

BILVAVI

**MY
HEART
ASKS**

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

PARSHAS TOLDOS 5782

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YITZCHOK DAVENING FOR RIVKAH

QUESTION

Why didn't Yitzchok daven for Rivkah until he saw that she was barren? He had many years to daven for her even before reaching the conclusion that she was barren (which was 10 years of waiting). Can we learn from this that a person can assume that Hashem lets nature run its course and there is no need to daven unless a person is in need of a miracle?

ANSWER

Certainly a person needs to daven at the beginning of every situation. 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, "Vayeetar" means that he greatly increased his tefillos. (See Beraishis Rabah 53:5 and Gur Aryeh ibid.)

RIVKAH'S NAME

QUESTION

What does the name "Rivkah" mean?

ANSWER

"Rivkah" means "connection". Sefer Torah Ohr (Toldos) says that the word Rivkah is from the term "rivkos", which are groups of 3 or 4 sheep that are chained together.

THE NAMES OF ROCHEL & LEAH

QUESTION

What does the name "Rochel" mean? And what does "Leah" mean?

ANSWER

The name “Rochel” is linked with the kind of sheep that the Torah calls “Rochel”. The Midrash in Shir HaShirim Rabah says that just as a “rochel” is a sheep that acts modestly, so did Rochel act with modesty, when she was silent so that she wouldn’t embarrass Leah. The word “Leah” means “pleasure”. Sefer Chaim v’Chessed (Bo) says that this is the meaning of the words of the Targum that the “eyes of Leah were [brittle] beautiful to see”.

WHEN YAAKOV MET ROCHEL

QUESTION

Our Avos did everything with tremendous thought and precision. Why then did Yaakov kiss Rochel? What was the purpose of this? Making the question stronger, Chazal said that when the shepherds saw this, they spoke negatively about Yaakov Avinu, because they were saying that bnei noach are careful not to commit adultery and here this man is acting inappropriately. So why wasn’t this a chilul Hashem?

ANSWER

There are those who explained that Yaakov only kissed the hand of Rochel, but from a distance it looked like Yaakov was kissing her. Refer to Sefer Toldosav shel baal Maadanei HaMelech.

The Netziv (Heemek Dovor Beraishis 29:10) explained that it was to show anyone standing nearby that he was a relative of Lavan and Rachel. This is rooted in the statement of Chazal that Yaakov kissed Rochel in order show everyone nearby that he was Lavan’s relative [perhaps to intimidate them so that they shouldn’t touch Rochel by the well, since shepherds are suspected of adultery].

The Maharal Diskin (Shemos 4:22) says that since Yaakov was 70 years of age at that time, it was not disgraceful for him to kiss Rochel who was a minor then. (See also sefer Ohev Yisrael and sefer Ohev Chessed parshas Vayeitzei for more on this.)

The root of the matter lays in the words of the Ramban (Beraishis 29:9) that Yaakov didn’t kiss Rochel on the mouth, but either on her hand or on her shoulder. This is also

explained by Rabbeinu Bachye (Beraishis 29:11), and sefer HaKesav V'HaKabalah says something similar.

The Gra (Tikkunim 11) said that the “kiss” is referring to speech, because speech is called zivug neshikin, “the connection of kissing”, and this is the secret of Yaakov’s “kiss” to Rochel whereupon he immediately “told” something to her afterwards [a hint that the “kiss” was not an actual kiss, but it was a figurative term that refers to speech].

The Mekubalim refer to this figurative “kiss” as yichud elyon, a unification on High (Sefer haPeliah, Igros Remaz 26, Ramchal “derush V'nasatah Kesef”, and in many other places of Raboseinu).

CAN A RASHA HAVE BITACHON

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 oxymoron?

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 parituclar 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].

COPING WITH FALSITY & HYPOCRISY

QUESTION

I see so much sheker (falsehood) and it bothers me so much. It's hard for me not to hate or belittle the fakers and hypocritical leaders of today. I know that I also have hypocrisy and falsehood to me, I'm not perfect. But is there a way for me to stop hating all the fakers even though I know that I also tend to be a faker? I really can't stand it when falsehood is presented as truth and when truth gets presented as falsity. How can I deal with this?

ANSWER

Sometimes you should take your mind off this as much as you can, and sometimes you should try to find at least one good point even amidst the falsity you are seeing.

TELLING PEOPLE ABOUT MOVING TO ERETZ YISRAEL

QUESTION

Should we publicize in the weekly "Bilvavi" pamphlet the topic of making aliyah to Eretz Yisrael, or should we not publish such words because it's not for most people to hear and only a few people are ready to make the change of moving to Eretz Yisrael? Is this a topic that needs to be spoken about often no less than the need to speak about how Klal Yisrael has the avodah to separate from the Internet before the Geulah? Is moving to Eretz Yisrael an important topic that should be spoken about and publicized?

ANSWER

Publish the words of HaGaon R' Chaim Kanievsky shlit"a, who tells people to make aliyah to Eretz Yisrael.

EMOTIONAL BLOCKAGES

QUESTION

What causes my emotions and feelings to be blocked because of things that happened to be in my past? Lately I feel weak and as if I'm just acting robotically, like a mind without emotions. Where does this problem come from – does it come from my aveiros or is it just that I have a nature to be this way? Would it help to do inner work with myself such as by learning the Rav's sefarim and writing down my emotions?

ANSWER

This needs to be dealt with professionally in-person, and it will not help to work on yourself by reading a book/sefer. It is a problem that came from aveiros from a previous lifetime.

SHALOSH SEUDOS & SURVIVING GOG AND MAGOG

QUESTION

The navi says that in the war of Gog and Magog, only one from each city or two from each family will survive. But don't Chazal says that if one is careful to eat Shalosh Seudos (the third meal) on Shabbos he will be saved from the war of Gog and Magog, which implies that a lot more people will be survive the war of Gog and Magog?

ANSWER

It is referring to one who fulfills Shalosh Seudos completely. The word shalosh connotes shleimus, completion.

ALZHEIMER'S

QUESTION

We can't understand the ways of Hashem, but what is the purpose of Alzheimer's disease? With all other illnesses, the sick person can at least learn Torah and do mitzvos, but

with Alzheimer's, a person cannot learn or do mitzvos. The whole reason why we are on this world is to learn Torah and do mitzvos, so what then is the purpose of Alzheimer's disease in which a person can't fulfill his purpose of why he came onto the world?

ANSWER

It is so that others will do chessed with them by taking care of them, and thereby gain zechusim (merits). It is also because any suffering on this world cleanses the soul.

GALUS EREV RAV IN ERETZ YISRAEL

QUESTION

Why is it that the Jewish people in Eretz Yisrael have to be subservient to the government there and they can't oppose the reshaim? Is it because not all of the Jewish people are in Eretz Yisrael today and therefore our power today is weaker, because we lack the entire collective body of the Jewish people in Eretz Yisrael?

ANSWER

The root of this is because one of the "Three Oaths" were violated, the fact that we are not allowed to fight with the nations in order to settle in Eretz Yisrael.

SKIN-BITING AND NAIL-BITING

QUESTION

What does the habit of chewing the skin and fingernails come from, especially if this is a family habit? What causes it and what can be done about it?

ANSWER

It is an externally learned habit which stems from lack of calmness and a lack of patience. That needs a lot of inner work. It may also be an outward expression of one's boredom, and if that is the case, one needs to fill his void with inner content.

A WOMAN'S AVODAS HASHEM

QUESTION

1) Without learning Torah, a man's life tastes more bitter than death. What then will save a woman from troubles on this world?

ANSWER

1) D'veykus (attaching) to Hashem, (2) chessed, and (3) tzniyus (dressing and acting modestly).

QUESTION

2) How do women enter into the depth of the heart? In "Getting To Know Your Feelings", the Rav explains that a woman's avodah begins immediately from the heart and therefore she does not have the avodah of internalizing her mind's knowledge into her heart. Is there a way for a woman to begin from the depth of her heart?

ANSWER

2) Certainly she can. It is by attaining inner silence (refer to the "Inner Silence" series), and also by verbally reviewing fundamentals of emunah with her mouth, as explained in sefer Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh Parts One, Two and Five.

UNDERSTANDING THE BRESLEV PATH

QUESTION

In a previous response [#15874 – "Bresslov and Beyond"] the Rav said that not all the Gedolim agreed that Bresslov is the only path of completely serving Hashem. I want to ask a fundamental question about all this. On one hand, I think it's impossible to ignore the lessons and teachings of Reb Nachman of Bresslov and his student Reb Nosson, and it seems that their teachings were prophetic for our generation today. Already a few hundred years ago, Reb Nachman and Reb Nosson of Bresslov identified so well how the problems of falling into despair, sadness, and problems with kedushah (personal holiness) and lack of spending time alone talking to Hashem are the roots of all issues, and they revealed

wonderful advice on how to deal with these struggles, which previously had not been addressed that much. Reb Nachman and Reb Nosson saw that the time had come to start addressing these issues. On the other hand, when I learn the sefarim of Bresslov, I find statements that excessively praise the greatness of their teachings and how every single person needs to become immersed in these teachings, and if not, a person cannot become close to Hashem. Although I get much chizuk from the Bresslover sefarim, I feel that there are certain parts I don't accept, such as what I just mentioned. I would rather take what I like and ignore these excessive, exaggerated praises of their own words of Torah. But someone told me that this is impossible to do, because he claims that the Torah teachings of Reb Nachman is the most wonderful Torah in the world and that it's all the highest level of Ruach HaKodesh, far superior to all other sefarim, and that no one has the right to say which parts Reb Nachman was right about and which parts he isn't right about. However, I am not at peace with all the excessive praise that Reb Nachman says about his own Torah. It's a strong argument that's hard to answer. Yet, the Ramchal says the same thing, because after the Ramchal wrote Derech Hashem and Daas Tevunos, he wrote that he got permission to reveal everything hidden in the Torah. Although the Ramchal's words are written in a prophetic style without being proofs to everything he says – similar to the Arizal's style – I find it hard to believe that the Ramchal could say that he revealed every secret of the Torah. But am I being a heretic and disparaging the Torah scholars of history because I don't feel at peace in believing everything they said? My question boils down to: Should a person believe all the Torah of Bresslov [and the Ramchal's Torah] even though they excessively praised their own Torah? Am I being disrespectful and brazen by asking this question? Or am I not obligated to believe in everything that Bresslov [and the Ramchal] said?

ANSWER

You need to believe everything the tzaddikim said. But for every machlokes between tzaddikim, you need to apply the rule of “Their words and their words are the words of the living G-d.”

[The following uses terms of Kaballah]. The root of Rebbi Nachman's Torah is in Chochmah Stimaah d'Arich [or Mocha Stimaah, hidden mind] and even more than that, it is rooted in Chochmah d'Radla. It is a wisdom that comes from ayin, which is Keser d'Radla. That is why the Torah of Rebbi Nachman is presented as a root of everything. But

there is a level above this, which is Keser itself. That is the illumination of Mashiach, the very level of Keser, as it is written, “And the crowns of royalty will be given to you.”

QUESTION

2) What is the meaning of the Bresslover teaching the “sefer Likutei Moharan is the most wondrous sefer which there is nothing like in the world from all the generations”?

ANSWER

It contains a flow of wondrous wisdom (Chochmah), like a “stream that flows as a source of wisdom.” The words of Rebbi Nachman seem to skip around from one topic to another, and it seems as if there isn’t much of a connection between one line and another, but upon deeper analysis, there is really a deep connection that binds together all of his words, it is all interconnected. In contrast to this, all other sefarim of Raboseinu (our holy teachers) revealed Torah that was logical, understandable, and deep, such as the sefarim of Chabad. Other paths formed a structure of wisdom, such as the teachings of the Reshash and the Leshem. Others formed an inner, logical exoskeleton behind all of the inner wisdom, and this is what the Ramchal and R’ Eizik Chaver (Pischei Shearim) did. Others encompassed all of the Torah in all its parts and arranged it all in a wondrous manner, such as the Gra. Each of them reached his place in Torah according to his personal root and his personal share.

QUESTION

3) Were there any Gedolim who were deeply familiar with the Torah of Reb Nachman and his student (Reb Nosson) who didn’t agree with them? And if yes, what problem did they see in this path?

ANSWER

They suspected that certain damages will come out of this path, and we can see this in our own generation today.

QUESTION

4) Why does the Torah of Likutei Moharan (Reb Nachman) and Likutei Halachos (Reb Nosson) focus so much on having a connection to the true tzaddik? While it is true that the Baal Shem Tov and his students taught about the need to connect to tzaddik, it is Bresslov

uniquely which stresses how connection to the tzaddik is tied to everything, how only the tzaddik can sweeten all denim and how our every breath comes from the tzaddik, etc.

ANSWER

[Kabbalah]. It is Yesod d'Atik, which connects together Arich Anpin. That is rooted in Yesod of Adam Kadmon, which is the “new Shem Ma”H (45-letter name of Hashem).”

QUESTION

5) The Rav explained that every person has his own way of serving Hashem, and only individuals throughout the generations merited that their path became a general path for all others to take. Did that include the Ramchal, Baal Shem Tov, Rebbi Nachman, and all the mussar approaches? Why is it that Chassidus is going strong until today's times whereas the mussar sefarim seem to be in the distance? Can it be that the paths of avodas Hashem which aren't popular anymore today were only a prophecy needed for the generation that they were said in?

ANSWER

See answer #2. Understand this well!

GUIDANCE IN LISTENING TO THE RAV'S SHIURIM

QUESTION

1) There are so many areas of avodas Hashem that the Rav explains in his shiurim and sefarim. Every day I want to learn about something else that I feel I have a need for, and sometimes in the same way I will hear different shiurim of the Rav on all different topics. Do I need to be consistent and stay within one area at a time before moving on to the next subject, or can I jump around from one topic to another based upon what I feel I have a need to learn about at the moment?

ANSWER

Be consistent [stay within one topic at a time].

QUESTION

2) How did the Rav reach such clarity in avodas Hashem and to put together all the different views in avodas Hashem and synthesize them all together? How can a person be zocheh to this? Is there a particular topic I can learn about which will bring me to the same level that the Rav was zocheh to?

ANSWER

2) [No answer. The Rav declined to answer.]

AVODAH ZARAH IN SHEITELS

QUESTION

How it can be that a Kolel avreich is moser nefesh to serve Hashem and keeps every chumra, even a chumra d'rabanan on a mitzvah d'rabanan, yet he is lax about the issue of avodah zarah in sheitels today? We are talking about avodah zarah here!! This should be much more of a serious issue than chumros about keeping Shemittah m'drabanan and giving maaser on money which is d'rabanan....

ANSWER

If there are any negios (ulterior motivations) in asking this question, it is not a question at all!

THE GRA VS. CHASSIDUS

QUESTION

It is said that the Gra accused the Chassidic movement of being followers of Shabsai Tzvi. What was this fundamental machlokes all about?

ANSWER

Much ink and paper has been written on this, and it is an elaborate subject. Briefly, the Gra's Torah teachings were rooted in the light of the first 6000 years of the world, whereas the root of Chassidus is to draw forth the light of Mashiach and usher in the days of

Mashiach, to draw the illumination of Mashiach into the current dimension. That is the root of the entire argument and differences between the Gra and Chassidus.

THE RAV'S PATH – MUSSAR OR CHASSIDUS?

QUESTION

Is the Rav taking the path of Chassidus or Mussar?

ANSWER

A unified approach of both.

WEDDING PICTURES

QUESTION

Is it improper for a couple to give a picture of them to their parents so that their parents can have a picture of their married children hanging on their wall? I think it's immodest, but I'm being told that I'm acting extreme about this.

ANSWER

Compared to the level of the generation today, it is extreme – but refraining from it is still a good and proper thing to do.

QUESTION

What is the Torah view about pictures of the couple in the Yichud room? The photographers will treat a newlywed frum couple as if we are not religious, making the chosson and kallah pose in all sorts of positions that are strange and inappropriate, Rachmana Litzlan. Is this permitted according to Halachah or is it only an issue of Hashkafah?

ANSWER

Halachically, there is leniency about this because the photographer is busy with doing his job. However, it certainly goes entirely against the spirit of the law of Yiddishkeit.

MOTIVATING AN UNMOTIVATED BOY

QUESTION

What can we do for a bochur who doesn't find satisfaction in avodas Hashem and has no interest in hisbodedus or anything like that, and he feels a strong pull towards the outside world where he thinks he will have it better and more enjoyable there?

ANSWER

Find an area of ruchniyus which is close to his heart, and through working on it with him, you can get through to him.

LOVING A GENTILE

QUESTION

12) Sefer HaBris says that a person should love even goyim (gentiles). Did everyone agree to this?

ANSWER

Everyone held that we should love goyim too. However it is not a mitzvah of the Torah.

HOW A HUSBAND CAN INSPIRE A WIFE

QUESTION

Once the Rav said that a husband can't satisfy his wife's spiritual needs by just saying a dvar Torah at the Shabbos table. I identify very much with that! I understand what "not" to do, but what can I do proactively to provide ruchniyus for my wife? Should a husband and wife learn a sefer together? And if yes, which sefer?

ANSWER

It would be worthwhile to come up with topics to discuss that will open up deeper conversations with each other, such as by discussing interesting questions together, and to use that as a springboard of entering into a discussion about one particular inner spiritual point. It is also worthwhile for a husband to learn with his wife a sefer such as Michtav M'Eliyahu.

HOW TO VIEW OUR IMPERFECTIONS

QUESTION

How is it not a contradiction that we need to accept everything on this world as a blessing that Hashem gives us because everything He does is good, when we also know that there are bad things on this world and even the best people can have very bad faults in them when they aren't self-aware and they don't work on themselves?

ANSWER

In the blessing of Borei Nefashos we say, “He created many souls and their deficiencies.” Every thing in Creation will have a deficiency to it, and it was created so that we can daven for our deficiencies to become completed/perfected and so that we can work to complete/perfect it, and to believe that that is deficiency came from Hashem in order to awaken a person that he needs to believe, pray, repent, and fix the deficiency in his character. In every situation we need to clarify what the main part of our avodah must be, in relation that deficiency that we are seeing.

KABBALAH – THE HIDDEN TORAH

QUESTION

1) I saw in the name of R' Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin the concept of Torah D'Atika Stimaah, the “ancient, hidden level of Torah” which is a Torah without any “garments”. Are we able to taste of this level of Torah even now? Or is it only a revelation of the future?

ANSWER

Yes – now.

QUESTION

2) If we are able to reach at least partially this level of Torah (Atika Stimaah), what are the conditions needed in order to reach it?

ANSWER

D'veykus to Hashem at the level of Atik. In the weekly “Bilvavi” alon, there is a section about the level of Atik.

QUESTION

3) Who will fully reveal this future level of Torah – will it be Mashiach ben Yosef, Mashiach ben Dovid, or Moshe?

ANSWER

Mashiach ben Dovid is the root of this revelation. Mashiach ben Yosef is the level of Arich, and Mashiach ben Dovid is the level of Atik, and Moshe integrates them together.

KABBALAH - REVELATIONS OF MOSHE & THE TWO MASHIACHS

QUESTION

In Kaballah, what is the concept that Moshe is the integration of Mashiach ben Dovid and Mashiach ben Yosef? Also, if Mashiach ben Yehudah is called the all-inclusive level of havayah, then how can Moshe's role be higher than this?

ANSWER

Before Creation, the ohr EinSof (infinite light) was above with the “Ten Hidden Sefiros” that are contained in it. After Creation, the ohr EinSof is called “Mashiach ben Dovid”, while the Ten Hidden Sefiros within the ohr EinSof are called “Mashiach ben Yosef”. When the ohr EinSof will again become integrated again with the Ten Hidden Sefiros, this integration is called “Moshe.”

ENOUGH OF THE INTERNET

QUESTION

1) 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

2) 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

3) When a person uses Internet only if it's filtered or if he only uses it for Torah purposes or to visit Torah websites, how does this hold him back from pnimiyus and from true avodas Hashem and from having a true connection to Hashem? How is he connected to the 50th level of tumah? You can't tell on him that he's connected to the 50th level of tumah. Not only that, but many people who use smartphones and Internet seem to be serving Hashem quite well, and it's just that they have a mistaken attitude about technology and they don't see it as a threat to them – while there are many bnei Torah who don't have anything to do with Internet, yet they don't seem to be as connected to avodas Hashem as many smartphone users are. How are we to understand this?

ANSWER

[With being connected to Internet and having an internet-capable device], they are inwardly connected to the Internet without even being aware of it, in a way that's hidden which most people can't tell. But deep down they are connected to the Internet when they make use of it, whether they are aware of their connection to it or not, and slowly their connection to the Internet becomes revealed outward [in how they behave and talk, etc.]

QUESTION

4) What's the source that merely having an Internet-capable device makes a person connected to tumah even if he's not actually on the Internet? Is it because of what Chazal say, "Whatever is connected to impurity becomes impure", meaning that the very capability of a person to connect to the Internet at any given moment (because he owns an internet device) is tumah in and of itself, even when he's not actually using the Internet and he merely owns an internet device?

ANSWER

Yes, but even more than that, he is constantly absorbing outside influences by having this device on him.

QUESTION

5) Is there a deeper meaning as to why the final nisayon of Klal Yisrael is specifically through a kli, "device" that blocks him from the truth? The fact that this challenge is coming to us in the form of a physical device that people have on them?

ANSWER

Yes. It is the evil that counters the holiness of Mashiach ben Dovid, who corresponds to the level of Malchus, which is called kli (container, or device).

QUESTION

6) After Mashiach comes will even kosher phones be destroyed?

ANSWER

There won't be a need for them, when Mashiach is completely revealed.

QUESTION

7) Has the Rav heard of R' Kobi Levi shlit" a who wages war against the Internet? Is it a mitzvah to widespread his sefarim since he's the only one in the generation who screams about this in a way that penetrates the heart?

ANSWER

His scream is a scream of truth.

QUESTION

8) I heard in the name of Rav Don Segal shlit" a that the first thing Mashiach will get rid of is the immodest sheitels of today. Why won't Mashiach first get rid of smartphones?

ANSWER

Please ask him.

QUESTION

9) If I see someone in yeshiva who has a smartphone but I have no idea if it's a treif phone or not, should I react strongly to him or at least voice my protest at him? I'm not asking if I have an obligation to rebuke him or not, rather I am asking if I should protest actions that are evil.

ANSWER

Cry to Hashem that He purify His world.

QUESTION

10) Is it bittul Torah and a waste of time to learn the proper hashkafah about Galus and Geulah and the period of history we are in, i.e. to learn the sefarim of the Satmar Rav, Rav Elya Weintraub zt"l [and other sefarim of daas Torah] which explain what we're going through now in the end of Galus and seeing these matters at their root, in the words of the Gra and others about the End of Days, etc. Most bnei Torah that I know would rather learn just Gemara and not look into these matters at all, and I think it's because they fear that learning about these things will drag them away from regular learning of Gemara b'iyun. However I also think that any serious ben Torah today needs to get the proper

hashkafah today on many topics of our generation, such as knowing the mentality to have towards the Medinah, the Erev Rav, the concept of being in Galus, how we should view the goyim, the influences of the generation on the Torah world, and the problems that have arisen in the last couple of years, etc. Because without knowing the daas Torah about these matters, it's almost certain that a person today will be influenced by the generation and his ruchniyus is in danger because he is ignorant of important knowledge that he should be aware of. What is the proper attitude to have about this?

ANSWER

One should study these topics while remaining properly balanced with regular in-depth Torah learning.

QUESTION

11) The Gra explains that in the period of Galus before Mashiach comes is like death. The destruction of the Beis HaMikdash is compared to the soul leaving the body, being exiled out of Eretz Yisrael is like being buried, and the worms that eat at the flesh in the grave are like the goyim who attack Klal Yisrael during the Galus. The rotting “bones” in the grave are like the yeshivos that remained in Klal Yisrael throughout the Galus, and the bones that remain intact are the Talmidei Chachomim. Then even those remaining bones rot (we are left without true Talmidei Chachomim), and we are left with the decomposed bones, which is us, the final generation, who are compared to dirt. While this metaphor of the Gra seems to imply that the final generation is the lowest level and likened to the dirt, perhaps we can interpret it as encouragement for us, that we are the last remainder after everything has been finished, and that it's precisely through us that the Jewish people will go out of Galus. Can this interpretation be correct?

ANSWER

Both implications are true.

A SMARTPHONE FAMILY THAT NEEDS A YESHUAH

QUESTION I know a family where the father and two of the boys have a smartphone, both with filtered internet it. Each of them has developed a different physical ailment. People have tried telling them that if they would give up their smartphones, they would certainly

see a yeshuah (salvation), but they have no interest in giving up their smartphones and they only react in anger to those who try convincing them to give up their smartphones. What can be done about them?

ANSWER

Daven for them, with tears!

CHALLENGES WITH MY SMARTPHONE FAMILY

QUESTION 1) The Internet is a sensitive topic for me, because most of my household have treif phones, and I can see the “results” of it. They also dress not-so-modest, to put it nicely. Do I have the right to forbid my family from bringing in smartphones and to forbid non-kosher sheitels (especially because there may be a serious issues of avodah zarah in sheitels)?

ANSWER

You do have the right to do that, however, you need a lot of wisdom to know how you should act practically, in each situation.

QUESTION

2) How do I explain to my children that their grandparents and aunts and uncles are good people even though they have smartphones? Do I need to speak about the dangers of Internet at home to my spouse and children? And if I do, how should it be done? Or should I just ignore the whole issue since my family has already been ruined by smartphones?

ANSWER

You need to explain to them that this is the nisayon (test) of the final generation, the nisayon that is more challenging than all other previous nisyonos throughout the generations, and that many people simply do not understand the depth of this nisayon and that they are unknowingly mistaken about it.

QUESTION

3) How can we overcome the social pressure or family pressure not to own a smartphone? Whenever the family is gathered around the differences between us are very

recognizable, because some of the family dresses not-so-modestly and they sport smartphones, they have different interests and go on certain trips and excursions and spend their time very differently because they are so mixed with modern culture. How am I supposed to shelter my children from their aunt whose dressed in the best of European fashion, who deems modest dress as something that's primitive and outdated?

ANSWER

Explain to them pleasantly, in a way that will penetrate them and sink into them: “Who created us? For what did reason did He create us? And what does He desire from us? And who will be happy in the Next World as well as on This World?”

QUESTION

11) I saw the Rav's words about how the Internet has already destroyed this entire generation, and that there is no more Torah world anymore because of it. I literally feel the truth of this, and because of this I feel broken and full of despair, for the next generation. Whenever I think about this topic – the Internet – I feel like there is no more continuation of Klal Yisrael the way things are going right now. I feel like I want to just disappear and become swallowed up in the ground because of how despondent I feel about this. How can I get chizuk about this and ensure that there will be a continuation for Klal Yisrael ??

ANSWER

Eemunah. Eemunah. Eemunah!

DOES THE RAV HAVE RUACH HAKODESH?

QUESTION Can the Rav tell me about my neshamah, which shoresh neshamah (soul root) I come from, and any other information that the Rav can tell me from intuition? Does the Rav have knowledge of Ruach HaKodesh to tell me about my life and what I should be doing in my life exactly?

ANSWER

I am a simple person, who learns a bit and teaches a bit. I do not have the whole way of how to help you in these matters, which I have no knowledge of at all. Todah.

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There are some of you who might find this intro a bit odd but you have to keep in mind two things. The first is that the Rav comes from a different background from most of us. He never read a secular book in his life. Secondly, we have a lot of problems. We are very mixed up- we were raised very far from kedusha and even the best of us have been infected and affected by things that are not pure Torah. Sometimes we come across a view that's expressed from that perspective of pure Torah by a contemporary person. So, not coming from a perspective of pure Torah, hearing something that comes from pure Torah does not always click.

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Rav Moshe Weinberger,
in "Getting to Know Your Self"
more than 10 years ago

