

BILVAVI

**MY
HEART
ASKS**

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

PARSHAS VAYIGASH 5782

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MESILLAS YESHARIM & THE TEN SEFIROS

How do the 10 levels of growth in Mesillas Yescharim correspond to the 10 Sefiros?

ANSWER

- 1) Torah corresponds to Malchus. It is the Torah which crowns Hashem as King.
- 2) Zehirus (watchfulness) corresponds to Yesod, which means to “shine”, as taught in sefer Moreh HaPerishus v'Madrish haP'shitas.
- 3-4) Zerizus and Nekiyus (alacrity and cleanliness) correspond to Netzach and Hod, which are called the two “feet”, the ability to run quickly to do a mitzvah (zerizus). The feet also touch the dirt of the ground, hence at this level there is also a need for nekiyus, cleanliness.
- 5) Perishus (abstinence) corresponds to Tiferes, the middle line, which turns chessed into din and also serves as a bridging level between chessed and din. Perishus means to either separate, make lukewarm, or compromise.
- 6) Taharah (purity) corresponds to Gevurah. “Who is a gibor, a warrior? One who overcomes his inclination.” Taharah is to separate and thereby purified, and it is a continuation of perishus.
- 7) Chassidus (piety) corresponds to Chessed, as it simply implies.
- 8) Anavah (humility) corresponds to Binah, “It has nothing of its own”. Binah is higher humility, unlike lower humility, shiflus (lowliness) which corresponds to Malchus.
- 9) Yirah (fear of Hashem) corresponds to Chochmah, “The beginning of wisdom is to fear Hashem.”
- 10) Kedushah (sanctity) corresponds to Keser, which is d'veykus.

DO I NEED TO LEARN ALL THE RAV'S SEFARIM ?

Do I need to learn all of the Rav's sefarim in order to get a tikkun (soul-repair) for my soul?

ANSWER

There is no need for most people to learn all of the sefarim. Rather, each person should learn whichever sefarim are according to his personal portion.

REALLY HAVING A REBBI

What does it mean to “make for yourself a Rav (a Torah guide)”?

ANSWER

[There are 5 aspects of having a Rebbi, corresponding to the 5 general areas of the nefesh (soul) which are: (1) Action. (2) Speech. (3) Thought. (4) Feeling. (5) Mochin – higher consciousness or perceptions.]

(1) In the area of action, a person needs to (a) serve him, shimush chachomim. (b) Following the rulings of his rebbi.

(2) In the area of speech, a person needs to say the divrei Torah of his rebbi.

(3) In the area of thought, a person needs to study his rebbi’s words.

(4) In the area of feeling, a person should connect to his rebbi through the deep feelings of his soul, and even more so, to feel an intrinsic connection with his rebbi.

(5) In the area of mochin, a person needs to become connected to the very approach (mehalech) of his rebbi.

POOR LISTENING SKILLS

I have a problem that I often forget to do things. My wife asks me to do something important and then I forget to do it. Usually it’s because I push things off because I have other things on my mind, and then I forget to do it. But I also forget what she just told me in middle of a conversation. Often I forget that she told me something and later she reminds me that she told me, and then when I tell her that I forgot she said it to me, she gets insulted and tells me that I don’t listen to her when she talks. The truth is that sometimes I really do not hear her talking to me even as she’s talking to me. And sometimes I heard what she said but I forget it. I realized that sometimes this happens because I have a strong imagination, and I’m usually lost in my

imaginative thoughts. At other times, it's because I am self-absorbed. I might be consumed by a certain thought, feeling, or fantasy, or a memory from the past, that I'm having. I'm always having mental conversations in my head all day with myself, and I suspect that this may be the main reason why I'm not hearing my wife's words to me. But that won't solve the problem of me forgetting what I heard. What I want to know is: (1) What causes a person to have poor listening? Does it come from heavy imagination, does it come from being self-absorbed, or from some other cause? (2) Why do I constantly forget things? (3) If poor listening and constant forgetting are two interconnected issues, or are they two different issues? Is the issue being caused by self-absorption which is really impaired wind-of-fire-of-wind (as the Rav explains in Fixing Your Wind.015.Self-Absorption) and is that what's causing me to constantly forget what I hear?

ANSWER

(1) The poor listening skills are merely a result of something else. It is coming from being self-absorbed, which is the root of the issue here. In particular, you are too absorbed in your feelings, which then brings you into your imagination [and then you don't hear conversations]. (2) Constant forgetting comes from a "heaviness" in the soul [which is being brought on by the self-absorption]. (3) Yes, the self-absorption is coming out in the form of heaviness in the soul. However, it is not coming here from wind-of-fire-of-wind. The "heaviness" in the soul (which is causing the forgetting) is coming from being absorbed in your feelings, and this is "earth-of-wind".

CO-DEPENDENCY

I am a married man, in my early 20's. I had a very hard childhood. My parents got divorced when I was a young child and I had a sibling who was emotionally abusive to me. My parents are emotionally closed people and I didn't receive love or warmth as a child. I barely remember anything from my childhood so I don't know if I ever received any love and warmth at all from them.

Baruch Hashem, I was zocheh to go to yeshiva and change my life for the better. But in my adolescent years, I began to feel an overwhelming feeling of dependency on a particular peer of mine. And if that friend would abandon me, I would quickly become dependent on another peer.

After I got married, I didn't encounter this problem for a while, but after some I met a certain young boy and I felt very attracted to his personality, and instantly I became friends with him. But I feel an overwhelming dependency on him, like I need to be around him always and to feel close with him. Although I don't feel that it's affecting my marriage, I am suffering a lot from these feelings of being so attached to another person and I can't free myself from how dependent I feel on him.

How can I fill the void that's in me? Will I ever be able to have normal friendships with another person instead of becoming attached to them? Will davening and having emunah help me heal and become emotionally healthy ?

ANSWER

Yes, and in the following ways. (1) Feel "dependent" only on Hashem, the Creator of the world. (2) Try to pinpoint exactly what the void in you is, and then you should see how you can fill that void. (3) Even amidst the feelings of dependency on the other, try to discern what exactly you feel dependent on him for, and which aspects you don't feel dependent on him for. Then, strengthen the aspects which you don't feel dependent on him for. (4) Gradually decrease your feelings of dependency on him, and go very slowly with this.

DISCIPLINING CHILDREN

I am a mother of 3 young children. I sometimes lose my patience with them, when I am disciplining or I need to rebuke them, I scream at them. I immediately regret it. How can I be more patient when dealing with them?

ANSWER

Every morning, awaken a conscious love towards them and show it to them. Think about your love for them, tell them you love them, and do actions of love for them. Whenever you need to discipline, make sure to also say a good word to them, especially words that convey love. Also, when you see a need to discipline, first pause for a few moments before you do or say anything. If you show anger at them, make sure afterwards to give them a hug or kiss, and say to your child: "I love you."

SELF-IMPOSED ISOLATION & THE REPAIR

I have a hard time connecting with others and opening up any kind of relationship with another. I really want to change this, but my problem is that I'm shy and also sensitive. Because of this, I have self-isolated myself in my house for several years already. I have tried several times to change my lifestyle but I wasn't successful. I also have a lot of trauma. I want to know how I can change. I also want to know: Why did my neshamah choose to have such a difficulty like this?

ANSWER

Try to find an opening in yourself by which you can connect a bit with others, and gradually, increase that part of yourself that can connect with others. In addition, make a list of all your potential qualities which you haven't yet actualized, and read the list every so often. Make sure to use your good points more often. After you have done that, now make a list of which aspects are holding you back from utilizing your potential, and then deal with each issue separately.

Your neshamah chose this difficulty because it is a tikkun for something in a previous lifetime, in which you didn't have a deep connection with Hashem and instead you substituted it with people.

That is why, on one hand, you should work on becoming more connected to others, but along with this you should also form a simple but deep and true connection with Hashem.

FINDING A REBBI AND CHAVRUSA

Is there a deeper reason why a person is having trouble finding a suitable Rebbi (Torah teacher) for him? And what can a person do about it? Also, if I don't have a chavrusa, what should be the attitude? Do I need to daven for a chavrusa? Do I need to feel dependent only on Hashem or do I need to feel also that my learning depends on having a good chavrusa?

ANSWER

The rebbi is the root to the student, who is the branch of the rebbi, just like a tree has roots and branches, and just as a father is the root of his children. A rebbi is not just a

teacher to someone, he is the person's root. Now, the "branch", the student, might not have found himself yet and he doesn't know where he should be spending his main energies on. When he can't find himself, he can't find his rebbi either. Or, he might not be unable to identify that a certain rebbi is really his root, and that is why he isn't finding his rebbi. Every person has a rebbi that's meant for him.

As for finding a chavrusa, it is both. Hashem wants you to have a chavrusa, because Chazal say, "Either a chavrusa or death." But you need to view your chavrusa as a messenger of Hashem, to help your learning.

MY WIFE IS NOT SPIRITUAL

Many times my wife says to me, "I am not the spiritual type. I'm not the type to listen to shiurim. I just want to be simple and do what Hashem wants. Even if I hear a shiur, I don't want it to be deep or intellectual, it has to be simple. I don't understand how women can listen to any deep shiurim about how to serve Hashem. That's not me at all."

1) Is it possible that there are some women who don't need to listen to shiurim or read any sefarim?

ANSWER

Yes. Her husband should tell her things on her level of understanding.

QUESTION

(2) Can it be that a wife is already close to Hashem just from being a good wife and mother and therefore she doesn't need any shiurim or sefarim?

ANSWER

It depends on her personality and also on what stage in life she is up to, like if she is raising small children or not, etc.

QUESTION

3) What should I tell my wife when she tells me that she is not spiritual and doesn't want to be?

ANSWER

Tell her that she is spiritual, but it is just that we always need to be constantly growing more and more.

QUESTION

4) What do I tell her when she sometimes admits to me “I really need guidance on how to become closer to Hashem...”?

ANSWER

Tell her that you will be happy to help her according to what her needs are, and not according to the depth that you need.

MULTIPLE MISCARRIAGES

I have unfortunately have had multiple miscarriages. I also had much suffering in my life besides for this.... I know that we are not supposed to ask “Why”, but I am trying so hard to strengthen my emunah and I am saying that it’s all from Hashem and that only He will give me children. Am I able to know why this has happened to me? What is the attitude I need to have towards all of this?

ANSWER

You need to have pure faith that everything is from Hashem and that there is nothing else besides Him.

On one hand, you should view your womb as a place which Hashem had made into a guest house for all neshamos who need a tikkun, a soul-repair, by spending a short amount of time on this world. In this generation, there are actually many neshamos who need this tikkun. On the other hand, try also to improve on doing one thing perfectly, without interrupting in the middle¹, even if it requires a lot of effort. Also, be careful to cut or burn fingernails and toenails.

MIKVEH INTENTIONS – FOR MEN

¹ Editor’s Note: This may have to do with something the Rav has mentioned elsewhere, that constantly interrupting one’s actions and not finishing what one is doing is likened to a miscarriage.

What are the kavanos (intentions) that a man should think about when immersing in the mikveh?

ANSWER

Do true teshuvah before immersing in the mikveh, and then again when you are under the water. Think that you are willing to die al kiddush Hashem. On your way out of the mikveh, become aware that you are becoming a new being. The mikveh is the secret of teshuvah [when makes you into a completely new being]. When one is under the water of the mikveh, he is like a dead person, where he is a world of entirely water, the second day of Creation, when there was only water and no dry land yet, with no place for a living being to survive. As a hint, the gematria of the words mayim karim (cold water, the cold water of a mikveh) is equal to the word meis, a dead person. Exiting the mikveh is like being born again. When you are under the water it is like being a fetus inside the mother, and upon exiting the water of the mikveh, you are being born again, exiting the mother's womb. Thus, coming out of the mikveh is a resemblance of becoming born again.

WHAT HAPPENS TO AN UNBORN FETUS?

1) I have a son who is my bechor (firstborn), but before he was born my wife had a miscarriage at the end of her first trimester, and the surgeons who performed the DME told me that the fetus didn't even have any form to it. We weren't sure therefore if our firstborn child really had the status of a bechor since the first pregnancy got very far, and also we weren't sure which gender the fetus was. According to our Posek that we asked, the second pregnancy of my wife which resulted in the birth of my bechor has the full status of a bechor and we were allowed even to make a blessing over his Pidyon HaBen, though at first he wasn't sure if we should make a berachah over him, and after reviewing all the documents about the DME, the Posek concluded that the first pregnancy wasn't substantial enough to classify the fetus as being a child yet, and therefore our son has the full status of a bechor, a firstborn child, and therefore the miscarriage did not have any status of being a child yet.

I am aware that when I had the fetus buried through the Chevra Kadisha, they told me that they marked a monument by the buried fetus with "Tinok (baby) ben...(my name)." They told me where the cemetery is and I forgot where it is, but I can find

out, and my question is: Should I go daven there by the grave they buried him in? I felt a connection to this unborn child of mine who was nothing more than an undeveloped fetus, because I still feel that there was a soul here who would have become my child had there not been a miscarriage. What can I do as a zechus for my unborn child? Should I just “move on” as everyone is telling me to do and not think about this? My heart isn’t at peace with this. What should I do, practically speaking?

ANSWER

Your main element is “water” and it is currently impaired, and that is why the “first offspring” of yours fell. The tikkun (repair) should be to repair your “element of water” (refer to the “4 Elements” series of “Fixing Your Water”) and do not be busy with trying to give a tikkun to the material aspects here. Instead, be involved in the tikkun of repairing your element of water, for that is where your portion lays.

QUESTION

2) Will my unborn fetus get up in the future at techiyas hameisim? And if he does, will he become my bechor (firstborn son) and then my current bechor won’t be the bechor anymore?

ANSWER

The fetus was not simply an unborn child who will get up in the future as your child. Rather, the fetus was a gilgul, a soul reincarnation, who came down temporarily as a fetus in order to bring about a certain tikkun (repair). The fetus will arise in his/her original form that has now been repaired.

You should not be thinking that much about what will be in the future when this unborn fetus arises again, because this is over-involvement in a prat, a private detail related to you as an individual, and the Geulah is when all peratiyos “private details” of being a private individual will cease, as Eliyahu HaNavi said and which is cited in the Gemara. Therefore, being involved with this and thinking about it would only be a fall [it would just be a waste of time and a self-absorption].

RECEIVING LOVE

What is the way to view the pleasure that comes from the love that we get from others? Do we need to imagine that it’s really Hashem’s love coming to us through the

agent of a human being? For example if someone gives you a hug or a kiss and it makes you feel loved, does that mean that you need to feel how it's really Hashem who is giving you that pleasurable feeling? Do we need to see the person as a messenger of Hashem who was sent from Hashem to give us the pleasure of feeling loved, or do we need to see the pleasure as coming to us entirely from Hashem?

ANSWER

The feeling of pleasure is coming to you from Hashem by way of the messenger who gives it to you, and as a result one should feel gratitude to the One who sent him this pleasure as well as the messenger of Hashem (the person) who gave it to him.

WOMAN'S DESIRE TO LOOK BEAUTIFUL

I have a desire to appear beautiful. If Hashem has caused me, and other women as well, to want to look beautiful, if Hashem has made this desire so important to us, then there has to be a good reason for this. It seems that our desire to look beautiful is not only so that we will look beautiful to our husbands, it's more than that. It's because we want to look beautiful for ourselves. I know that there's a lot of negative outcomes of running after beautifying ourselves, that it's a longing for something that's not possible and that it's a waste of precious time and that it involves doing a lot of things that aren't ratzon Hashem. Also, looks are a social need that we feel and it's not something that will stay with us forever. But what is the proper way to view this desire that women have to look beautiful? I exercise regularly not only because I want to be healthy but so that I can look good, and not only so that I can look good for my husband, but so that I can feel good about myself when I know that I look good. Is this a good thing or a bad thing? Is this a part of myself that I should embrace or try to root out?

ANSWER

The Torah describes how Sarah and Rochel were beautiful, that they had a pleasing appearance. This was really because their deeds were beautiful, as our Sages said. Internal, spiritual beauty can spread to become physical beauty. This is the trait of Tiferes (beauty) and Hod (splendor). However, the desire to be physically beautiful without striving to have inward beauty is a desire for This World. The true, inner desire of a person to appear beautiful is a desire that the the inner beauty of one's

neshamah should be seen even outwardly, a desire for one's inner beauty to become manifest as physical beauty on them that can be seen.

GROWING IN YESHIVAH

If a yeshiva bochur or avreich keeps all sedarim of yeshiva and exerts himself in learning according to his capabilities, and he also learns Mesilas Yescharim for about a half hour a day, will that be enough to reach gadlus (greatness) and shleimus (wholeness) or does he need more than that?

ANSWER

He needs more than that – he needs to do actual inner work, and not only through learning Mesilas Yescharim.

HOLY MARITAL INTIMACY

How can a person sanctify his marriage as discussed in the sefarim of mussar and Chassidus?

ANSWER

Learn Igeres HaKedushah of the Ramban, and if there are any questions you have on it, I will be happy to answer.

HUSBAND IN A LOVELESS MARRIAGE

I am married for over 10 years and for several years already I've lost my entire desire to stay married.

I need love in my life, and because of this, I simply want a new wife. I want to feel that I have a wife who loves me, not a wife with an emotionally dry personality who can't give me that feeling that I'm loved. All of my happiness in life has drained from me because of this. All the time I feel like I'm searching for my "other half", and I don't feel like my wife is that other half. My life isn't good in general and in particular my marriage is not good, there's marital discord, and perhaps that has to do with it. I can barely describe what I've been through until now and I don't know where to begin and where to end. I just know that I want there to be love in my life – I want someone to love, and I want to receive love in return.

As much as I want to end my marriage and find a loving wife, I don't have the heart to break up my family with little children, but on the other hand, I feel like I can't go on anymore with my marriage and suffer like this. Where does my issue lay in, and what can be done in my situation?

ANSWER

First, find "yourself", and from there you will find a pure self-love. When you do so, afterwards it will be easier for you to let go of the need to receive love from outside of yourself. [Editor's Note: refer to the class of "[Fixing Your Water.020.The Desire For Love](#)"]

WITNESSING HASHEM'S JUDGMENTS

Lately I am dealing with symptoms of colitis which I hadn't experienced in a long time. In addition, last week I was davening in a shul and a stone flew into the window nearby where I was davening and it almost hit me. The next day, my son, suddenly and very uncharacteristically, ran into the street and nearly got run over by a car. The driver stopped just in time.

How should I react to these three events which all happened consecutively? Is there a certain avodah that Hashem wants to see from me? I should point that in general I feel like I'm growing higher, because I regularly get guidance from the Rav and I feel like I've become a new person ever since I have started to get the Rav's guidance, and therefore I want to know how to do teshuvah and progress further.

ANSWER

When you come close to middas hadin (Hashem's judgments) you need to clarify the root of your own middos hadin in your soul, which is, by sharpening your own power of keeping to boundaries and limits. The reason why a person must do this is because sometimes a person is in middle of growing and going higher and suddenly he is jumping too quickly to higher levels, and he needs to clarify what his proper limits are, and to act according to his current level. (See Gemara Bava Basra 4a by the story of Bava ben Buta).

THE PATH OF CHABAD

How does a person serve Hashem at the level of a beinoni (the intermediate level between a rasha and tzaddik), the level which most of the world needs to strive for [as explained in sefer Tanya]? How does a person banish evil from his soul in his day-to-day living? Is it enough to think about Hashem's greatness while learning Torah and davening without studying the depth of the soul and the evil that a person can sink to?

ANSWER

The view of Chabad is to work with the mochin, the brain. CHaBa”D stands for Chochmah, Binah, Daas (wisdom, contemplation, and knowledge), the mental faculties. In the path of Chabad, the main avodah is hisbonenus, contemplation, by using the mind to gain control over the heart. However, in our generation, almost no one has the brain on a level to contemplate like this. That is why in our times, it is not enough to simply contemplate the spiritual, but to do actual hands-on work of understanding the evil that one can sink to and to learn the ways of fighting it.

GAINING SELF-CONTROL & RESPONSIBILITY

1) Since a person has two different sources of desires, which come from either the nefesh habehaimis (lower soul) or nefesh Elohis (higher soul), how does a person choose which kinds of desires he wants to have (choosing between desiring the wishes of the nefesh habehaimis versus the wishes of the nefesh Elohis)? Also, how can a person be in control of a desire? And how can a person produce a good desire?

ANSWER

A person is able to control his ratzon (will) through overcoming his will, by either (a) Doing the opposite of what he wants, or (b) Letting his mind gain control over his emotions. Producing a positive, good will is through purifying the body and thereby revealing the soul's will. Alternatively, it can happen through doing something good which produces an awakening or inspiration in the person, i.e. by listening to someone wise who awakens and inspires him.

QUESTION

2) If Hashem created me as an irresponsible kind of person and I live by default almost in the same way that an animal lives its life following all of its urges and instincts – in areas that people are normally careful in and take care of themselves in – what will empower me to live at a higher level than this and to want and understand the importance of actually doing things right?

ANSWER

Every person is born with the capability of being responsible, and he is not like an animal. Reveal even the smallest good desire in you that you consciously recognize, and enlarge it, through either contemplating it, verbalizing it, or acting on it. A person needs a will in the first place to want something good – the desire to want something good – and the fact that you are asking about this shows that you do have the will to want it!

QUESTION

3) What is an example of a small thing that a person can do, to reveal a good kind of ratzon/will?

ANSWER

Say a kind word to someone. Even the smallest good thing that you do, can awaken your good ratzon.

HOW A FATHER SHOULD SPEND QUALITY TIME

I spend about an hour and a half of time every day with my 3-year old son after he comes back from the babysitter, in between my morning and afternoon sedarim (sessions of Torah study). I usually take him to an afternoon park with machine rides. What should I do with him as I'm spending time with him?

ANSWER

Tell him a story, and allow him to express himself in the middle, and through this, have conversations with him. Talk to him on his level of understanding, and from showing an interest in his life, in his wishes, and his fantasies. Play with him also, and make sure to also play with him with more complex games that require a bit of thinking

(only to the level of thinking that he's capable of). Amidst all this, make sure every so often to tell him something serious that's inward and truthful, for example by telling him "Hashem loves you and He gives you everything", and also express your own words of love to him.

BILVAVI-STYLE EMUNAH

I don't understand the Rav's style in sefer Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh teaches that we need to develop our emunah in a question-and-answer format by asking ourselves questions how the world got created and then clarifying that Hashem created it, etc. This sounds like an intellectual and philosophical approach towards emunah, which is very different from the emunah I was taught as a child, which is that we need to simply believe that Hashem is here, there, everywhere and without clarifying how this is true and without getting into questions.

ANSWER

It is like when we say the questions of the Mah Nishtanah by the Pesach seder, which is in question-and-answer format. We are not asking the questions because we are honestly questioning it and looking for an answer [rather, we already know the answer and we are just clarifying it to ourselves so that our knowledge can internalize].

CHIZUK FOR A WOMAN IN THE PROCESS OF DIVORCE

In a situation where a woman has to get divorced, what is the inner meaning of it, why does Hashem want this from her? Why would a man or woman need to go through a divorce, and how are they supposed to deal with it in the Torah way? What's the inner meaning behind why they need to get divorced? What good can we say about getting divorced? (Certainly the intention here is not to legitimize divorce, only to help those who are dealing with this situation, to go about it in the proper and emotionally healthy way according to the Torah.)

ANSWER

The root of the concept of divorce is in the Nesirah, the 'surgical removal' of Chavah from Adam, where Nukva (the feminine side) became separated from Zeir Anpin (the

masculine side). The entire purpose of Creation is that there should first be a separation in order to unify afterwards, to demolish in order to build. This is reflected in the mitzvah of the Torah to remarry one's divorcee, in which one rebuilds what he had demolished, revealing how what he had demolished had led to building something from it, but even in a case where the man and woman are not zocheh after their divorce to get remarried to each other, Hashem returns and connects everything together properly as it should be. The separation is always a demolishing for the purpose of building something from it, and then they are zocheh to a new connection [with another], which will result in offspring, as the Torah says in the verse "sheger alafecha", the offspring that is sent out from you, in which geresch (divorce) becomes turned into sheger (offspring that follows later in the next marriage).

THE PURPOSE OF FALSE RELIGIONS & EVIL

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

ANSWER

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

QUESTION

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

ANSWER

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

KIRUV LEARNING MATERIAL

What should I learn with someone who is just starting to draw close to Judaism? Should I learn Torah with him, or halachah, or mussar? Or should I discuss with him the purpose of life and why we're here on the world, etc.?

ANSWER

It depends on his personality, so there are no ironclad rules for this.

WHY DO TZADDIKIM CARE ABOUT THEIR POSSESSIONS ?

Rashi in Parshas Vayishlach says that Yaakov Avinu went back for the small jugs that he left behind, because the tzaddikim "value their money more than their body". How can it be that tzaddikim care about their physical and monetary possessions, and why would they care more about this than their own physical lives?

ANSWER

It is because parts of their soul are bound with their money, enabling their money to exist. It is not because they feel a connection to their physical objects. Even more so, a tzaddik purifies his physical existence and therefore even his physical acquisitions are important to him, because they become sanctified like an animal becomes a korbon.

And the holiness that comes upon their money and acquisitions is greater than the holiness that comes upon their body.

TWO BROKEN HANDS

My mother-in-law broke her left hand more than 2 weeks ago, and before her hand healed she fell this past Shabbos and now she broke her right hand. She would like to know, is Hashem hinting something to her that she needs some kind of tikkun?

ANSWER

She should make a cheshbon hanefesh (self-accounting) by examining all of the actions that she does with her hands, and accordingly, she will see what she needs to fix.

LUNAR ECLIPSE IN AMERICA

Last Friday in America there was a lunar eclipse for over 3 hours which could be seen in most of the USA. Is this a bad siman (sign) for Klal Yisrael who are compared to the moon? Do we need to use it as an awakening to do teshuvah? And if yes, what specific teshuvah needs to be done?

ANSWER

1) Yes, the Gemara (Talmud Bavli Succah 29a) says that a lunar eclipse is a bad sign for Klal Yisrael. 2) Have emunah, and do teshuvah. 3) Each person needs to fix the absence of resolutions for improvement which aren't being taken on by others.

DEFINITION OF A TALMID CHOCHOM

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

ANSWER

Sefer HaPeliah says that whenever the word Chochom (wise person) is mentioned in Chazal, it refers to one who knows secrets, who knows the meaning of the mitzvos and what their benefit is and what they hint to. From this we can learn that even if

one knows Sifra, Sifrei, Tosefta, all of the Talmud, he is not called a Chochom. The Sefer HaKaneh says that if one learned all of the above, one is still called an ignoramus, because a wise person (Chochom) is only one whose soul is bound with the soul of the Torah.

QUESTION

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

ANSWER

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

QUESTION

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

ANSWER

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

QUESTION

4) What is the meaning of a Talmid Chochom who has no daas?

ANSWER

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

QUESTION

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

ANSWER

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

QUESTION

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

ANSWER

Same answer as 5.

QUESTION

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

ANSWER

He is just missing shleimus.

MY DILIGENT HUSBAND IS IRRESPONSIBLE

1) How can a wife respect her husband, if he goes to sleep very late at night because he learns until he has no energy left, then he gets up late the next morning and davens Shacharis way past the zman (through he does say Shema in time) and because of this I have to work so hard in the morning getting the kids ready for school because my husband is still sleeping in bed?

ANSWER

You need to find his good points, and respect him for that.

QUESTION

2) How can I respect my husband when he learns all the time on his laptop? I don't hear the kol Torah (the sound of Torah) coming from him because he just learns

quietly on his laptop all day, and the kids just see a father looking at a computer screen all day and there's no "sound of Torah learning" in my house.

ANSWER

Everyone has their own personality based on their unique soul makeup. It is not proper for a wife to set forth rules to her husband on how he should be learning and in what manner. That is what Rav Shach told a wife who complained that her husband learns bekiyus (cursory reading of Gemara and not in-depth) and doesn't learn iyun (in-depth). The same would apply in this situation.

QUESTION

3) Since my husband davens late in the morning, he comes late every to yeshiva. I work to support the family and so that my husband can learn seriously, but he doesn't take on the responsibility of learning Torah as I had hoped. Instead he only learns whenever he feels like it and he comes and goes when he pleases, based on his wishes and without any sense of responsibility. Do I get the same reward for enabling him to sit and learn as if he would be coming on time to seder?

ANSWER

It seems to my feeble understanding here that you have certain thinking patterns here, in which you want your husband to do exactly as you wish, and he's acting according to his personality which is built differently than yours. You have a great reward for enabling his learning. It is important that you not involved yourself at all with his learning. But you can certainly ask him to help you in the house, just as all the wives of all the Gedolim throughout the generations asked their husbands to help them in the house. But you should not get involved with his learning, with how he should be learning and in what way, etc.

WEALTH IN THE TIMES OF MASHIACH

1) What is the Torah's perspective on wealth and honor? In the Rosh Chodesh blessings we ask for wealth and honor. If we have money, we can accomplish a lot and we can become more powerful, without having to be dependent on others for money, we wouldn't need to feel dependent on rich donors. Everyone gets their way, and anyone can make anything happen, through money – for better or for worse. I am

asking this question in particular because I am aware that different Gedolim from all types of Jewry, between the Litvish, Chassidish, Sefarim and Ashkenazim, brilliant Torah scholars, Chassidic Rebbes and tzaddikim, all had a different mentality about this matter. Is there a general mentality to have towards wealth and honor, or is every case meant to be judged separately, and does it depend on one's mazal or personal avodah in life?

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

ANSWER

1) The duty upon us is to become connected to the “light of Mashiach”, which is the light or the revelation called achdus/unity, or echad/oneness. And we must await Mashiach's revelation. At the time of Mashiach, it will be like when pairs came to the Teivah (the Ark) of Noach, on their own, and Noach didn't have to run to get them. And it will be like those husbands who are zocheh that their wife comes to them, such as Yitzchok Avinu, who didn't have to go out to look for a wife. So too, in the times of Mashiach, wealth and honor will come to everyone without having to bother to get it, as an automatic byproduct of the great light of Masiach. Chazal taught, “Do things for the sake of their Maker, and in the end, honor will come.” It will be the same in the times of Mashiach.

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

END OF DAYS

1) What did the Rav mean in a recent response that a person can have a clearer perspective on our current times by “seeing opposites in everything”? This seems like a very abstract concept, can the Rav please give some examples of how one can do this?

ANSWER

In each thing, see the good parts and bad parts in it, as well as the logical parts in something and the non-logical parts in something.

QUESTION

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

ANSWER

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

QUESTION

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

ANSWER

No. Seeing opposites to each thing is to see the different parts of something, sometimes seeing one aspect of something and sometimes seeing a different aspect of it, whereas daas d’hipuch (using the mind to overturn information) is to see opposites within the same concept.

QUESTION

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

ANSWER

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

QUESTION

5) The Rav said that only through the 50th gate of kedushah (holiness) can we fight against the 50th gate of tumah (impurity), and it is either through emunah peshutah, or through temimus, or through seeing opposites to everything. My question is that I know people who seem to be strong at these abilities, they have emunah peshutah and temimus, yet they are very connected to their smartphones and internet use, either for Torah or kiruv purposes. They don’t understand why they need to separate from the Internet, especially if they are getting so much Torah from the internet. It seems to me that the only way for people to wage war against the Internet is through mesirus nefesh to do the will of Hashem. It is just that most people do not understand at all why this is what Hashem wants from us now, because they don’t see a problem with Internet if they are using it for Torah or kiruv purposes and other good purposes. It seems then that mesirus nefesh is the only way to reach the 50th level of kedushah, but just through emunah peshutah or temimus alone, it doesn’t seem that this will be enough to fight against the Internet. If anything, their temimus makes them fall into the Internet even more because in their earnestness they don’t see a problem at all with using Internet – they don’t have the subtlety to feel how this device is intrinsically impure, especially if they get Torah from it. So can the Rav please explain how people can fight against their Internet use just through having emunah peshutah, or temimus, or the ability of seeing opposites in everything? How do these abilities bring a person to the 50th level of kedushah? It seems to be that the only advice to win against the Internet is through mesirus nefesh to do the will of Hashem, and then to explain to others how this is what Hashem wants from us, and only then can they understand it intellectually and then internalize in their hearts, and then they can actually be moser nefesh for Hashem...

ANSWER

Either they have ohr makif (enveloping light which they haven’t yet internalized but which they are encircling and grasping onto), or they have reached a partial level of light. If someone has emunah peshutah or temimus or pshitus, they are certainly

connected to the 50th level of kedushah. But it is possible that it hasn't yet penetrated into their nefesh habehaimis, their animal level of their soul.

QUESTION

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

ANSWER

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

QUESTION

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

ANSWER

That would be possible if the Geulah happens through an "awakening from below", but now we are already at the level of "For My Sake, for My sake, I will do it."

QUESTION

7) The Rav explained recently that the decree of "45 days of in desert" which was prophesied about the end of days doesn't necessarily mean a physical event of being exiled to the desert, because it can also mean a spiritual exile to a spiritual desert, and the Rav also explained that this was also the secret behind the 45 souls who perished in Meiron this year. Did the Rav means that the tragedy in Meiron was a fulfillment of the exile of the 45 days in the desert? And if yes, does that mean we are found in the process of the 45 days in the desert in the spiritual sense?

ANSWER

Yes! It was the cessation of the ideal design of man (the death of the 45 implies the cessation of adam/man, equal to 45). And now the main light is through the

illumination of the kav (the ray that extends from the infinite) which is above the human being – the kav d'Adam Kadmon.

QUESTION

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

ANSWER

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

HELPING MASHIACH

1) When believing in Hashem that He does everything and that He is bringing the Geulah, does that require us to believe also that there is someone right now who is capable of being Mashiach even though it is not known to us who Mashiach is? Will believing in this give strength to Mashiach to fight the spiritual war of Gog and Magog for us?

ANSWER

This is not part of one of the principles of emunah, but it is true, because we are taught by Raboseinu (our teachers) that every generation has someone in it who is eligible to be Mashiach, even if this potential Mashiach didn't even receive the soul of Mashiach yet. And through believing that there is a potential Mashiach in the generation, yes, we give him strength and illumination.

QUESTION

2) How do we believe in Mashiach and give strength to him without getting into issues of avodah zarah (making a deity) out of him, and to believe that it's all Hashem and that only Hashem is everything and does everything?

ANSWER

Mashiach is only a shaliach, a messenger, of Hashem. Mashiach has no power of his own and he cannot do anything on his own at all.

QUESTION

3) Are all of our souls included in the soul of Mashiach?

ANSWER

Yes.

QUESTION

4) Are we able to reach “ayin” only through connecting to a tzaddik?

ANSWER

That is one of the ways.

QUESTION

5) If Mashiach hasn't yet been revealed, how do we help him?

ANSWER

Through tefillah (prayer), emunah (faith in G-d), teshuvah (repentance), and awaiting the Geulah (Redemption).

QUESTION

6) Do we need to daven to Hashem to reveal Mashiach or should we just believe that there is someone who is Mashiach even though we don't know who he is? And do we need to believe that Mashiach is suffering on our behalf?

ANSWER

Daven to Hashem [to reveal Mashiach]. And yes, it is true that Mashiach suffers on our behalf.

7) When we do yichudim (unifications, holy intentions of combining names of Hashem as taught in the sefarim hakedoshim), will it suffice to say “Please Hashem, may my efforts give strength to all those who are doing yichudim, to our nation, and to illuminate those who do not know, that they become strong vessels to reveal the Heavenly light upon the world. Please Hashem, reveal the soul of Moshe our teacher!”

ANSWER

It is possible to say this prayer.

QUESTION

8) Will the above weaken our connection to the tzaddik since we do not know what this tzaddik is?

ANSWER

On one hand it does weaken the connection to the tzaddik, but on the other hand it purifies the person, because it removes the material hold on him that had been blocking him from reaching higher levels.



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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