



Droshos - Yishuv HaDaas

This short drasha was given to young Israeli's who recently returned from the Far-East after completing their obligatory army service. The author explained statements of Chazal which these young Israelis, who practiced meditation in the Orient, never realized existed in the Torah worldview. The author very bluntly explained how yishuv ha'da'as can only be attained through Torah. Amazingly (or not) many of the participants followed the advice of the author to start observing two new mitzvos daily.

We are Jews, the holy Jewish nation whose feet stood at Har Sinai. When we want to find something we search for it in the holy Torah. If the quality of *yishuv ha'da'as* (tranquility and peace of mind) wouldn't be written in the Torah, we would have no need for it and we wouldn't need to search for it. However, since the concept of *yishuv ha'da'as* is written in the Torah, we need it and we must search for it.

Yishuv ha'da'as cannot be found by sitting with your feet crossed, staring into space and asking yourself, "How can I get *yishuv ha'da'as*?" To find *yishuv ha'da'as*, one must first search for it in the *Gemara*, *Midrashim* and the great commentaries and seek direction and advice from there. He must study the words of the *chachamim* in order to learn that *yishuv ha'da'as* is a requirement, and how to acquire it.

The *Gemara* teaches:^[1] "There are three things which bring *yishuv ha'da'as*: *Kol*, *marreh* and *reyach* [pleasant and enjoyable] sounds, sights and aromas. The *Gemara*^[2] also lists the three things which ruin *yishuv ha'da'as*: *avoda zara*, *ruach ra*, and *dikdukei aniyus* -idol worship, an evil spirit and severe poverty.

When people search for *yishuv ha'da'as* with their own intelligence, without the wisdom of Torah, they do not understand how the concepts mentioned in the *Gemara* are related to our subject. For most people, *yishuv ha'da'as* is attained from entirely different places. However, if *Chazal* tell us that this is the direction and path to *yishuv ha'da'as*, then we can rely on it for certain and understand that there is no other way. Any method which is not found in the Torah is irrelevant. The *Gemara* tells us the exact formula to acquiring *yishuv ha'da'as*. Whoever will try to find *yishuv ha'da'as* in other ways is going in false and crooked paths, and he will not reach his destination.

Since the words of our *chachamim* are extremely deep, their words must be studied thoroughly in order to understand their intention. When *Chazal* tell us that *kol* (sounds) will help people attain *yishuv ha'da'as*, they didn't mean for people to sit in their room all day long, listening to music. Similarly, when *Chazal* tell us that *marreh* (sights) help people attain *yishuv ha'da'as* they also didn't mean that a person should simply look at beautiful pictures in order to "get" *yishuv ha'da'as*. The *chachamim* teach us in their brief and concise way the exact methods to attain *yishuv ha'da'as*. The understanding and application of their words need further study.

The literal translation of *yishuv ha'da'as* is not peace of mind, as some may think. *Yishuv ha'da'as* literally means 'to settle the knowledge.' *Yishuv* means 'to settle,' and *ha'da'as* means 'the knowledge.'

What is first – *yishuv* or *da'as*? If a person searches for *yishuv* he will not have *yishuv ha'da'as*. Maybe he will have a beautiful house in the country (in a *yishuv*) – but he will not have *yishuv ha'da'as*.

Both “*yishuv*” and “*da'as*” cannot be acquired simultaneously. There must first be *da'as* (knowledge) in order to settle himself. *Chazal* teach us that “pleasant and enjoyable sounds, sights and aromas” will straighten out a person’s knowledge. If, *chas v’shalom* someone lost his mind, will the “pleasant and enjoyable sounds, sights and aromas” bring his knowledge *yishuv ha'da'as* back? Everyone understands that it will not. If one doesn’t have *da'as*, there is nothing available to settle him.

Da'as (knowledge) can also be translated as *chibur* (connection). As it is written: ^[3] and “Adam connected with his wife, Chava.” *Chazal* ^[4] tell us that there are three entities which are connected: Yisrael, Torah and *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. The Torah, which is in the middle, is the medium which creates the connection that joins Yisrael with *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. If a person doesn’t have this medium of connection, which is Torah, or in the words of *Chazal*, if he doesn’t have *da'as Torah*, (because Torah is *da'as*) it is impossible for the connection to occur.

If a person wants to connect two chairs together, he needs string to tie them together. If he wants to lock up his bicycle so it won’t be stolen, he needs a chain. Every connection between two separate items needs something in between them to tie them together. *Da'as* is the medium which connects a Jew with his Creator. *Da'as* is the holy Torah.

When a person has *da'as*, when his mind and heart are filled with Torah, then he can have *yishuv ha'da'as*. When a person doesn’t have Torah, and yet, he is seeking *yishuv ha'da'as*, what he is really searching for is *yishuv* without *da'as*. But if there isn’t *da'as*, there certainly cannot be *yishuv ha'da'as*.

These concepts are simple and obvious, but many people do not view things this way. Many people think that they already have *da'as*, and that only the *yishuv ha'da'as* is lacking. An ignoramus has no *da'as* at all since he has nothing to straighten out. The more a person connects to *da'as*, the closer he will become towards attaining *yishuv ha'da'as*.

Da'as is necessary in order to connect to a deeper realm within the self. There are many levels within the personality and soul. ^[5] One must first discover and reveal his own depth, and then connect to it. Both the revelation of the *pnimiyus* (inner dimension) and the attachment and connection to it, are achieved through *da'as*.

When *Chazal* tell us that “pleasant and enjoyable sounds, sights and aromas” bring *yishuv ha'da'as*, this only applies to someone who already has *da'as*. Only after one has acquired *da'as*, can the “pleasant and enjoyable sounds, sights and aromas” bring him to *yishuv ha'da'as*. Otherwise, the “pleasant and enjoyable sounds, sights and aromas” cannot help.

Similarly, the *Gemara* says: ^[6] “There are three things which open and widen the perspective of the mind: A beautiful home, a beautiful woman, and beautiful utensils.” Why, then, do we see people who have all of these three aspects and, yet, still lack an open mind? The answer is that without *da'as* there is nothing there to be expanded. When a person has true *da'as*, then a beautiful house, a beautiful woman and beautiful utensils will open the mind even further.

Without the Torah as the foundation and the source, all workshops and courses that teach methods and ideas for acquiring *yishuv ha'da'as* will fail. They will not work! Without Torah, all these courses don’t have substance. It is an illusion which has been brought to us from non-Jews. I am speaking about this from the depths of my heart because it pains me. When a workshop is not based upon the principles of keeping and studying the Torah, it is impossible for the workshop to succeed. It is simply

impossible, because it is impossible to attain *yishuv ha'da'as* without *da'as*.

People are searching for *yishuv ha'da'as* – where do they hope to find it? From a deeper place in the soul? Non-Jews also have a deeper space within them. If a non-Jew reaches and connects to this deeper place, has he attained *yishuv ha'da'as*? If he has, then what is the difference between us and them? There is one difference: we have the Torah and they don't have holy Torah. Our *yishuv ha'da'as* comes from *ha-da'as*, from the Torah.

There are many workshops and courses which are opening, and people flock to them like birds flocking to a cage, but we must know that it is a trap. Why? Everyone is searching to recognize their inner personality, to develop their potential, to grow, to relax, to lead calmer and more successful lives. All of us are living with various difficulties and struggles, and everyone wants peace. So workshops open up, people come and invest their time and money. Their intentions are good, but as the Kuzari^[7] writes: “Your intentions are good but your actions aren't good.”

Why aren't their actions good? Because *yishuv ha'da'as* cannot be attained without *da'as*. Preceding the search for *yishuv ha'da'as* must be the search for *da'as*.

Chazal say:^[8] “When one has *da'as* he is not lacking anything.” How does one acquire *da'as*? Chazal^[9] answer “Torah is great because it leads one to actions.” The perfection of *da'as* is when it is accompanied by actions, good deeds and the practical application of the *halachos* that are studied. *Da'as* can only exist within those who study keep the Torah.

When Moshe *Rabbeinu* received the Torah, which is *da'as*, he received the Torah with all its details. Therefore, the perfection of *da'as* is when there is adherence to the practical *halachos* of the Torah with all of the details. Otherwise, he may acquire *yishuv*, but he certainly doesn't have *da'as*.

Yishuv ha'da'as means *chibur*, connection which is between external perceptions and the deeper realms of a person. For this connection to occur his external actions and perceptions must be parallel to the inner realm of his holy soul. If the external perceptions are not parallel to his inner realm, it will be impossible for the connection to happen. It can be compared to a person who tries to place a larger utensil into a smaller one. It is impossible; it simply doesn't fit. They are not parallel.

Everyone has an inner dimension, *pnimius*. There are many people who are aware of their hidden inner dimension, and they want to connect to it. But if we want to connect to our inner realms, but, at the same time, we want our external perceptions to remain the same, then it will be impossible for us to find our inner dimension and to attach to it. We cannot continue to dress the way we desire, and we cannot continue to act in the ways that we choose.

In order for the external and inner dimensions to unite, they must be similar. Only then can they unite. But the person must first make his “externals” similar to his inner dimensions.

The Navi^[10] tells us that there was a time when every person did as he pleased, without adherence to the rules of the Torah. Under such circumstances, it is impossible to search for spirituality and to search for a connection with the inside and to find *yishuv ha'da'as*, because the outer utensil is not parallel to the inner. When the person prepares his external utensil, then he can connect and reach the inner dimensions.

Every new beginning and every new attainment must be done at the right time of life and at the right age. For example, if a twelve year old desires to join a class on marriage, they won't let him enter. He'll ask: “What happened to democracy? Everyone should be permitted to do as he desires.” But everyone understands that he is not at the right stage. When he will be several years older and enter

into that world, then he can join this type of class.

Da'as alone is still not *yishuv da'as* since *da'as* is only one side of the coin. It is impossible to get married alone, because marriage requires a pair. Similarly, *yishuv ha'da'as* is a [balanced] connection between the *pnimiyus* (internal) and the *chitzoniyos* (external). Searching inside is important, it is correct, and it is necessary, but we must not lose sight of the necessity to fix the outside as well, since we are trying to connect the *pnimiyus* to the *chitzoniyos*.

The wooden planks^[11] which created the walls of the *mishkan* (tabernacle) needed to be parallel to each other, so the planks could enter into their right place. Similarly, we must make our outsides parallel to our insides for the connection to occur.

Creating this parallel means first of all to learn Torah, the practical application of the *mitzvos*, and to try to fulfill them. This is the fundamental step towards *yishuv ha'da'as*. Without an understanding of the importance of keeping the *halachos* it isn't possible to connect with the inside.

Chazal tell us that sounds, sights, and scents helps the person acquire *yishuv ha'da'as*. A person who studies this externally will follow these three pieces of advice all day long. He will listen to nice music, he will look at beautiful things, and he will buy a lot of fragrant spices.

Does anyone really think that this will help him reach *yishuv ha'da'as*? Everyone understands that it will not succeed. *Chazal* were referring to an entirely different concept.

To be slightly honest with ourselves, we want *yishuv ha'da'as*. Everyone wants it, some more some less, and some seek it a lot.

It is written:^[12] "*Zeh ha'Sha'ar la'Hashem, Tzadikim Yavo'u Vo*" ("This is the gate of Hashem, the righteous shall enter through it.") *Chazal* explain that the 'Gate of Hashem' is *yiras shamayim*, adherence to the *Shulchan Aruch* with all its details. The proper way to connect to one's *pnimiyus* is to pass through the 'Gate of Hashem,' with the adherence to the laws of the Torah.

Keeping the *halachos* of the Torah is a non-negotiable requirement towards attaining *yishuv ha'da'as*. Ignoring the *halachos* can be compared to someone who learns how to do business, but he has one small problem – he doesn't have any money to invest. He studied for a year or two and knows different businesses strategies and investment plans. But if he is in debt and cannot even write out a check for two hundred dollars because the bank doesn't trust his check, then all his wisdom is worthless. He learned about businesses worth millions, but in a practical sense, it doesn't mean anything.

Yishuv ha'da'as is a business offer which is worth millions of dollars for the soul, but there is a great danger involved. When a person connects to his deeper realms, he feels the taste of *pnimiyus*. He enters deeper and deeper, and can easily make a wrong spiritual turn and find himself lost in India.

The only way to enter and attach to the inside is through the "*Zeh ha'Sha'ar la'Hashem, Tzadikim Yavo'u Vo*" – the 'Gate of Hashem' – the Gate of *Yiras Shamayim* – with the adherence to the laws of the Torah.

This is the only way.

Woe is to the person who only remains by the front gate and doesn't enter within, but woe to the person who tries to enter without the 'Gate of Hashem.' He will be passing through a barbed wire fence or worse, an electric gate which kills anyone who touches it.

The "*segulah*" for *yishuv ha'da'as* (and it is more than just a *segulah*) is to learn two *halachos* daily

and to keep them. This is very practical advice – keep two halachos daily!

We should all merit to recognize the gateway for *yishuv ha'da'as* and to enter through it, and to acquire from there the desired *yishuv ha'da'as*.

^[1] Brochos 57a

^[2] Eiruvim 41b

^[3] Bereishis 4: 1

^[4] Zohar Vayikra 73a

^[5] See the authors sefer Da Es Nafshecha (Getting to Know Your Soul)

^[6] Brochos 57b

^[7] The Kuzari 1:1

^[8] Nedarim 41a

^[9] Kedushin 40b

^[10] Shoftim 21:25

^[11] Shemos 26:24

^[12] Tehillim 118: 20

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