, into the life in front of us; each time that a person takes a look, he can see something else entirely, a different world than what he saw before. We aren't talking about high levels and perceptions

such as seeing Eliyahu HaNavi, which is a very high spiritual level to reach. We are talking about a kind of life which anyone who wishes to be a *ben aliyah* (aspiring, spiritual person) can uncover: to keep seeing a different world than before, in the world in front of us. That is the meaning of true spiritual growth.

EXTERNAL SPIRITUAL GROWTH VS. INTERNAL SPIRITUAL GROWTH

When it comes to spiritual growth, there is an external kind of superficial growth, and an internal kind of spiritual growth. External kind of spiritual growth is to increase the amount of one's Torah learning, *mitzvos*, acts of kindness, etc. But the inner kind of spiritual growth is to live a life of truth; to keep seeing a different Creation.

(Of course, if a person keeps seeing more depth to life and this doesn't cause him to improve the external layer of his life, he is clearly living a contradiction.)

But the true way to live is that as one increases his Torah learning and dedication to *mitzvos*, his being slowly becomes purified with this, and his perspective towards life begins to change. This change will cause him to improve both externally and internally. He will want to keep improving his Torah learning and *mitzvos*, which is his external layer, and as he becomes more and more purified from this, he will see newer perspectives towards life.

This is the meaning of true spiritual growth. There will definitely be changes in his external situation, but there will mainly be internal changes. His perception matures, he sees a more inner perspective towards things, so he will see and comprehend things much differently than a few years ago; he will lead a different kind of life.

THE INNER LAYER OF REALITY: THERE IS NOTHING BUT HASHEM'S REALITY

When a person has this kind of true spiritual growth, his inner perspective will see a world in which *nothing matters except for the will of Hashem*.

There are many actions that take place in the world, and from a deeper perspective, all of these actions happen due to Hashem's will. There is nothing in Creation except for Hashem's will. From the true perspective, "*His Glory fills the world*".

The Chazon Ish writes that Hashem's reality is "constant" throughout all creations, and that this is "the secret of the world that is concealed, from those who pursue This World." Hashem is everywhere, but He is also hidden from anyone who pursues This World – and this fact is the most hidden and concealed secret, to those who are caught up in vanities of This World. By contrast, if a

person doesn't pursue This World, he is a truly spiritual person, who keeps seeing deeper into reality.

Seeing deeper into reality, and having more and more spiritual growth, are all but stages in one's *Avodas Hashem*. The last stage of one's *Avodas Hashem* is to arrive at the "constant reality of Hashem."

When a person is an infant, he sees everything as food. When he gets a bit older, he sees everything as a game. When he gets older, he sees that the world is more complicated; he sees that he needs to worry about livelihood, health, child education, and if he is more spiritual, he worries about he can improve in his *Avodas Hashem*. He thinks he understands reality in front of him. He knows that there are things to take care of, there are successes and failures in life, and that is how the world looks to him.

But the truth is entirely different than this. The inner layer of Creation is that Hashem's reality fills all of the creation. It is not only found with one who is very close to Hashem, who merits recognizing it. It exists throughout all of creation, for it is an ever-constant reality.

Why don't people see this reality? To be general, people can't see it due to sins, materialism, and an attachment to the ego, which conceal a person from recognizing the Creator.

But there is a straight path that a

person can take – to have constant spiritual growth – which enables him to see deeper into reality, with the deeper he enters into reality. He will then see different "worlds" each time; he will see that there is only the reality of the Creator, and that everything else on this world is like a giant covering, which can either conceal the Creator from us, or serve as a means to reveal Him.

That is all there is to reality, and there is nothing else. The countless amounts of creations in this universe, which Hashem has all created, are all but details to Creation. The one point that binds it all of reality together is that anything can either conceal the Creator from us, or reveal the Creator to us. There is nothing but either *he'elam* (concealment) or *giluy* (revelation) of the Creator's reality.¹

A LIFE OF CLARITY

When one is aware of this perspective – and not just as a knowledge, but as a perspective towards life which he has absorbed, which he views life with – he will see an entirely different Creation than how most people see it. He will see a Creation in which there is nothing except the reality of Hashem, so he won't become confused or sidetracked by anything else on this world.

Understandably, everyone has difficulties, but the difficulties don't

¹ See *Tefillah #0124 - Revelation*

have to leave a person completely bewildered at life. The difficulties are certainly uncomfortable for a few moments, but it doesn't confuse him completely. He might sometimes eat more food than what he really needs to eat, he might see something he shouldn't have looked at, and he might say something he shouldn't have said – but this doesn't have to confuse his perspective towards life. Life will be very clear to him, for one who discovers the point being described here: he sees one thing alone – the reality of Hashem, which existed before Creation and which will exist after Creation.

There are many things in front of us which can confuse from seeing this truth. But if one is never aware of this truth in the first place, his life will be a constant struggle and war with all kinds of difficult things.

When one absorbs the perspective, both in his mind and heart, the simple fact that there is nothing in reality other than Hashem's reality – his entire view towards life changes completely. This is not a mere piece of knowledge; it is an awareness that transforms a person on his inside. He will see a different Creation than before. What others see in Creation, he will see completely differently.

This is the depth of the matter that "Avraham Avinu was on one side of the world, and the rest of the world was on the other side." Simply speaking, Avraham

separated from the idol worship of the world and he chose to find the Creator. But there is also a more inner understanding of this, which is entirely different. Chazal say that Avraham Avinu shined the light of *emunah* upon the world, which means that he saw only one thing in the world – he saw that there was only the reality of Hashem, and that there was nothing else. That was all he saw. He realized that the rest of Creation was not the actual reality. He saw that there was only "*Hashem Echad*", Hashem is One – he is the only one in all of this creation.

COPING IN THE TROUBLING TIMES WE LIVE IN

Without absorbing this perspective, a person will have a superficial view of this world. He takes a look at the world today and he sees whatever he sees, but he doesn't see the actual reality. He sees that there are billions of people in the world, and that there are so many difficulties and hardships of living. In our generation especially, a person today can see nothing but all of the *tum'ah* (spiritual impurity) that fills the world today, the many problems there are today which deter us from living truthfully, and the many events of the world today which bewilder us: our eyes cannot bear to see such things, our ears cannot tolerate it when we hear such things, and our minds cannot take it.

If someone doesn't see the complications of this world, he is simply out of touch with anything.

But if he does see it, he wonders: "How can Creation continue this way anymore, when there are so many problems, so much pain and so much difficulty? It cannot survive anymore!" It cannot survive even physically, and it cannot survive spiritually, due to the many problems that exist today which threaten our spiritual situation.

What indeed is the solution to get by all of the difficulties of today? To try to wage war with all of the issues, and hopefully merit *siyata d'shmaya* (Heavenly assistance) to overcome all that has to be overcome? Indeed, if a person tries his hardest to overcome the problems, he can merit *siyata d'shmaya* to get by all the problems. But there is a different way entirely to deal with all that we see. We can instead see the Creation differently than how we initially see it.

First we can contemplate it intellectually and know it, and then we can let it settled on our minds, so that our minds are at peace with it; then we can internalize the perspective. The perspective which we can see life with can be entirely different! Asking what the difference between these two perspectives is is like asking what the difference between the perspective of a three-year old and the perspective of a seventy-year old is. The perspective which we can learn to see life can be entirely different than how we see it until now, if we keep penetrating further and further into the depth of reality, through constant spiritual

growth. We will then see a different world entirely.

REACHING THE TRUE VIEW

“**Woe** to us from the Day of Judgment, Woe to us from the Day of Rebuke.” When one comes to that day of judgment and rebuke in the future, which he will surely come to – he will be judged for all his deeds, that which he did and that which he didn’t do; but the main thing he will be judged about is: “How did you see the reality of this creation that Hashem made? What did you see in it?” It is about how much a person drew himself closer to this perspective, of seeing the true view of Creation, in which Hashem’s reality is constantly revealed everywhere, the “secret of the world that is concealed, from those who pursue This World.”

There are people who pursue the materialism of This World, and there are others who are interested instead in Torah and mitzvos, but they can also be entangled in the perspective of This World, if they don’t see the true perspective towards life. Of course, those who pursue Torah and mitzvos in their life are much better off than those who pursue materialism, but most people, even those who have exertion in Torah study and in doing Hashem’s will, are not discovering the hidden layer of reality, which is the true reality.

In order to see it, a person needs to get there through increasing his Torah study and his performance

of *mitzvos*, and through purifying his *middos*. But he also needs to have quiet times every day for contemplation, as the Chazon Ish writes in *sefer Emunah U’Bitachon*. If a person contemplates the truth about reality, amidst inner quiet, using the understanding of his heart – and one needs to contemplate this from the most tranquil and inner place inside himself – he can slowly open a new ‘window’ that he can look into the world from, and he will see reality differently. He will become a new being entirely, as if he is born anew.

This is an inner kind of vision, and it is impossible to describe it exactly through any of the 22 letters of the *Aleph Beis*. But it is a world which all our *neshamos* yearn for. It is a world where the truth is lived and realized. It is a world where a person lives with a palpable closeness with Hashem, at all times, an ever-constant reality.

IN CONCLUSION: LIVING A LIFE OF “NOCHACH P’NEI HASHEM”

“**Woe** to us from the Day of Judgment, Woe to us from the Day of Rebuke”. One needs to bring his life to a level of constant spiritual growth, and at times, he will be able to see deeper perspectives into reality (which cannot be described in their detail, for the details of it are many). It brings a person to a life of “*nochach pnei Hashem*”, to live facing Hashem – for that is the entire reality that a person will see, when he finds it.

One who reaches this will feel a certain bliss that he is heading closer and closer towards the reality of Hashem. As Rabbi Eliezer told his son on his deathbed: “Behold, I am going to bliss, with Hashem.” One who lived a life of “*nochach pnei Hashem*” will see a creation in which everything either conceals, or reveals, Hashem.

Those words of Rabbi Eliezer on his deathbed - “Behold, I am going to bliss, with Hashem” - is the yearning of every soul, to live life in this way. It is a life that is spent on This World with Hashem, and upon leaving the world, a person continues to live with Hashem in front of him, getting closer than before. And when one finally merits reaching the Great Awesome Day of Judgment in the future, where all hearts will be returned to Hashem, it will be to him a recognition of truth, a simple and palpable recognition – that the entire reality of life is nothing but “*nochach pnei Hashem*”.

שיחת השבוע 013 ויגש -
יום הדין הגדול

THE PURPOSE OF FALSE RELIGIONS & EVIL

QUESTION

1) The Rambam says in Moreh Nevuchim that Christianity and Muslim exist in order to make Hashem's Name known throughout the world. Sefer Tzror HaMor says that the purpose of these religions is so that the Jewish people won't look strange to the rest of the world for being religious (since there are other religions in the world too) so that the world will leave them alone and let them do the mitzvos. But what's hard to understand is, that how can this be if Hashem doesn't want these religions? Christianity is idol worship, the very opposite of His will. Why then did Hashem choose that these other religions are making Hashem known in the world if these religions are in error and destined for destruction (especially because they do not even keep the 7 Noachide laws)? (I could perhaps

understand how Hashem's Name is revealed on the world through Islam, since they don't worship idols, and even though they murder and steal, that's their choice and it's not what their religion is based on, but I don't understand how Hashem becomes more revealed on the world through the idol-worshipping religion of Christianity.)

ANSWER

That is the whole depth of Creation: Even evil ends up revealing good. Even denial of G-d (kefirah) ends up revealing the concept of believing in Him (emunah). That is the whole purpose of Creation: "More light is revealed from darkness."

QUESTION

2) We all came onto this world to fix the sin of Adam. But we only seem to be hurdling in the opposite direction of the world repair.

We are not seeing any acceleration towards tikkun (repair) but only towards kilkul (devastation)! And we know that we are so close to Mashiach, so how will that happen if we don't seem to be getting any closer to tikkun but only further away from it? And the general spiritual situation of the Jewish people right now, especially in chutz l'aretz, is the worst that is has ever been at. And we also know of the concept that almost all neshamos today have come back to help the world achieve its tikkun, but it only seems that we are getting further from tikkun with increasing kilkul with no end in sight...

ANSWER

Refer to sefer Daas Tevunos, which explains why it has to be this way - that all evil breaks out in all of its intensity in the end of days.

#DEFINITION OF A TALMID CHOCHOM

ANSWER

1) What is the source of the Rav's words that the "inner definition" of a Talmid Chochom (Torah scholar) is someone who lives his knowledge?

ANSWER

Sefer HaPeliah says that whenever the word Chochom (wise person) is mentioned in Chazal, it refers to one who knows secrets, who knows the meaning of the mitzvos and what their benefit is and what they hint to. From this we can learn that even if one knows Sifra, Sifrei, Tosefta, all of the Talmud, he is not called a Chochom.

The Sefer HaKaneh says that if one learned all of the above, one is still called an ignoramus, because a wise person (Chochom) is only one whose soul is bound with the soul of the Torah.

QUESTION

2) What about a Talmid Chochom who does not live his knowledge? Does he have the halachic status of a Talmid Chochom or is he regarded as a Talmid Chochom who has no de'ah (mature knowledge)?

ANSWER

Halachically he has the status of a Talmid Chochom, as explained in

the Poskim.

QUESTION

3) How can a Talmid Chochom live his knowledge? It's understandable that knowledge of mussar and middos has to be lived and not just known, but why would a Talmid Chochom have to live by his knowledge of how well he understands two people grabbing hold of a garment and the concept of ownership, etc.?

ANSWER

It means that his soul is bound with the soul of the Torah.

QUESTION

4) What is the meaning of a

Talmid Chochom who has no daas?

ANSWER

The Gra (Mishlei 13:16) says, “A Torah scholar who has no de’ah (daas) will act according to his initial judgment.”

QUESTION

5) What about all the Talmidei Chachomim today who didn’t hear the shiurim of the Rav on how to utilize the power of daas and they don’t recognize the soul’s abilities well – do they only have external knowledge and they are not genu-

ine Talmidei Chachomim?

ANSWER

It depends if his soul is connected with the soul of the Torah (as explained in the previous answer).

QUESTION

6) And what about those who didn’t hear the Rav’s shiurim on Nefesh HaChaim (IV) on what it means to be a Talmid Chochom and how to connect to the Torah?

ANSWER

Same answer as 5.

QUESTION

7) If a Talmid Chochom doesn’t recognize the powers of the soul and he doesn’t know himself well, is he a Talmid Chochom and it’s just that he lacks shleimus (self-perfection) or is it that he’s not a Talmid Chochom because he doesn’t recognize his soul and therefore he doesn’t have a quality connection to the Torah?

ANSWER

He is just missing shleimus.

WEALTH IN THE TIMES OF MASHIACH

QUESTION

1) What is the Torah’s perspective on wealth and honor? In the Rosh Chodesh blessings we ask for wealth and honor. If we have money, we can accomplish a lot and we can become more powerful, without having to be dependent on others for money, we wouldn’t need to feel dependent on rich donors. Everyone gets their way, and anyone can make anything happen, through money – for better or for worse. I am asking this question in particular because I am aware that different Gedolim from all types of Jewry, between the Litvish, Chasidish, Sefarim and Ashkenazim, brilliant Torah scholars, Chassidic Rebbes and tzaddikim, all had a different mentality about this matter. Is there a general mentality to have towards wealth and honor, or is every case meant to be judged sep-

arately, and does it depend on one’s mazal or personal avodah in life?

2) Also, as a related question, the Rambam says that in the times of Mashiach, we will not be lacking in any way, we will have plenty of food and money and everything we need, and there will be as much luxuries and comforts as the amount of dust in the world, there will be no more hunger and no thirst, nothing except a hunger to hear the word of Hashem. Will this all happen instantly or will we have to do any efforts to get to that point?

ANSWER

1) The duty upon is to become connected to the “light of Mashiach”, which is the light or the revelation called achdus/unity, or echad/one-ness. And we must await Mashiach’s revelation. At the time of Mashiach, it will be like when pairs came to

the Teivah (the Ark) of Noach, on their own, and Noach didn’t have to run to get them. And it will be like those husbands who are zocheh that their wife comes to them, such as Yitzchok Avinu, who didn’t have to go out to look for a wife. So too, in the times of Mashiach, wealth and honor will come to everyone without having to bother to get it, as an automatic byproduct of the great light of Masiach. Chazal taught, “Do things for the sake of their Maker, and in the end, honor will come.” It will be the same in the times of Mashiach.

2) The “light of Mashiach” is essentially the light of bitachon, a level that is above the curse of effort that was placed upon Adam HaRishon, because it will be a return to the level of before the sin of Adam HaRishon, when there was no need to make any effort.

END OF DAYS

QUESTION

1) What did the Rav mean in a recent response that a person can have a clearer perspective on our

current times by “seeing opposites in everything”? This seems like a very abstract concept, can the Rav please give some examples of how

one can do this?

ANSWER

In each thing, see the good parts and bad parts in it, as well as the

logical parts in something and the non-logical parts in something.

QUESTION

2) I understand from previous responses of the Rav that this concept of “seeing opposites to everything” is the entry into the 50th Gate of Holiness which is essentially the entry into Radl”a (reisha d’lo isyada, the unknowable head. Thus entering into the deepest level of kedushah depends on this concept of seeing opposites in everything. Why would the deepest level depend on accessing this intellectual ability? How does this intellectual ability awaken the heart to more closeness with Hashem?

ANSWER

The intellect [understanding conflicting concepts and being able to contain the contradiction] is one of the possible ways to enter into Radl”a, but it can also be entered through [being able to contain] contradicting desires and contradicting middos and emotions, etc.

QUESTION

3) Is seeing opposites in everything the same concept as “the secret of opposites” or is it the mind’s ability to overturn information (daas d’hipuch)?

ANSWER

No. Seeing opposites to each thing is to see the different parts of something, sometimes seeing one aspect of something and sometimes seeing a different aspect of it, whereas daas d’hipuch (using the mind to over-

turn information) is to see opposites within the same concept.

QUESTION

4) Is there a source that seeing opposite in every concept is the entry into the 50th level of holiness, the Radl”a?

ANSWER

What source is needed for this? That is the entire concept of the Radl”a, to see differing and opposite concepts within the same thing, to see opposites within each thing, as the Ramchal explains clearly in “138 Openings To Wisdom” (sefer Kelach Pischei Chochmah).

QUESTION

4) Will this generation for sure see Mashiach, since we are the last generation? Or can there chas v’shalom be another Holocaust-like scenario that happened to the Jews of Europe (which the Rav hinted to recently that it’s still a possibility of happening, chas v’shalom)?

ANSWER

Both are a possibility. May Hashem take pity on us and bring his Mashiach now, through His compassion.

QUESTION

5) Are there individuals in our generation who are moser nefesh to do the will of Hashem who can bring the Geulah and make all of Klal Yisrael worthy for the Geulah?

ANSWER

That would be possible if the Geulah happens through an “awakening from below”, but now we are

already at the level of “For My Sake, for My sake, I will do it.”

QUESTION

6) The Rav said that the closer we get to Mashiach, the light of Mashiach gets stronger, even though the birth pangs preceding Mashiach are getting sharper and more painful. Here is my question Lately I feel a lot of darkness – both because of what’s happening in the world and also because of darkness that I feel inside me. I feel that it’s a holy feeling of mourning the void of holiness in Creation, but I also feel that because my soul isn’t balanced, it also brings me to feel sad and bitter: “ I am bitter and am difficult of spirit.” I don’t feel the light of Mashiach shining strongly in these times. I know that it exists but it’s abstract to me, and I just believe dryly that it exists but I don’t feel it. How can I feel the light of Mashiach during these times and how can I feel that it’s getting stronger?

ANSWER

Connect to p’shitus (unquestionably loyalty to Hashem) and Ain Oid Milvado k’pshuto (the simple and literal sense that there is truly nothing other than Hashem). That is the light which is above our world and above all tumah/impurity. When one truly feels a disconnection from the world, it is easier to feel this.

