

**BILVAVI**

# **MY HEART ASKS**

**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

**PARSHAS VAYISHLACH 5782**

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## HOW DO I KNOW WHAT HASHEM WANTS FROM ME

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We know that after we do anything, we can say that it was all from Hashem and it was all for the good. But how do we know before we are about to do something if Hashem wants us to do it or not, when we still have the bechirah (free will) to choose what we want to do? For example if we're not sure if we need to buy a certain car or not, or if we're not sure which direction to take when we are driving, how can we know what Hashem wants us to do?

### ANSWER

It is impossible for you to say exactly what Hashem wants from you, unless it was revealed to the person from Shomayim. The right attitude to have, however, is to remove any personal *negios* (self-serving motivations), which reveals the ratzon Hashem in its place. This is said by the Ramban and it is also brought in sefer Toldos Yaakov Yosef.

## CLARITY IN SHAKY TIMES

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I have heard from tzaddikim that it is impossible for even the greatest Gadol and Tzaddik today to know exactly everything, especially in the current period we are going through, and even those who do know don't speak about it that much. And if someone says he knows clearly every detail that will happen today, we must be wary of him. What is the Rav's view about this?

### ANSWER

Only Hashem knows everything! A tzaddik only reaches according to his personal portion allotted to him. In the times we are in now, the mode of Hashem's conduct is the "*Reisha D'lo Isyada*", the unknowable head, so everything today is unknowable and hidden. But this we do know: The root of Hashem's mode of conduct today. That very knowledge gives a lot of clarity – but only partially. It is the root of the partial clarity by which we can have during these times. It doesn't just mean that we simply don't know what's happening. Rather, what we are seeing is everything being overturned. We are seeing opposites to everything. If one doesn't understand this, then everything will simply be confusing to him, he just sees the world as becoming unstable, there is mostly turbulence and changes in the world. If one wants to understand the current period according to

his current level of understanding, he can try see how each thing has two opposite concepts within it. Then he will be able to see the full picture of how Hashem is running the generation.

## POST-CORONA EFFECTS

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For already half a year since I got corona, I have “post-corona” – I am losing hair, I feel tired, my bones hurt...I went to many doctors who just took money from me and didn’t help me. It is hard for me to learn and daven and go to the mikveh, and it’s so hard for me to feel that this is all for my good. How can this all be for my good if because of it I can’t serve Hashem as I would like? I feel like I am helpless to do anything about my situation. What can the Rav say to strengthen my spirit and is there any kind of therapy I can do to help my situation?

### ANSWER

It is worthwhile for you to inhale air throughout the day, to breathe in clean air, amidst a calm and pleasant state of mind. This is because the root of this disease comes from *ketzar ruach*, being “short-breathed”. In addition to this, repeat to yourself the fundamentals of emunah, simply, pleasantly, and earnestly.

## GRABBING THE INTERNET-SNAKE BY ITS TAIL

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(1) What is the meaning of Chazal “Grab the Serpent by its tail”? (2) Also, can the Internet be compared to the Serpent, since it is all the all-inclusive impurity, and is there a way to “grab the Internet by its tail” and defeat this force of *tumah*?

### ANSWER

(1) *Rekanti (Shemos 3)* says, “The tail of the Serpent hints to the forces of impurity....” See the *Malbim (Shemos 3)*, *Eitz Chaim 48:3*, and *Ramchal Tikkunim Chadashim, tikkun 15*.

(2) Yes. See *Pischei Shearim Partzuf Arich Anpin, 25*: “Grab it by its tail, and return the head to the tail, in the secret of “He [man] will stamp at your head, and you will crawl at the heel.” Look into the *Leshem Sefer HaDeah II, 4:20 (3)*.

## STRIKING DOWN OF LEADERS IN THE FINAL DAYS

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1) In a recent response [#14769] the Rav explained that when corona began we were in the plague of “darkness”, and now “We are currently in the plague of “striking down of the firstborn”, in that all “beginnings” (heads) of this world of falsity, especially the head of all the nations, Amalek, will be destroyed, and that Hashem is striking down and uprooting every head/leader, every evil leading point, in all the dimensions of place, time, and soul, and in every kind of creation – still non-living creations, growing organisms, animals, and people, and this is an elaborate and deep matter.”

(1) How do we see a “striking of the firstborn” today? (2) Also, which strike is this being directed against and what is the purpose of it? (3) What are the stages that will come after this “striking of the firstborn”? (4) And where do we see the previous nine “plagues” that came to the world before this?

### ANSWER

(1) Every “head” will fall, just like in Egypt when the oldest child in every house fell at the final plague. That will reveal Who the true Head is: “*I am the First.*” (2) That is the goal of this striking down – to remove the evil heads [who think they are in charge] and to reveal Who the true “Head” is. (3) After the plagues came the splitting of the sea [another plague upon Egypt], and when the people came to the sea and they wanted to *daven*, Hashem said to them, “Now is not the time to *daven*. Now, it is *b’Atika talya milsa*, now it depends on *Atik* (just trust Hashem).” This will be the stage when *Atik* will be completely revealed. (4) The first 9 plagues corresponded to the first 9 of the 10 Sefiros, which span *Malchus* through *Chochmah*. Each of the previous plagues that came to the world corresponded to one of these particular *Sefiros*.

## MAMA ROCHEL

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There’s a famous Midrash about how Rochel Imeinu defends Klal Yisrael to Hashem, and Hashem ANSWERS her that in the merit of her tears which she cries for her children, Klal Yisrael will go out from Galus and be redeemed. Does that mean that Rochel Imeinu’s tears have done everything for us?

## ANSWER

*Halevay!* (If only!)

## PATHS OF ROCHEL & LEAH – PART 2

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1) *I enjoyed very much the Rav's response [#16252 – Paths of Rochel and Leah] about the different paths of the neshamos of "Rochel" and "Leah". I just wanted to clarify some other QUESTIONs on this topic. In the words of the Arizal, the souls that are rooted in "Leah" come from the "head of Zeir Anpin" whereas the souls that come from "Rochel" come from the chozeh (chest/middle) of Zeir Anpin. It seems then that the souls that come from Leah have a higher soul root. Is that correct?*

## ANSWER

Yes, but even the lower level will have an aspect to it that makes it higher than the higher level.

## QUESTION

2) *If it's true that Leah-souls are a higher soul-root than Rochel-souls, why then did Yaakov prefer Rochel over Leah if Leah had a higher shoresh neshamah (soul-root) and he should have considered her to be even more important than Rochel?*

## ANSWER

Because that was Yaakov's portion. The upper section of Yaakov, from the "chest" of Zeir Anpin to the "head" of Zeir Anpin, is called the area of "Leah" [referring to the union of Yaakov and Leah, and this area is called "Yisrael", the higher aspect of Yaakov], while his lower section from the "chest" (middle) of Zeir Anpin and downward is the area called "Rochel" [referring to the union of Yaakov and Rochel, and this area is called "Yaakov", referring to the lower aspect of Yaakov] At first he was called Yaakov, and that is why wanted Rochel [because Rochel belongs to his lower aspect, "Yaakov."] Later he was called Yisrael, after he fought with the angel of Esav and he took Esav's portion – he then became deserving of Leah, who was originally destined to marry Esav – and from then on he was called "Yisrael", which refers to the area from above the "chest" (middle) of Zeir Anpin until the head [thus Leah belongs to his higher aspect, "Yisrael"].

## QUESTION

3) *It seemed from the Rav's response that there is actually a third grouping of souls, in the meeting point between "Rochel" and "Leah", where the "head" of Rochel reaches the "heels" of Leah, and this explains why there are souls who are very emotional and who serve Hashem with their hearts and make their knowledge palpable [Rochel] but who are also drawn towards intellectual clarity, "Leah." Is this true?*

## ANSWER

Yes. This is because it is the middle point between the two extremes of Rochel and Leah, and every middle point is always an integration of the two extremes on either side of it.

## QUESTION

4) *Does that mean that souls who are "Rochel" alone are only into emotion and action and it is not their avodah at all to arrive at intellectual clarity of matters [the path of Leah-souls], whereas souls of "Leah" are only meant to have intellectual understanding and clarity but they don't have the avodah at all to make their knowledge palpable and visceral to them [the path of Rochel-souls]?*

## ANSWER

It's not that "they don't have the *avodah* at all" to reach the other extreme. It is just that the main *avodah* of Leah-souls is intellectual clarity, whereas the main *avodah* of Rochel-souls is the heart/feelings, but each of these extremes certainly needs the other's path [Leah-souls also need to internalize and feel what they know, and Rochel-souls also need to arrive at intellectual clarity. It is just that Rochel-souls mainly have the *avodah* to feel their feelings while Leah-souls mainly have the *avodah* of intellectual understanding without feeling what they know].

## QUESTION

5) *Which souls are meant to learn Kaballah, the Rochel-souls or the Leah-souls?*

## ANSWER

The Leah-souls.

## QUESTION



6) What is the concept of “*dinei Leah*”?

## ANSWER

Leah is rooted in *Binah*, and judgments are awakened from *Binah*.

## QUESTION

*7) Just as there is a divide between Rochel and Leah and just as their different paths continued into the argument between the brothers and Yosef, will there also be an argument between Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben Dovid?*

## ANSWER

Yes, but then they will make peace with each other.

## THE SALE OF YOSEF

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It is brought in Chazal that by the sale of Yosef, the Shevatim made a Beis Din to decide, and they included the Shechinah in their ruling of sell Yosef. Why did the Shechinah agree to them? And why were the Shevatim punished for the sale of Yosef is their ruling in Beis Din had the consent of the Shechinah?

## ANSWER

Because of the rule that “In the way a person wants to go in, he is led.”

## ARE WE EVER ALLOWED TO HATE A JEW

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Is there any kind of Jew whom we are allowed to hate?

## ANSWER

Yes – a *rasha* (wicked person) who refuses to accept any rebuke. That is what the Gemara says in *Talmud Bavli Pesachim 113b*. Even when hating a *rasha*, though, we must only hate the evil that he does, but not the person himself.

## THE POWER OF JEWISH CHILDREN

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Why do Chazal say that entire world stands on the merit of the Torah learning of children?

Children don't have daas and they are exempt from mitzvos, so what special joy does Hashem have from the Torah learning of children?

### ANSWER

The Gemara (Shabbos 119b) says, “Do not touch my anointed ones” – This refers to the children of the Jewish people.” They are called “anointed ones”, Mashiach, from the word masiach, to converse casually. Children converse in Torah casually and earnestly, resembling a “wholesome man who sits in the tents”, the quality of *temimus*, wholeness.

Chazal also said that “The world stands on the vane chatter of Jewish children.” Rav Papa said to Abaye, “And what about our Torah learning?” Abaye replied, “Chatter that has sin in it does not compare to chatter that has no sin in it.” Thus, the quality of children is that their chatter has no sin in it. R' Aharon Kotler (*Mishnas Rebbe Aharon III, 104*) says that although in the mitzvah of Torah learning children are inferior to adults, they are superior in the aspect of keeping up the world with their Torah learning. See also *Zohar (Bo 39a)* and *Zohar (Vayikra 17b)* that children hold up the world give might to the Jewish people in exile. The *Tikkunei HaZohar (21a)* says that because of the children, there is Shechinah in the Jewish people. Especially in the era preceding Mashiach, the main spiritual illuminations are due to the children, who, as mentioned before, are called “Mashiach”, my anointed ones. The *Zohar Chodosh (Beraishis 13a)* says that the generation before Mashiach will survive due to the chatter of children, and it is through children that harsh decrees are nullified. It is brought in *Shelah, Torah Ohr, 100*. However, the Netziv (*Heemek Dovor Tetzaveh 28:41*) says that the anointed ones, the children, have exalted souls. This seems to imply that their quality is not because of their speech, but because of what they are. Sod Yesharim I says that even the actions of a child are greater than the actions of an adult. The angel who teaches children is Metatron, the chief angel.

The root of children of the Jewish people is in the Torah, in the Aron, in the Keruvim who had the faces of children. The Keruvim, who had the faces of children, were above the Aron, hence the

children of the Jewish people are on a level above the Luchos that were placed in the Aron, and that is why the world stands on Jewish children. Understand this very well.

## ANTI-SMARTPHONE CARDS FOR CHILDREN

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There is a series of trading cards made for children which have drawings that poke fun at people who own smartphones, as part of the war against internet and smartphones. There are thousands of such cards with different scenes on how people look so bad, especially in front of their children, when they own a smartphone. There was a very big controversy about these cards, and the smartphone users got very upset that these cards teach children to disrespect their parents who own smartphones and that it teaches people to belittle anyone who owns a smartphone and that it is a lack of respect for Yidden. A big effort was made [started by the internet crowd] to ban these cards, and it became forbidden in yeshivos for children to possess these cards, and in yeshivos if a child is caught with these cards they are promptly thrown into the garbage. What is the proper perspective towards these cards? Are we allowed to use them for chinuch purposes just in our homes?

### ANSWER

This is a very, very, very difficult issue! Because we need to educate our children to be aware of wrong things that they are seeing in their homes. This is in the category of “Break the barrel and protect its wine” [it is preferable to save the children and keep them holy, even at the expense of insulting the parents, when the parents are doing the wrong thing in their homes].

## BRISK – WAY OF LEARNING & WAY OF LIFE

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I saw that HaGaon R’ Dovid Soloveitchik shlit”a is very against learning Kaballah, because it is *gaavah* (conceitedness) for people to learn Kaballah before they mastered Gemara, and people who go learn Kaballah are fooling themselves as if they are already know Gemara well-enough to enter into this secret part of the Torah, and also because it is laziness and an escape from working hard at Gemara. In light of the above, is the *derech* of Brisk not meant for people who want to learn the area of *pnimiyus* of Torah? Also, what is the way of *avodas Hashem* of Brisk? Brisk stands out uniquely as a world unto itself that is completely independent from all other ways of yeshivos, both

in their way of learning and in their way of life. What is the inner root behind the *derech* of Brisk, and how can a person know if the *derech* of Brisk is for him or not?

## ANSWER

[When it comes to the study of Kaballah], the style of learning in Brisk doesn't fit with the simple way to learn Kaballah. However, the path of Brisk is not in contradiction with the learning of Kaballah as explained according to *Gra*. Even more, the way of learning of Brisk is actually a proper basis for in-depth, analytical learning which is not abstract, but well-defined. The *Divrei Torah* that comes from Brisk is essentially all about giving proper definitions to something, to get to the root of a point, and usually, there are two roots to every matter. Through finding the root(s) of a matter, one uncovers all the different points and *dinim* (*halachos*) that stem from it – each *din* is established based on its root.

The path of *avodas Hashem* of Brisk is: to be totally subservient to *ratzon Hashem* (to Hashem's will). And from that sense of subservience, one becomes afraid of *chas v'shalom* transgressing His will. In Kabbalistic terms, this is called the *kav s'mol*, the “left line”. In the area of Torah learning it manifests as giving definitions and boundaries to each thing, and in the area of *avodas Hashem* it manifests as *yirah*, fear of Hashem. But certainly there is plenty of *ahavas Hashem* there too – and wondrously so. But *yirah* is the root there, both when it comes to *avodah* and in Torah. Upon subtle analysis there is actually a huge difference between the paths of the Beis HaLevi, R' Chaim, and the Brisker Rov. It is enough to mention this just to give some understanding of this. Every person has to examine the nature of his own *nefesh* and his *shoresh neshamah* (soul root) to know if any path of *avodas Hashem* is for him or not, and that is a very broad matter.

## CHRONIC HEADACHES

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I suffer from chronic headaches. Sometimes it can go for 12 hours straight and sometimes it even goes for 24 hours and even longer. Lately I am getting these headaches the entire day. What is my *avodah* when the headaches come?

## ANSWER

In general, the way to deal with any physical suffering is to accept the suffering with *emunah*, with love for Hashem, and this creates a deep connection to Hashem. Become connected to the power of

your soul to be contracted (tzimtzum) where it focuses on specific areas. You can also use the pain to connect to the deep feelings of the soul. Also, the pain is purifying the body and helping you detach from This World.

With regards to headaches specifically, the avodah is to connect your thoughts to a place of *pshitus* (simplicity), to simple and non-complex kinds of thoughts. When you are in pain it is harder to think about anything complex and analytical, and it is easier then to think about things that are simpler and not complex.

## INTOLERANCE TO THE SLIGHTEST CRITICISM

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I am a 21-year old bochur and I feel like I'm choking – having gone through so many years of enduring my life. From a young age I was sensitive and anxious. I could be happy until the sky's limit but I could also have long bouts of sadness. I also got excited when I saw people who have bitachon, and I tried to copy them. From a young age, the way I solved my issues was by running away and leaving behind any place where I couldn't stand. I felt a lot of sibling rivalry towards my brother if he was chosen instead of me for something. Whenever I was criticized with words like "You're weird" or "You're annoying", I felt broken and I would cry. I felt like I was nothing and that I had no value. I am afraid of getting married because I don't want my spouse to lower my self-esteem even more with criticism. I can't take criticism. I'm afraid I will get a 'dominating' wife who will be too critical of me and break me. My father was abusive and he forced the Torah on me. In yeshiva I got beat up a lot and insulted by other kids. I feel like I'm always cold, it's my personality, and I don't easily smile. It's difficult for me to see people who are apathetic and I, too, have grown very critical of others, and I have difficulty accepting others when I find fault with other. For example, when I find people who are apathetic and not spiritual enough, or when people tell me to do something, I become afraid and I feel insulted and angry. I've lost my taste for life, I feel like my feelings are gone. I can't take my vicious cycle anymore. I want to stop being so critical of the reality around me, I want to stop getting insulted over every small word that people say to me. But mainly I feel so hurt that Hashem put me in this situation where I'm so easily insulted and hurt. I really try to be better and to overcome my yetzer hora and learn more Torah. Every time I get insulted from another, I feel hurt that Hashem put me in this situation where I'm so sensitive and easily hurt. I feel like I am totally moser nefesh for Hashem, through davening, Shabbos, learning and doing chessed. I wish I could stop getting hurt and insulted by others and that Hashem would

protect me. I wish Hashem would give me more bitachon in Him and show me that He's with me in my pain. I wish Hashem would guide me on how to reach my tikkun so that I won't have to go through any more pain.

I would be happy if the Rav can help me understand what the root of my issues are, and if I'm too self-absorbed how I can love myself in a healthy way, and how I can still like myself even when others insult me....I've been broken too much. I feel so limited and so vulnerable and helpless. Anyone can come and just destroy me with a little blow. I can't free myself from these feelings, I am always getting insulted and hurt, and I feel totally helpless to do anything about it! Save me, Rav, because I've tried more than once to find the root of my issues.

## ANSWER

You are too connected to what you don't have. You are too focused on the shortcomings of others, on their criticism and on your shortcomings. And you can't take any more, so you can't tolerate when anyone else exposes any of your shortcomings and you are always very drawn to whatever you're missing or whatever's not right with you. The root of your tikkun is to become connected to all that is good and positive. Take a pen and paper and write down all of your good points. Then list them in order of priority. Then, connect to your good points, mainly your strongest point. Become aware of it and utilize it more often. Whenever you are faced with difficulty, make sure to "escape" to your strongest good point and focus on it. This is how you will build for yourself a "world that is entirely good", and with every difficulty you will have a good place in yourself to escape to: your best quality. There are steps that need to come after that too, but this is a "good" beginning!

## SERIOUS & SENSITIVE NATURE

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My nature is that I am a bit sensitive. Before I got into learning Gemara in-depth, I could easily converse with others and have a good time with them. Now I am more serious about my learning, I analyze what I learn with in-depth study, but ever since my learning has matured, I am strangely finding myself more sensitive and deeply hurt from the comments of others. Also, before I got into learning, I had a funny personality and I always had a good joke to say, and in general I had an easy time socially. But now I feel like I can't talk as quickly as I used to, and I also feel like my friendships aren't as strong as they used to be. I feel like my most of my conversations with others

are too superficial and not ‘real’ conversations, and that they are just full of humor and jokes. If only I could find new friends. But at this point in my life, I can’t find new friends and I am surrounded all the time by more ‘external, superficial’ kinds of people that I can’t really have serious conversations with. This problem has caused a lot of imbalance to come upon my neshamah. I feel depressed, because I had always wanted to live with more meaning and more deeply, with more Torah in my life, but on the other hand it has made me very depressed because I can’t connect that much to those around me. And when I feel that distance from others, I become really depressed.

Can the Rav explain what is happening to me and how I can continue to live a more internal kind of life while staying connected with friends even though they are more external and superficial than I am? And can the Rav explain to me why I have suddenly become so much more sensitive to the comments that others make to me, and how I can change how I feel about this? Thank you to the Rav from the depths of my heart, for all of the guidance.

## ANSWER

With the more you get into your learning, learning with *iyun* (in-depth analysis), the more you are entering into the “inner world”, which is a serious, level-headed place to be in, and which is the very opposite of light-headedness (*kalus hadaas*). When people are light-headed, when they have *kalus hadaas* and they aren’t serious, they will have a lifestyle of being funny, humorous, and joking most of the time, etc.

You can try to start off your conversations with something funny, but it should also be something that contains depth, thinking, which carries weight and importance to it. This is the balance between inner depth and the world of light-headedness and humor. It is the first step that’s part of a greater process.

## SUFFERING FROM PERFECTIONISM IN KIRUV & IN LEARNING

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I love to help others and I think about others all the time. I especially want to do kiruv. I can’t be calm and serene as I am learning and getting closer to Hashem that there are Jews out there who are so far from Hashem and who haven’t tasted truth. I have started to become involved in a kiruv



organization and I saw many results Baruch Hashem from my work with others. But I keep thinking about the children who don't have religious education. Although we have succeeded in getting children a religious education in Torah schools, I do not feel that we are succeeding, because there are still more children and young boys who are still irreligious and eats my heart out. And then I hear crazy stories of how irreligious Jews are getting trapped into intermarriage, and I think about it so much that I become depressed from it and it affects the way I am at home with my family. Do I need to stop being involved in kiruv until I have stabilized my emotions more? Or should I give no rest on kiruv because there are souls who are going lost? And if I should continue, how can I deal with my strong emotions that make me so depressed?

Also, I want to know all of Shas and all of Shulchan Aruch. I also want to be a shochet and a mohel, someone who fears Hashem, and I want to know a lot about the soul, and to know Kaballah. I want to be perfect at everything. When I learn any sugya of Gemara I want to understand the entire matter of what I am learning about, not just the words in front of me, because there are at least 19 halachos that hinge on the matter being learned about in the sugya and I feel that I must know them in order to know what I am learning. This takes me a lot of time and then I can't focus. Then I can't find myself in learning and I lose my drive. I also feel like I haven't really gotten anywhere in all of my learning until now, and I haven't become totally clear in all that I learned, I just have notes that are incomplete. When I begin to learn a new topic I try to write a sefer on the topic, and when I learn I need to know the entire encompassing view of the matter, all the 4 parts of Torah (simple and hidden meanings) of what I am learning, which are all of equal interest to me. There is no end to how much I want to know all of the Torah and I can't see myself being otherwise. But how can I do this all properly?

## ANSWER

This is a subtle matter. There is a Creator Who can do anything, and there is the human being, who is limited. There is also a spark of the Creator within the created being, and therefore there is a spark in a person which wants to "do everything". This is also called our desire to go higher, *ratzu*, advancing. But we also have our 'default' mode, *shov*, returning to our normal level. A person has to recognize that he is a created being, which is limited by very definition. This is the depth of the power of humility: Recognizing that we are limited, and that we are not limitless and infinite. After your mind comes to peace with this, you then need to deeply clarify that you as a human being are



not responsible for bringing the world to its purpose. You are not responsible for results. You only have the responsibility of doing what you can, according to what Hashem wants from you. The results are not your responsibility. This perspective which helps you do what Hashem wants you to do, as opposed to looking for results that are perfect. Even more so, one has to know his capabilities, how much he can do and the quality of what he can or can't do, and then he should determine how much he needs to do, and what kind of work he can do, and how he can progress according to his unique capabilities and to do what he is meant to do (besides for clarifying what the halachah entails of him).

When it comes to learning, one should try to understand what he is learning according to his capabilities, but with the understanding that the Torah is longer than the land and wider than all of the seas, and it is impossible to get to the end of the Torah, whether in quantity or in quality, for the Torah is so vastly deep that no one can get to all of its depth. One should clarify each thing he learns about according to his level, to know what he is clear about and what he is not clear about. The very recognition that we are learning an endless wisdom is already a way to gain the humility of Moshe, and changes one's perspective about learning, so that he has the proper perspective. It is about learning one's personal share in the Torah – “And give us our portion in Your Torah.”

## SENSITIVITY TO FOUL ODORS

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### QUESTION

Why are some people very sensitive to a foul odor?

### ANSWER

*Sefer HaPeliah*, cited in *Yalkut Reuveni (Melachah, 2)* says that those who work in a foul-smelling trade are souls that are rooted in “Kayin”, and they are naturally attracted to working in jobs that have foul odors there because there is already a foul odor on their souls. Thus, by contrast, souls that are rooted in “Hevel” are much more sensitive to foul odors and they suffer from it.

The *Arizal (Shaar Ruach HaKodesh* and *sefer Taamei HaMitzvos, Mishpatim)* says that foul odors cause the *neshamah* to leave, and therefore smelling the *besamim* on Motzei Shabbos is enjoyable to the *neshamah* and returns the *neshamah*.

## WOMEN & MASHIACH

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Do Chazal speak anywhere about the wife of Mashiach? And if Mashiach will have a wife, are women more connected to the wife of Mashiach than they are to Mashiach himself? Just as we find that women are more closely connected to the Imahos (the Matriarchs) than to the Avos (Patriarchs), and although all of Klal Yisrael, both men and women, are connected closely to both the Avos and Imahos, still the women have a closer connection to the Imahos. So do women have more a connection to the wife of Mashiach (if there is one) than to Mashiach himself?

### ANSWER

Mashiach himself will be on the level of *Nukva* [*Malchus*], the feminine level, and it is women who are *masiach l'fi tuman*, they converse innocently (and *masiach* is from the word *Mashiach*). It is natural for woman to talk freely, and that is a hint to Mashiach/*masiach*/conversing. Also, Dovid (the root of Mashiach) came from Rus, who is called the “mother of royalty”. And Chazal said that while Yehudah was trying to take a wife, Hashem was busy preparing the light of Mashiach [which would come from the union of Yehudah and Tamar]. See *Kisvei Rema”m m’Shaklov, derushim al seder hishtalshelus* 327.

Women are connected to Mashiach himself, as explained above, because Mashiach’s level is rooted in the feminine [in *Nukva/Malchus*].

In the End of Days, the masculine and feminine levels become combined, and that is the light of Mashiach. Thus, in the simple sense, Mashiach will not have a wife, because Mashiach is in the secret of “There is no left side (no feminine side) in *Atika* (in the hidden level).”

## PAIN OF THE SHECHINAH

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1) *What is the pain of the Shechinah?*

### ANSWER

1) It is when there is a lot of restricted, limited level of the revelation of Hashem in His world. The word pain, *tzaar*, is from the word *tzar*, narrow, which implies *tzimtzum*, constriction. There is

proper tzimtzum and then there is increased tzimtzum, and when tzimtzum is very much increased, it is pain of the Shechinah.

## QUESTION

*2) If I feel the pain of others is that called the pain of the Shechinah?*

## ANSWER

2) Yes! Every pain of a Jew is Hashem's pain. The root of the pain on this world is in the pain above.

## QUESTION

*3) Is the Shechinah something that's separate from our neshamos or is it a part of our neshamos?*

## ANSWER

3) The Shechinah is the root of all neshamos.

## QUESTION

*4) When I feel another's pain do I also need to identify with the pain that the Shechinah has over this or is the mere fact that I am pained about a tragedy or another's pain is enough to be called joining with the pain of the Shechinah?*

## ANSWER

4) Both. There is pain below by joining with the pain of other Jews down below on this world, and there is also the root pain, which is the Shechinah's pain. Whenever there is pain below on this world (when a Jew has pain), there is also pain above. And when there is pain above, there will also be pain below on this world.

## QUESTION

*5) How can a woman connect to the pain of the Shechinah in day-to-day life?*

## ANSWER

5) Let it penetrate, and reveal a desire, to reveal Hashem and to reveal His glory on the world. This is the inner will of every Jew. When this will is uncovered, a person will feel pain that Hashem's glory yet been fully revealed. To the extent that you want Hashem's glory to be revealed on the world, that is how much pain you will be able to feel, over its absence.

## QUESTION

6) *How can we learn about the pain of the Shechinah?*

## ANSWER

I don't know of a sefer that's organized just on this topic. It is a matter that's scattered throughout the words of our Sages. In the last couple years there are new editions of Kinnos that also collect together all the different words of our Sages, about the concept of the *tzaar HaShechinah*.

## CAN A GADOL MAKE A MISTAKE?

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First I want to introduce this question by stating respectfully that I am asking these questions out of an earnest desire to know the truth, and not because I want to fight or attack. The Gra says in Mishlei (16) that the Sages of the generation are given special assistance from Heaven to give rulings to the public. We blindly followed the ruling of Gedolim to vaccinate – my wife got vaccinated but I didn't. I was personally opposed to taking the vaccine. I didn't take the vaccine because I had just recovered from corona, but my wife got the vaccine. Later we heard someone put out an announcement with the exact words of Rav Vosner shlit"a (the grandson of R' Shmuel Vosner zt"l) who testified that scores of people (maybe more, I don't remember exactly what he said) testified that they were highly damaged because of the vaccine. And there were even cases of death from the vaccine, which the government hid from people. And there was also a letter from Rav Karp shlit"a (but it's an older letter from several months ago) saying almost the same thing.

Another story: About a year ago, the Gedolim from all different types of Jewry signed a letter of approval that people should donate to the organization "Hidabroot", for kiruv and tzedakah purposes. But now R' Kobi Levi is saying valid testimony that R' Chaim Kanievsky shlit"a forbids any kind of kiruv through "Kosher TV" channels and through "Shidduch websites", which were

founded by Hidabroot. I think it's safe to say that if R' Chaim would know about everything Hidabroot is doing he probably would not advocate them. And in fact many Gedolim are also against Hidabroot, such as Rav Tzadka and Rav Mutzpi and others.

My **question** is: How do we explain such a thing, that Gedolim could be mistaken about something, and why isn't this a contradiction to the words of the Gra that the Gedolim always receive assistance from Heaven to give the right ruling when they are ruling for everyone?

Also, how can we ever rely on anything said in the name of the Gedolim when it's possible that they weren't given the right information about something (like if people intentionally withheld certain information from them when conveying to them all their information about something)? How can I listen and trust the Gedolim when I suspect that people are misleading them with false or lack of information, if I don't know for certain that they aren't being misled by the public? Does Hashem want me to blindly follow everything the Gedolim say even if it doesn't make sense to me? How can I be emotionally at peace with this, how can I trust their words when we can plainly see sometimes (maybe even many times, but I don't know...) that certain important information wasn't told to them?

## ANSWER

The Baal Shem Tov said that sometimes the *nasi* (the leader) can sin due to the sins of the nation, because the nation are like the branches that are intertwined with the root, their *nasi* (their leader), and the branch always has some effect on the root, as well as vice versa.

That is why when the majority is found in the less ideal situation, they can be influencing the "root" (the leaders), and understand this very well.

And sometimes, the branches (the nation) don't merit at all to be influenced by their root (by their leaders). The Gemara in Bava Kamma gives a parable about a flock of sheep that don't listen to their master [and run away and become endangered by the wolves].

Another example is the generation of the Judges, as Chazal taught, that the Judges ruled according to the level of the generation [Because the generation was at a low level, the Judges also were influenced by the level of the generation]. I heard these words from my teacher, HaGaon R' Gershon Edelstein shlit"a, earlier than 20 years ago.

2) I heard from my father-in-law who was a student of R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l, that once someone came to him to discuss a halachic ruling that was publicized in his name. R' Shlomo Zalman told him, "I never said this", and then he added, "I am telling you and ruling to you that you should not believe whatever you hear in my name. Only believe what you hear directly from me."

## HOW DO WE KNOW WHO THE GADOL HADOR IS?

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How do we know who the *Gadol HaDor* (the greatest person in the generation) is? Is it determined by the *Gadol HaDor* before him who appoints him to be in his place?

### ANSWER

The *Gadol HaDor* is the one who has the soul of Moshe, either for the most part or at least a spark of Moshe in his soul. One of the Sages told his student, "Moshe, you have spoken well" (*Talmud Bavli Succah 39a*) and Rashi there says that just as Moshe was the "*gadol hador*", so is the *gadol hador* in every generation called "Moshe", because there is an illumination of Moshe's soul that shines within the soul of the *gadol hador*.

See also *Tiferes Yisrael* (on *Shabbos HaGadol*) who says that the *gadol hador* is the one in whose merit the entire world is sustained, such as R' Chanina ben Dosa, of whom it was said, "The entire world is sustained through my son, Chanina."

See also *sefer Sheairis Yisrael* (*Shaar Hiskashrus 5*) that if one has *mesirus nefesh* for the *EinSof* which goes beyond the level of *keilim*/vessels and he draws down nourishment from there to the world, he is the *Gadol HaDor*.

See also *sefer Bas Ayin* on *Parshas Beshalach*.

## REWARD FOR THE WICKED & FINAL SORTING PROCESS

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1) Sometimes Hashem pays back a rasha for any mitzvos he did on this world, and he rewards him nicely on this world so that he will lose Olam HaBa. But isn't there a rule that "there is no reward for a mitzvah on this world", because mitzvos are eternal and therefore they can't be rewarded for on this world (and also because the true place of reward is the Next World and not on this world)?

## ANSWER

“A man according to his praise.” If one valued mitzvos only with a physical perspective, doing the mitzvos shelo lishmah and because he wanted wealth or honor – which is a bridging level between the physical and the spiritual – he may get that on this world, as R’ Chaim Volozhiner taught.

## QUESTION

2) What is a rasha? Someone who tried to keep Torah but fell into aveiros, does that mean that anything good he has on this world is all an exchange for his reward in the next world because Hashem is just paying him back on this world so that he won’t get rewarded in the next world?

## ANSWER

A rasha means he is deserving of *kares* (soul excision), meaning that his soul is cut off from its root, because it is so attached to this material world and all of his desires and wishes are for this material world, as taught by Rabbeinu Yonah.

## QUESTION

3) There was a tzaddik who said that it’s worth it for him to come into the world and do every aveirah in the world even if he can get to fulfill the smallest mitzvah, because a person is eventually purified from his aveiros, but the reward for even the smallest mitzvah is endless. How does that work out with the fact that wicked people are rewarded only on this world?

## ANSWER

In such a case, the person isn’t completely attached to materialism, it is just that he has fallen and he is pained by his fall.

## QUESTION

4) The Rav has said that chas v’shalom those who don’t give up Internet before the Geulah will not be zocheh to the Geulah. How does that work out with the fact that there were tzaddikim who said that they can bring the Geulah in their time and it’s just that there were souls in the generations who didn’t yet receive their tikkun and therefore these tzaddikim chose to push off the Geulah? It is told of R’ Mordechai of Chernobyl, and of the Ramchal as well, that together with their students

they meditated on yichudim for a long amount of time in order to bring Mashiach, and on Musaf of Yom Kippur they heard a noise, and it was the Samae”l (S”M) who was coming to prevent Mashiach, and it told them that if they bring Mashiach now, there will be souls who won’t be by the Geulah, so the Ramchal pushed off all his efforts to bring Mashiach and postponed it. And I saw brought from the Chofetz Chaim who said that we should inform everyone that when Mashiach comes everyone will reach their tikkun, because no Jew will be left behind. So why is the Rav saying that not everyone will be by Mashiach? Also, if there were neshamos that didn’t reach their tikkun in the times of the Ramchal and that is why the Ramchal didn’t want to bring the Geulah, what did they gain, if the situation today is much worse and there are far more neshamos who are doing much worse than in previous generations and they aren’t reaching their tikkun?

## ANSWER

The higher parts of the soul will merit the Redemption, because “All of Yisrael have a portion in the World To Come”. Those who lose out on the World To Come forever and remain outside of it essentially refers to the lower, less refined parts of the soul. Also, additional parts of people’s souls have already been sifted since then, and now only those parts which haven’t been sifted remain, to be sifted. This is the final sorting process!

## HOW MESIRUS NEFESH & MATNAS CHINAM WORKS

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1) The Rav has said that it is not within our power to change the generation, except through *mesirus nefesh* (sacrificing our will for Hashem), which comes from Above. It sounds like we can indeed change the generation, if we have *mesirus nefesh* – so what did the Rav mean that it’s not within our ability to change the generation? It seems that we can, if we have *mesirus nefesh*.

## ANSWER

It is not within our power to do anything that can bring about change. But if we show *mesirus nefesh*, we awaken a great light. When we have *mesirus nefesh* below on this world, our awakening from below causes an awakening above which brings a great light from above to come down to the world, and through that light, changes will happen on their own, not through us.

## QUESTION



2) How is *mesirus nefesh* a light that comes from above? If each of us has the power to awaken ourselves and have *mesirus nefesh*, then it's an awakening from below, from us, and it's not coming from above.

## ANSWER

See previous answer: *Mesirus nefesh* is an awakening from below, from us, which then brings about a light that comes from above, which then brings about change.

## QUESTION

3) If Moshe didn't get **ANSWER**ed when he asked Hashem for a *matnas chinam* (a free gift) to be allowed into Eretz Yisrael even if he isn't deserving, then how are we able to receive a *matnas chinam* from Hashem when we are undeserving? If Moshe, the *greatest tzaddik*, didn't get

**ANSWER**ed when he asked Hashem for a *matnas chinam*, then certainly we can't get it, so how can it be that we all have a power of *matnas chinam* to receive salvation from Hashem when we are undeserving because we are all children to Hashem?

## ANSWER

*Matnas chinam* is a light that comes from the Next World. That light is shining strongly now.

When *tzaddikim* aren't **ANSWER**ed even when they requested a *matnas chinam*, in each case there was a very specific unique reason why they weren't **ANSWER**ed. It is very possible that Moshe wasn't **ANSWER**ed because that mode of conduct (*matnas chinam*) wasn't good for him, but for every other individual, whatever he needs he can get at that time that he needs it.

## QUESTION

4) Why does the Rav say that those who remain connected to evil, to the 50<sup>th</sup> level of *tumah*, won't be by the *Geulah*? According to the concept of *matnas chinam* which the Rav explains so beautifully in the derasha "Asking Hashem For A Free Gift" (Tefillah #051), it seems that anyone can be *zocheh* to the *Geulah* even when they are undeserving, if they ask Hashem to be by the *Geulah* even though they are undeserving, and in that way they get a *matnas chinam* from Hashem, as long as they awaken this deep perspective in the soul, the fact that we are all children to Hashem, making

anyone able to receive any salvation from Hashem even if he is undeserving due to his deeds and due to his low level? So how can it be that those who remain connected with the 50<sup>th</sup> level of *tumah* won't merit the *Geulah*? Why can't they ask all Hashem for a *matnas chinam*, to get it even though they are undeserving, simply because they are Hashem's children?

## ANSWER

The 50<sup>th</sup> gate of *tumah* is a total contradiction to the *Geulah*. If those who remain connected with the 50<sup>th</sup> level of *tumah* will indeed merit a *matnas chinam*, the first part of their 'free gift' would be that they will first have the merit to disconnect from the 50<sup>th</sup> gate of *tumah*, and only after that would their 'free gift' from Hashem enable them to receive the 50<sup>th</sup> level of *kedushah*.

## WHO WAS OG?

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1) Is there a source that Og was Eliezer the servant of Avraham?

## ANSWER

1) *Maseches Sofrim* 21, *Pirkei D'Rebbi Eliezer* 16, *Yalkut Shimeoni Bamidbar* 21: 765, and other places as well say that Og was Eliezer.

## QUESTION

2) How can it be that a tzaddik like Eliezer could turn into a terrible enemy for the Jewish people, and what can we learn from it?

## ANSWER

2) The *Arizal* (*Etz Chaim* 49:9) says that Og and Eliezer were the same neshamah – the good part of his neshamah is Eliezer, and the bad part of this neshamah was Og. See also *Sefer HaLikutim*: Shoftim 85, and *Likutei HaShas* to Tractate Berachos.

## REASONS FOR HOLOCAUST & TRAGEDIES

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Rav Hutner said that we shouldn't give reasons for why the Holocaust happened, because it was above human comprehension. The question is, what about taking mussar from what happened in

the Holocaust? If it didn't come from any aveirah at all and it was just a secret mystery of Hashem which we cannot reason, and it had nothing to do with us or with how we acted, is there is still room for us to learn any mussar from the Holocaust, on what we need to fix, or on being afraid of Gehinnom, etc.?

## ANSWER

Everything has a root and branches to it. The root of something is always hidden and covered over, and it is rooted in the infinite thoughts of Hashem which is above all our understanding. But the “branches” can be understood. As the Gemara says regarding the suffering of Rabbi: “It came from an action and it will go away through some action”, meaning that we need to suspect that perhaps it came from a certain improper action (or sin) which served as the “garment” to bring about the tragedy. And when it comes to this, each person has to search himself out, according to his own level!

## LIVING IN ERETZ YISRAEL AFTER MASHIACH

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1) After the Geulah when Eretz Yisrael will be divided amongst the Shevatim (tribes), will people living in Yerushalayim have to move out of their apartments because only the tribes of Yehudah and Binyamin have the rights to live in Yerushalayim?

## ANSWER

See *Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 111a*: Rabbi Yochanan said “One city will be divided amongst two tribes.” The Yad Remah there discusses if Mashiach ben Dovid will come to divide Eretz Yisrael amongst the tribes. However, three different inheritances of three nations [Kenizites, Keinites] will also come to live in Eretz Yisrael, so the division will be different then. They will all pay each other with money [for where they want to live]. However, Yerushalayim won't be divided amongst the tribes, because the conclusive view is like the opinion in our Sages that Yerushalayim doesn't get divided. See *Talmud Bavli Yoma 12a*.

## QUESTION

2) What if a person is moser nefesh to live in a part of Eretz Yisrael that he doesn't inherit? If someone is moser nefesh and grabs any available apartment in Eretz Yisrael as soon as he is able to,

is that mesirus nefesh going to ensure that he keeps that apartment in Eretz Yisrael? Or will the divisions of the tribes override it?

## ANSWER

2) No [he won't be able to live in a part in Eretz Yisrael that's not his inheritance], refer to answer 1. See also sefer *Chesed L'Avraham* (3:22) and *Tzlach* of *Derasha to Shabbos Shuvah*, who quotes the views of the Semag and Rashbam that in the future, Eretz Yisrael will be divided amongst 13 tribes. See also *Toras Moshe on Devarim 34,1*.

## QUESTION

3) There are many ads in the frum papers to buy a nice apartment in Eretz Yisrael. If a person has the money to buy an apartment in Eretz Yisrael and he buys one, is that coming from belief that Mashiach is coming soon or is it coming from a desire for luxury and owning more houses?

## ANSWER

3) For some people it is coming from belief in Mashiach's arrival, and for others it is coming from a desire for luxury.

# PROPHECY BEFORE MASHIACH COMES

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The Rambam says that prophecy will return before Mashiach arrives. If we are right before Mashiach's arrival then where is the return of prophecy?

## ANSWER

That was what Rav [Avraham Yitzchok HaKohen] Kook held – and that is why he tried to revive the spirit of prophecy within his Torah teachings and in the way of serving Hashem that he taught. But the Gedolim disagreed with him, because it was reminiscent of the tribe of Ephraim who tried to bring the Geulah from Egypt before its time – the time for the Geulah hadn't yet come.

## INTRINSIC NATURE OF MASHIACH

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Is Mashiach a person or he is a spiritual light ?

ANSWER

Both.

## DESTRUCTIVE PLEASURES OF OUR TIMES

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I believe that 3 things are destroying our generation today [in particular, the children growing up in today's generation]: The internet, candy [sweet sugary foods], and music that puts people in a trance. Do all of these things have a common denominator? And if yes, how can we protect our children especially from these things? And if the answer is to develop a holy sense of pleasure that will counteract these things, then how exactly do we develop it and teach it?

ANSWER

The pull towards the internet is a pull that goes beyond logic and reason. Candy/sweets is not the issue of candy/sweets per se, it is the desire to experience pleasure in general. Music that puts people in a trance represents the loud, jolting culture of the world today in general, which modern-day music is just an example of.

The repair for all of these things is to connect to the dimension beyond logic and reasoning: to a holy sense of pleasure [pleasure in the spiritual, in a connection with Hashem]: to reach *hashkatah* (*sheket*), to become inwardly calm and serene.

## EXILE AGAIN

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Is it true that we will become enslaved again as we were in Egypt? If yes, what kind of servitude will it be? And are there any sources for this?

ANSWER

In Egypt we were enslaved to the Egyptians, and the Erev Rav was there. Now we are exiled to the Erev Rav themselves, and that is the slavery and servitude we are in – it is a servitude to the rule of the Erev Rav over us. This is what the *Gra* has written, and see *sefer HaTekufah B'Saaras Eliyahu* [of R' Elya Weintraub zt"l].

## GAINING HASHEM'S PROTECTION FROM TRAGEDIES

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I work so hard at learning and davening and doing mitzvos and training myself to do chessed for others and to improve myself, and to identify with my neshamah, and it's all so that I can have a genuine relationship with Hashem. It seems that most people just aren't into this. And, not only that, but most people I know are involved with doing very bad things. Does Hashem see the few of us who are trying so hard to live our lives in the right way according to His *ratzon*, when most people aren't interested in living their lives for *ratzon Hashem* and many people even have businesses and interests that are the antithesis to the Torah? Is it only in Olam HaBa (in the World To Come) where we will see the difference between those who lived their lives according to Hashem's will and those who didn't? Or maybe it's only individuals on this world who are clearly apart from the majority, since tragedies and hard times are befalling the world due to the way that most people act (who aren't living their lives in accordance with Hashem's will)...?

### ANSWER

The Rambam (*Moreh Nevuchim*, III, in *perek 51 - 53*) discusses this a lot, and the Rambam there explains that the more a person is *davuk* (attached) to Hashem, the more protection he gains from Hashem, and he will be saved more from tragedies, even on this world. This is called *Hashgacha Peratis* (Divine Providence) and it is different with each person depending on what his personal level is. And Chazal said: "Hashem is your shadow" – Just as you exist to Him, so will He exist for you" [The more you think of Hashem, the more He will protect you. See *sefer Nefesh HaChaim shaar III*.]

## CHIBUT HAKEVER – BEATING IN THE GRAVE

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Why does a person need to undergo *chibut hakever* (the beating in the grave) after death, to purify him from even the permissible pleasures of this world? If those pleasures are permitted, why does a

person need to be purified from it? Why does a person deserve to be punished for things that he was allowed to do??

## ANSWER

It is a cleansing process so that he can be able to rise to a higher world. When a person became too attached to the coarse materialism of this world, his soul remains too attached to his body and it is being prevented from rising above. That is why there is a mitzvah of “*You shall be holy*” – “to sanctify yourself even amongst your permitted desires”. Each person needs to sanctify himself according to his level.

## LEARNING SHELO LISHMAH

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When is it prohibited to learn Torah shelo lishmah? Aren't we all learning shelo lishmah...? And how can a person work on lishmah and eliminate shelo lishmah?

## ANSWER

Tosafos says that it is only forbidden to learn shelo lishmah when one learns in order to be mekanteh, when he learns in order to challenge others and prove them wrong. But there is no problem with learning for kavod (honor), and we rely on this view of Tosafos on a practical level. But in each thing we do, we should try to do one small degree of it with a bit of lishmah, and we should also have an aspiration to minimize our shelo lishmah and increase our lishmah.

## IF A TZADDIK ISN'T A TALMID CHOCHOM

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How should we view *tzaddikim* if they aren't *talmidei chachamim* (Torah scholars)? Sometimes I see people who can *daven* for many hours straight, and their faces shine with *kedushah*, but they are not a *Talmid Chochom*. (1) May one go to such a person for advice or to get a *berachah* from him? Or is it better to go only to *tzaddikim* who are also *Talmidei Chachomim*?

## ANSWER

There are three pillars that hold up the world (Torah, avodah and chessed) and each person can connect to any of these pillars depending on what his *shoresh neshamah* (soul root) is. That is why

we can find people who put a lot of effort into their tefillah even though they are not that gifted in their Torah learning. We are allowed to go to such people for a *berachah*. If such a person has *Ruach HaKodesh*, we may also ask him for advice, but if he does not have *Ruach HaKodesh* then it is better to go to a *Talmid Chochom* whose thinking is *yashar* (Torah aligned) and clean from the influences of the world.

## UNANSWERED PRAYERS & BEYOND FRUSTRATED

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I recently asked the Rav about my frustrations (Q&A 13833 – How Do I Get Close to Hashem) that I have because of all my unanswered tefillos for *ruchniyus* and in the lack of relationship that I feel with Hashem because I don't get anywhere with my tefillos, and the Rav answered me how the main point of life is to keep developing a relationship with Hashem. However, this answer only explains how all physical concerns and physical difficulties are really meant to uplift us closer to Hashem and not distance us from Him, how in spite of physical challenges or suffering we should still learn Torah with exertion and we get closer to Hashem. This is not really a deficiency, though, because it's just temporary, more or less. I was asking about things that I'm missing in my *ruchniyus*.

It's certainly not a good thing that a person is far from Hashem and from the Torah. A person needs *ruchniyus* in order to live a true life. If a person doesn't understand his learning and is asking Hashem that he should understand his learning, or if he only understands his learning a little and he wants to understand it better, and his *tefillos* aren't being answered, it's certainly not a good thing. If he's asking Hashem for a chavrusa or for a Rav and he still doesn't have one no matter how much he davened for this, that means he doesn't have enough Torah in his life and then he will be distanced from Hashem, because it's only the Torah that purifies a person and he doesn't have it, so he remains in a bad situation. There's nothing worse than missing Torah in one's life, and if a person doesn't have enough Torah in his life no matter how much he davens for it, he's certainly missing something big and it's not a good thing for him to be in this situation, as we can see with what happens to people who don't learn. So it's doesn't make sense how Hashem doesn't answer all my tefillos. I am one of His children and asking Him for *siyata d'shmaya* - why am I not being answered? It's a strong question. Not only that, but Hashem Himself commands us to want this and He wants it more than His children want it, and He knows how much good will come from the Torah if His children are successful in it, especially in this generation where the only true



way to be a *ben Torah* is to be in the *beis midrash* and learn Torah diligently amidst closeness to Hashem, and we can see simply how in this generation so many are sad because they don't have this, or they are sinking lower because of this deficiency, each person on his own level. Why does Hashem allow this to go on?

## ANSWER

1) Even what we are missing in our *ruchniyus* is good for a person. It is through missing these things that one rises higher in the end, because it makes him yearn for even more *ruchniyus*. “More light comes from darkness.” Light (success) comes from darkness (failures and difficulties), be it physical darkness or spiritual darkness (one's spiritual shortcomings). The light that comes after one's darkness is a much greater light than any light which isn't preceded by darkness. All of one's spiritual difficulties, which are a form of darkness, are the tools by which a person can receive a greater light, which he wouldn't have been able to receive had he not gone through the hard work of trying to remove his spiritual darkness.

Think well about these words, and then your perspective will change about your situation. It will be a truer perspective than the way you are seeing your situation of *ruchniyus* right now. It is upon you to gain this perspective that more light comes precisely from darkness. In addition to that, the Ramchal writes in *Derech Hashem* and *Daas Tvunos* two general reasons why we need to undergo exertion and challenges in serving Hashem. (a) Because good cannot come to a person unless he first undergoes difficulty and tests – it doesn't come to his as a gift. (b) So that it shouldn't feel like *nahama d'kisufa*, “bread of shame”, meaning that if he doesn't work hard to succeed, he will feel ashamed, because a recipient feels embarrassed to take something from his giver when he doesn't deserve it at all. That is why hard work is needed in order to get anything good.

## QUESTION

2) I am aware that when a person is missing something, this can be a catalyst for developing more of a relationship with Hashem, but if a person is missing something for a long time no matter how much he davens to get it, his connection to Hashem will weaken because he feels that he is far from Hashem because Hashem isn't answering him. Certainly every case is different and it depends on what a person is missing and how much he is davening for it, it depends on the person and on how much he davened, but generally that is feeling, that a person will feel so far from Hashem when he isn't being answered no matter how much he davens.

## ANSWER

2) You feel like you have davened so long for the things you are asking for and that it's taking too much time, but that's all according to the way you understand it. Hashem has endless reasons, because He is called EinSof (Infinite), and according to His thinking which is infinite, the amount of tefillos that you need to spend on davening for something is the exact amount that you need to be putting it, nothing less and nothing more. You need to believe that this is all for your ultimate good. And Chazal taught that some tefillos are answered right away while other tefillos are answered at a later time. A tefillah may be answered 20 years later – and it's all for your good, even for the good of your ruchniyus.

## QUESTION

3) Talking to Hashem throughout the day would make sense if it's a two-way street (so to speak) in the relationship with Hashem, but if one's relationship with Hashem feels like a one-way street, where a person just talks and talks to Hashem and nothing is happening from all of his tefillos, there's no relationship being created from this. The opposite happens, in fact. At first I used to daven so much to Hashem, but as time went on I stopped myself and thought, "Is anything really happening from all of this? What changed? Are my tefillos being accepted? Is Hashem speaking back to me? Maybe in previous generations this worked, and maybe there are a few special people in today's times who this works for, but not in today's times!" This is what it seems to be...

## ANSWER

3) The purpose of davening to Hashem personal tefillos is not mainly so that your tefillos will be accepted and answered. It is all a tool to create a relationship with Him. So the main thing is not to request of Hashem, "Give me this and give me that". Rather, the purpose is to speak with Him. Examples include thanking Him for what gave you, telling Him everything that is happening to you, and amidst that conversation with Him you can also include requests to Him. What is needed here is a change of perspective. Change your way you think about it – see it all from a different perspective, one which is far deeper.

## A MYSTERIOUS DREAM

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I am sending in this question to the Rav with a hope and a tefillah that the Rav will be the right messenger to give me clarity. A couple of weeks ago, I had a dream which I am not at peace with ever since I dreamt it.

I woke up in the morning from it with a description that was the same as a story [in the 1600s] called “The Lost Esther” – but, I had never heard that story before my dream, and even if I did, I could have only heard it more than 25 years ago when I was a young girl and I have long forgotten it. I found out later that it is a story about the daughter of the *Shach* [who was abducted to be taken for the king in marriage, and the priest tried to coax her into sinning willingly with the king].

When I awoke from the dream I remembered that I had asked myself in the dream, “What is going on here?” But before I became aware of it, I dozed off and immediately I remembered these words in my head: *“They thought she went lost, but really she wasn’t.”* When I awoke, I remember [mentally] asking Hashem, “You sent me two dreams and I have no idea what the intention of the dreams are. Are You sending me another one, to tell me what the dream meant?” Then I found myself asleep again and then awaking with these words in my head: *“This is the preparation for the Geulah”*. Six days later, I had the same dream again which was telling me these words: *“Look at Tehillim perek 25, which is connected with the Geulah.”*

Let me add here that I am not the imaginative type at all, not even close. My name happens to be Esther, and for all of my life I have been awaiting the *Geulah*, and it’s all I *daven* for. I wanted to know what the meaning of all this was.

## ANSWER

[In the story of The “Lost Esther”, the daughter of the *Shach*], the Esther of that story [the daughter of the *Shach*] was a spark of the soul of Queen Esther - who was taken for the king’s palace. The priest who tried to coax her into sinning, was a spark of the soul of Haman. The king whom she was taken to was a spark of the soul of Achashveirosh.

Since you are a person who hopes so much for the Geulah, a spark of an illumination of Queen Esther’s soul was ignited within you. And that is the hint of *Tehillim chapter 25*: *“All those who hoped in You will not be shamed”*, which resembles *“Your salvation became eternal, and their hope will be in every generation”* [the verse that we recite in *Shoshanas Yaakov* after hearing *Megillas Esther*].

## NO ONE TO TALK TO

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I had asked the Rav if the Rav knows anyone today who's well-versed in pnimiyus who we can speak to clarify any matters of pnimiyus and inner avodas Hashem, and the Rav answered, "Unfortunately to my great pain, I don't know of anyone." My question: So what should a person do if he doesn't have someone to guide him in these matters? Every person needs someone to guide him in *avodas Hashem*, and without having the right guide, it is very, very hard.

### ANSWER

Try to clarify a matter as much as you can [with someone who is capable of helping you clarify a matter.] But beyond that (for anything you can't clarify enough), "We have no one to lean on except on our Father in Heaven." [When we need help and we aren't finding it and there's no one to speak to], we need to *daven* and place our hope and *bitachon* in Hashem.

## FEELING SLUGGISH

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What should a person do if he feels heavy and sluggish, if he feels like he is being weighed down by something which always causes him to feel physically sluggish?

### ANSWER

Briefly, here are some practical points. (1) Train the body to get moving more, such as by walking. (2) Train yourself to walk quickly sometimes. (2) Train yourself to practice jumping. Move your hands quickly sometimes, etc. Also, eat a lighter diet.

This is all true when it comes to physical sluggishness, but since there's stress in the soul that's causing it, one needs to figure out what's bothering him and causing him to feel more sluggish. Sometimes it is coming from laziness, and sometimes it is coming from being sad about something.

## HOW CAN I KNOW AS MUCH AS THE RAV ?

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How can we be *zocheh* to reach the encompassing knowledge and expansive understanding of Torah that the Rav has, when life is full of so much stress, pressure and responsibilities, and raising children, etc.?

### ANSWER

There are several possibilities. (1) Emotionally disconnect from the world, back and forth. (2) Be strongly connected to the Torah in every situation, to be inwardly attached to the Torah. (3) Reveal the *neshamah*, for the *neshamah* knows everything, as it is written, “*My souls knows very much.*”

## MASHIACH AFTERSHOCK

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I have emunah that Mashiach is coming, but it’s hard for me to digest something that’s so far from our logical comprehension, that suddenly Mashiach will come and there will be things that are mind-blowing and indescribable. How can I be at peace with this intellectually and draw this matter closer to mind, that something so awesome and great is going to happen in our world which is so closed off from the real spiritual reality (may it come quickly)?

### ANSWER

Earth-shattering events have already taken place in our history, such as the event of the giving of the Torah, when the Yam Suf was split, and other such miraculous events.

## GEULAH DISAPPOINTMENTS

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There’s a hotline about awaiting Mashiach that quotes from hidden *tzaddikim* about things that will soon happen, and many times these things don’t end up happening. Is it good to listen to this hotline since it increases our hope for Mashiach’s arrival and helps us await his coming, or is it better not to listen to it because it’s disappointing when their words don’t come true? Also how can we keep awaiting Mashiach now that corona is over and Mashiach didn’t come?

## ANSWER

As long as something is not based on any reliable source, it is not worthwhile to be involved with it. It is better to learn the words of Chazal where they speak explicitly about these matters, and our Sages definitely spoke in certain terms. *Emunah peshutah* (simple, unquestioning faith) is more precious than anything, and therefore there is no difference of what is happening now in the world. *Emunah peshutah* should be the main aspect which builds one's growth. Current events are merely a tool to get awakened (and for any *bar daas* (sensible person), current events are an explanation of the process that's going to happen) to improve and prepare oneself. But in any case, *emunah peshutah* must always remain as the most important thing.

## I AM JEALOUS OF THE RAV

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I just wanted to let the Rav know that I simply envy the Rav, I am very thankful for all the time and energy spent on these questions and I hope Hashem sends every form of great salvation to the Rav.

## ANSWER

Chazal state that being jealous of those who learn Torah makes you wiser!

## FIVE EXAMPLES OF CONTRACTION & EXPANSION

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How does the soul expand and contract?

## ANSWER

In the 5 different ways which correspond to the 5 Partzufim known as Arich, Aba, Ima, Zeir Anpin and Nukva.

The expansion of Arich is when one lengthens a process [i.e. talking or writing more elaborately] while its contraction is when one shortens a process [i.e. talking tersely or writing briefly and to the point without elaborating].

The expansion of Aba is love, while its contraction is hatred.

The expansion if Ima is to be proactive and nurture, while the contraction of Ima is to relax and be passive.

Zeir Anpin is the middos. The middos either expand or contract.

Nukva receives. Nukva expands when it wants to receive a lot, and it contracts when it is satisfied to receive less (i.e. not depending on being supported financially by others for Shabbos needs even though one won't be able to have a lavish Shabbos as he would like to).

## FROM ARICH TO ATIK

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The Rav explained in a response last year immediately after the outbreak of coronavirus that following 5779 and onward, there are 221 years left until the end of Creation (6000), and 221 is equal to the word *Arich*, hence from then onward Hashem's trait of lengthening/slowing His anger has been lessened and that was why His wrath was more revealed in 5780.

Is this something that “has to happen” or it is merely a possibility that won't for sure happen? Is it all a perspective coming from the “left line” (*kav sm'ol, gevurah*) whereas the perspective from the “right line” (*kav yemin, chessed*) would be a completely different way of looking at things now? Or is it at least possible to see everything from the perspective of the “right line” and thereby sweeten all of the harsh judgments? (I am coming from *Likutei Moharan* 282 which teaches that we can sweeten everything when we view the world from a perspective of *kav yemin/chessed*).

## ANSWER

*Arich* has become shortened and *Atik* became more revealed. *Arich* leans towards the right line (chessed/water) whereas *Atik* leans towards the left line (gevurah/fire).



Questions in all spheres of life in general

and the *nefesh* in particular

are welcome in the Q&A system

and will be transferred to the Rav, *Shlita*

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