

BILVAVI

**MY
HEART
ASKS**

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

PARSHAS SHEMOS 5782

ISSUE 221

| | |
|--|----|
| THE KELIPAH OF CHRISTIANITY _____ | 3 |
| MIXED PRAYERS AT THE KOSEL _____ | 5 |
| EMUNAH _____ | 6 |
| CHOOSING A KOSHER JOB _____ | 7 |
| JEALOUS OF FRIEND WHO'S ALWAYS HAPPY _____ | 7 |
| INNER-CHILD THERAPY _____ | 9 |
| PARENTS WHO WERE CARELESS ABOUT TZNIYUS _____ | 11 |
| YIRAS SHOMAYIM OR NERVOUSNESS _____ | 12 |
| CHASSIDISH LEVUSH FOR A BAAL TESHUVAH _____ | 12 |
| PSYCHOLOGISTS _____ | 13 |
| GUIDANCE & FINDING ONE'S MAIN REBBI _____ | 13 |
| CORONA – DARKNESS & STRIKING DOWN OF FIRSTBORN _____ | 21 |
| BILVAVI & RAV YITZCHOK GINSBERG - 1 _____ | 22 |
| THE PATH OF RAV YITZCHOK GINSBERG - 2 _____ | 23 |
| THE PATH OF RAV YITZCHOK GINSBERG - 3 _____ | 23 |
| BEING VERY ORGANIZED & DEMANDING _____ | 24 |
| HEALING TRAUMA _____ | 24 |
| ALIYAS NESHAMAH VS. CLINICAL DEATH _____ | 25 |
| MARRYING 2 WIVES _____ | 26 |
| TORAH LEARNING STOLEN BY THE SITRA ACHARA _____ | 27 |
| READING THE NEWS _____ | 27 |
| THE YESHIVA OF SHEM & EVER _____ | 28 |
| SYNTHETIC SHEITELS _____ | 28 |
| WHO IS MASHIACH? _____ | 29 |
| PROPER DIETING _____ | 29 |

| | |
|--|----|
| AHAVAS YISRAEL IN THE FINAL DAYS | 30 |
| HOW DO I GET AN ENEMY TO LIKE ME? | 31 |
| MAKING IT TO THE GEULAH | 31 |
| THE NEED FOR A REBBI | 32 |
| SEFARIM CORRESPONDING TO DIFFERENT SOUL LEVELS | 32 |
| WHICH SEFARIM EXPLAIN SOUL ROOTS? | 34 |
| AYIN, OHR EINSOF, KAV, RADLA & MORE | 35 |
| THE 13 TH GATE | 37 |
| I WANT TO GIVE MONEY TO THE RAV | 37 |

THE KELIPAH OF CHRISTIANITY

I don't understand what the purpose of Christianity was in the history of the world. Can the Rav explain from the inner dimension of Torah what the purpose of Yeshu (Jesus) was?

ANSWER

Rashi (Yirmiyahu 31,5) says the Christians (Notzrim) would stand atop the buildings and call out with their voices that so they could be heard from afar, and Notzrim is also from the term Notzar Chesed l'alafim, "He creates kindness for thousands of generations." Thus the Notzrim/Christians draw their vitality from Notzar Chessed l'alafim. The halachic status of the Christians is discussed in Rambam Hilchos Avodah Zarah 9:4, Maachalos Asuros 1:7, and Peirush Mishnayos Avodah Zarah 1:3, Hilchos Melachim 11 (in which the Rambam explains that the Christian religion has a part in bringing knowledge of G-d into the world). See Teshuvos V'Hanhagos III:317. Rashi in many places says that "minim" (heretics) are the students of Yeshu. See Berachos 12b and Rosh HaShanah 17a and Yoma 40b, and Rashi ibid. (However, the term minim is explained differently by Tosafos on Avodah Zarah 2a, Shu"t Rashi 327, Rabeinu Yeruchem 17, Meiri on Avodah Zarah 8a, Beer HaGolah Choshen Mishpat 266:2, 425:300, and Shu"t Yaavetz 41).

The Gemara in Sanhedrin 43a says that Yeshu haNotzri was stoned because he did sorcery and he misled Jews into sinning with him. The entire story is recorded in Sotah 47a.

The root of Christianity is in Edom/Esav (Sefer HaIkaraim, IV, 42). See Sefer HaMaspik L'Ovdei Hashem (Beraishis 25:23), "At the end of the era of the second Beis HaMikdash, when the Jews were weak, Edom gained power, and they were the cause for the destruction of the second Beis HaMikdash, which Dovid prophesied about: "Remember Hashem what the children Edom did on the day of Jerusalem", meaning the founders of Christianity after Yeshu (may his name be erased) had been

dead for several years already, thus all the Christians are called Edom. See Abarbanel (Yeshayah 35), “All the Christians who believe in the religion of Yeshu are, without a doubt, the children of Edom, the children of Esav.” And Since Yeshu was born under the mazal of Maadim (Mars), the bloodshed [of Jews at the hands of the Christians] was all on his head.”

Esav/Edom was the opposition to Yaakov, and this opposition began when Yaakov and Esav clashed in their mother’s womb. Edom/Esav also is the counterforce to Yosef, who is called the oppressor to Esav. Esav opposed Yaakov, and Yeshu was the opposition to Yosef. Thus the Christians founded a “new testament” in order to counter the true covenant – the trait of Yosef. Yeshu’s name is Yesh and vov, a hint to yud shin, which hints to 310 worlds of every tzaddik, and the letter vov hints to the sign of the holy covenant (Bris Kodesh) which has the shape of the letter vov, 6, corresponding to Yosef. That is why Yeshu died on the sixth day of the week (Otzar Midrashim).

Yeshu’s father was a man named Yosef ben Pandira, and his mother’s name was Miriam. (See Sefer HaGematrios of Reb Yehuda HaChassid, parshas Eikev). The primary trait of Yosef was that he unified together the heavens with the earth, the fusion of spiritual with the physical. In contrast, the Christians claimed heretically that the Torah given at Sinai had its time until Yeshu came, and that Yeshu had said that until now the Torah applied physically and now the Torah was to be understood only spiritually. The Sefer HaGematrios (ibid) also says that Yeshu is the “damage to the holy covenant”. Understand well another thing, that Yeshu is the kelipah to Mashiach ben Yosef (in the sense of being the exchange given to the harlot) and also the kelipah to Mashiach ben Dovid (in the sense of being in exchange for a dog donated as a sacrifice). Piskei Riaz (Sanhedrin 1:3) says that Yeshu HaNotzri’s name was Yehoshua, and the Sages give him the nickname Yeshu. Piskei Rid (Sanhedrin 63b) says that Yeshu HaNotzri’s name was Yeshua, and he was called Yeshu as a derogatory name. Yeshua is the kelipah to Yehoshua ben Nun, who came from the

tribe of Yosef. Sefer Ginzei Ramchal (104) says that the secret of Yeravam was that he could have become Mashiach ben Yosef, and this is connected to the kelipah of Yeshu.

The concept of the view of Christianity (and there are several groups within them, with different beliefs) is explained in Sefer HaIkarim (III, 25) that “The teachings of Yeshu HaNotzri were that the Deity (G-d) is comprised of Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit and that they are all one.” This is really the kelipah to the concept of “Three ties are bound with each other, Hashem, the Torah, and Yisrael. And, by extension, it is also the kelipah to the triad of Moshe and the two redeemers. The kelipah that is Yeshu is the kelipah to Mashiach. Thus the Christians hint to Yeshu as their Messiah, from the verse, “Until Shiloh comes”, which they thought is referring to Yeshu. Chazal said on this verse that “Shiloh” is referring to Moshe.

The Ramchal says in Adir B'Marom (p.463) that Yeshu was [a reincarnation of] Zimri, and Moshe was buried in Beis Peor in order to repair Zimri, for Moshe is the holy three-fold connection [of Hashem, the Torah, and the Jewish people]. Yeshu is judged in boiling hot dung (Gittin 57a) which resembles the idol worship of Peor, which was served with human waste. The crown of Dovid was buried there, symbolizing the connection between Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben Dovid, which is through Moshe.

MIXED PRAYERS AT THE KOSEL

What should be our attitude about those who want to pray at the Kosel with mixed gatherings of men and women – does Hashem want that they should still come to Him and daven, even in such a manner, since they desire so much to daven to Him (and they don't know the Torah so they don't even know that it's wrong? Or does Hashem not desire such prayers since it is coming through a sin?

ANSWER

This mixture (taaruvos) is rooted in the “root of the Erev Rav”, which means taaruvos rabbah, a “huge mixture”. That is why they want to be in this place precisely, a place where the Shechinah has never left, and it is called the Kosel Maaravi (from the word erev, mixed) because it is the place where all the forces of holiness in the world are mixed together! [Thus their evil “mixture” is the impurity that is trying to counter the holy “mixture” that is the Kosel].

EMUNAH

Where does emunah come from in the 10 Sefiros?

ANSWER

Emunah comes from Keser, and the general Keser subdivides into 10 Sefiros within

Keser (starting from Keser of Keser and down to Malchus of Keser).

Emunah in the existence of the Creator is Keser.

Emunah that Hashem’s wisdom is wider than the land and vaster than the sea is Keser.

Emunah that Hashem’s wisdom expands endlessly, is Binah.

Emunah that Hashem runs everything – this is Daas.

Emunah in the endless goodness of Hashem – this is Chesed.

Emunah that there is no limit to Hashem’s strength – this is Gevurah.

Emunah that in the end Hashem will prevail over everything – this is Netzach.

Emunah that in the end everyone will admit to the Name of Hashem – this is Hod.

Emunah that in the end everything will become attached with Hashem – this is Yesod.

Eemunah that His Kingdom will spread everywhere – this is Malchus.

This is all one facet to the discussion of emunah.

CHOOSING A KOSHER JOB

Before a person is about to choose a job, what are the questions he should ask himself, to see if the job will be fine halachically and also to know if the job is suitable to one's personality? How can one know if a job won't cause him to waste time and lost out time from his learning, after he's finished working for the day?

ANSWER

These are the halachic issues to address: Find out if the job involves anything forbidden by the Torah. Does it entail ribbis (charging interest)? Are there issues of yichud? Is there immodesty there? Are there any issues there of causing others to sin or helping others sin? Is it a job that will entail stealing, lying, flattering? Does the job involve partnering with people who don't keep Shabbos or those who are bad company, which will lead to lashon hora or rechilus, breaches in tzniyus, wasting time from Torah learning (according to one's level), being unable to daven properly, working on Chol HaMoed? Does the job require being on the Internet, and is this a kind of job that causes many people to sin? Also, which middos will be awakened when working at this kind of job?

In order to know if a job is tailored to one's nature, he needs to know his strong points and his weaknesses, and he needs to know which particular abilities are required for the job. Then he can know if the job is compatible with him, and then he can see which kind of job he should choose.

JEALOUS OF FRIEND WHO'S ALWAYS HAPPY

1) I have a friend who's always happy, always with a smile and who is easily laughing – I'm blown away by how he's always in such a good mood. Others are also in awe of

his easygoing and happy and smiley nature, how he's always so full of life. I am trying to understand how he is able to be so happy always. Is it because he has already revealed his neshamah? Is it because he's very deeply connected to the Torah that he learns? Or it is because he has an easygoing nature and that's how his nefesh habehaimis is? Does it come from a dominance of one of the 4 elements? (I'm thinking either wind or water).

ANSWER

It may be coming from any one of these reasons you mentioned, or it may be because of all the above.

QUESTION

2) My friend is always in a good mood, always smiling, laughs all the time, and he's always in a positive frame of mind and he only sees things that are positive, he's always saying things that put a smile on others and he easily gets others into a good mood. Never once have I heard him ever say something negative, and even if he would, he would say it in a humorous way. I am awestruck from his positive nature – in fact, it's baffling to me how a person can always be so positive. My question is: Does this mean that he is a very internal kind of person who's very connected to Hashem and to Torah? Or is he just a superficial kind of person who isn't deep and who never thinks about the purpose of life and who never tries to build his internal world? I've known him for many years and it seems that he doesn't like to be deep or think too much, but he is also very diligent in Torah and he is very careful in mitzvos, so he is certainly spiritual and he can be serious too. Unlike my friend, I on the other hand am usually not happy, I am easily negative, and I take life very seriously. What's bothering me is that I am so much deeper than my friend is, I'm always trying to build my inner world, so why am I not easily happy, whereas my friend doesn't work hard on himself like I do yet he is always so happy? I'm always eating myself up inside because of this, it seems so unfair, that the deeper I become the harder it is for me to be happy, whereas those who remain superficial and they don't become deeper and they don't think too much, they are happier. I am aware from the Rav's shiurim that simchah is a

deep joy and not a superficial joy. So am I so far from simchah even though I'm very deep and internal, and why is my friend always so happy even though he's not deep like I am? I'm jealous of him that he's always so happy even though he doesn't work on himself like I do! Am I supposed to just take life simply and not think that much, and then I'll be happier like my friend is?

ANSWER

Your main problem that's holding back you is that you haven't yet purified or balanced out your "element of water". Also, your friend has a simpler, smoother nature than you, while your nature is more complex and multi-faceted. But that doesn't mean you need to abandon your complex nature. You just need to balance it out and purify it more – because, in your case, this is your cheilek (personal portion) on this world.

QUESTION

3) There's a new-age thinking today that "Depression is a sign of being deep." When people are sad and depressed, is it because they're deeper kinds of people and they think a lot, and that's what makes them get depressed? Or are there are reasons for why people get depressed?

ANSWER

Sometimes, sadness comes from being very deep, and sometimes it doesn't – for example it may be coming from an impaired element of "earth".

INNER-CHILD THERAPY

What is the "inner child"? Does a person need to treat his own "inner child" in the same that a child needs to be treated, to be drawn close when necessary and to be scolded when necessary?

ANSWER

This is based on the Gemara, “Always use the right hand to draw close, and the left hand to push away.”

QUESTION

2) Is the “inner child” located in the nefesh habehaimis area of the soul or in higher areas of the soul?

ANSWER

It is in the lower third section of the body, where the nefesh habehaimis is located. But the nefesh Elohis (G-dly soul) also illuminates it.

QUESTION

3) Is the inner child the real “you”, our very soul itself, or is it only a “part” of our soul?

ANSWER

It is a “part” of the soul.

QUESTION

4) There’s a therapy called “Non-Dominant Hand Writing” where a person uses his non-dominated hand (i.e. a right-handed person writing with his left hand) and lets the words flow, and the words that he writes are the messages of the “inner child” talking to him. This therapy is used for people to get in touch with their “inner child” and bring out their childish nature again. Is this a Torah-approved method of healing one’s inner child and getting in touch with it?

ANSWER

No. It awakens the weak, unrefined parts of the soul, which are one’s katnus, immaturity.

QUESTION

5) Can a person read non-Jewish self-help books or see a therapist that uses non-Jewish methods, if he's suffering a lot internally and emotionally? If he can't learn properly because he hasn't yet healed his issues? Is it considered pikuach nefesh that his life is in danger because his life is falling apart from all of this emotional stuff that has to get healed?

ANSWER

Regarding the aspect of being able to learn Torah better [after making use of non-Jewish methods of psychology], the therapy/reading may help him, but it can also harm him spiritually, because the ways that are taught by the goyim [are focused on healing the person but] do not guide a person into being able to learn Torah better.

PARENTS WHO WERE CARELESS ABOUT TZNIYUS

What is the tikkun for a mother who was seen by her child when she was inappropriately dressed (she forget to lock her bedroom door and the child walked in)? And what if both the husband and wife were careless to lock their door, and because of their carelessness, their child saw them inappropriately and now they want to do teshuvah for this?

ANSWER

- 1) They should become connected to what the inner meaning of tzniyus is, which is described by the Maharal in Nesivos Olam, Nesiv Tzniyus. This is for both the husband and the wife!
- 2) 2) They should benefit the public with something that involves improving tzniyus – both in the external aspect and internal aspect, of tzniyus.

YIRAS SHOMAYIM OR NERVOUSNESS

How can we know the difference between doubts that come from yiras shomayim (being afraid of Hashem) versus questions and self-plaguing thoughts that come from nerves?

ANSWER

If the person ends up being happy in the end, then it comes from yiras shomayim. A yarei shomayim fulfills both possibilities when he isn't sure what to do. The root of this is in the Radl"a (reisha d'lo isyada, the unknowable head) where two opposite options can both be true, as explained by the Ramchal in sefer Kelach Pischei Chochmah. It is when one can completely fulfill each of the options, both at the same time. This was how the Brisker Rav acted, and after he did what was required of him, he was calm, serene, and happy.

CHASSIDISH LEVUSH FOR A BAAL TESHUVAH

I am a Sephardic baal teshuvah and I am very drawn to Chassidus. I very much want to start dressing Chassidish because I am drawn towards this way of dress. I love the big round streimel and the long jacket. No one dresses Chassidish where I live though, so I'm not sure if this is the right thing to do. I don't feel at peace with wearing a short jacket, I feel like it's not the true Jewish look and that it doesn't make us feel separate enough from the style of the goyim.

ANSWER

The main thing by you should be the development of your olam pnimi (inner world), your inner avodah. Sometimes a person also needs external factors in his avodah, but one has to be very careful with the external parts, because it can cause a person to be too involved with the external aspects, causing a person to lose his inner balance, and sometimes it also causes a person to be mistaken about his priorities, turning what's secondary into priority and turning priority into something secondary.

PSYCHOLOGISTS

I have heard a complaint about psychologists, that they feel haughty deep down towards their clients, meaning that they have a lot of gaavah, and they feel better about their own identity when they see that their clients have issues. What is the right perspective to have and the right way to go in?

ANSWER

Go [for help] to people who serve Hashem. [Editor's Note: It is well-known that the Rav doesn't approve of going to psychologists and therapists for help in all areas, as the non-Jewish methods cannot fully help and treat a Jew's soul, and because the Jew's spirituality is harmed in the process of using non-Torah methods. However, from other responses of the Rav, it is clear that when it comes to extremely difficult circumstances or life-and-death issues, or in cases where a person needs medication and the only way to know this is by going for professional help, certainly the Rav agrees that it must be dealt with professionally and in-person, because life-and-death or severe issues must be treated immediately. But once the person's problems aren't that extreme anymore and he is able to come back to the "middle road" more or less, he should not make use of psychologists or therapists, and he should treat his soul using the methods of balancing the 4 elements of the soul, as explained in the Rav's sefer "Hakarah Atzmis" (Self-Recognition) and the 4 Elements series.]

GUIDANCE & FINDING ONE'S MAIN REBBI

I'm sorry for this very long question. I want to know all about what it means to "Make for yourself a rebbi" (having a Torah mentor to guide me in life). I don't mean to ask about the Rav specifically, I just have general questions on the entire subject of what it means to have a Rav, something which is relevant for any person, and I have the impudence to ask these questions because "It is Torah, and I need to learn it."

1) What should a person do if he doesn't have a Rebbi and he wants to fulfill what the Sages say, "Make for yourself a Rav" and he wants to receive guidance for living? Or, on a very simple level, what should one do when he needs to find someone whom he can ask all his questions to? Does a person need to choose one person whom he will make into his Rebbi, or can he receive from many different teachers so that he can have a more integrated approach towards life?

ANSWER

The Gemara says that when it comes to knowing the Torah's information (girsas, the text) one should only have one teacher for this, but when it comes to in-depth understanding (iyun) one should learn from several different teachers of how to think. It is possible and it is appropriate for most people to receive different aspects of thinking from each teacher he learns from. Each person is different when it comes to how many different Torah teachers they can learn from, because there are some people who become confused from learning several different approaches. So each person needs to learn Torah from different teachers depending on how much he can handle and to what extent.

QUESTION

2) How does a person have bittul (humility and subordinating himself) to his rebbi? Is it through acquiring a lot of Torah knowledge and wisdom from his rebbi, or does he need to just simply follow his Rebbi earnestly (that is, if he heard from others that this particular rebbi is a tzaddik or a great person or a Gadol), and that is how he can feel bittul towards the rebbi?

ANSWER

Both factors are required. There must be bittul on all levels (to the actions, middos, Torah teachings, will and essence of the rebbi) and that is a fundamental perspective.

QUESTION

3) Does a person need to have total bittul to everything that his rebbi says, whether he understands what his rebbi says or not (and the entire need to understand what his rebbi says is purely because there is a mitzvah to learn Torah and understand Torah, and because one needs to become more connected to his Rebbe's thinking and to the soul of his Rebbe, but he must do what his Rebbe says even if he doesn't understand everything his rebbi says to do)? Or should a person only accept what he understands, and anything he doesn't understand he should 'put aside on the shelf' until he eventually is zocheh to understand it?

ANSWER

He should believe in all that he hears, and he should try to understand partially whatever he is taught, according to however much he can understand. But he must do what he is told by his rebbi, whether he understands the rebbi's words or not.

QUESTION

4) If a person often asks someone for advice [and considers the other to be somewhat of a rebbi to him whom he receives an approach in life from], and sometimes the person doesn't agree with that wise person's advice and has a hard time following it, and then the wise person or rebbi-kind of personality tells the person, "I can only guide you if you have total bittul to everything I say – only if you follow me blindly can I help you!", what should the person do?

ANSWER

One can receive advice from any wise person. But one should not completely subordinate himself except to his main rebbi (his rebbi muvhak).

QUESTION

5) If a person is in doubt about which approach to take when it comes to serving Hashem [i.e. he's not sure if he should be serious and doing teshuvah and improving himself or if instead he should be having a more relaxed approach of having emunah and bitachon and being b'simchah, and countless other doubts that one may have

about which approach he needs to take], does he need to just do whatever will make him happy and calmer? Or does he need to be more truthful and do what he thinks Hashem wants him to do even if it's more difficult for him and it doesn't necessarily make him happier and calmer?

ANSWER

If a person isn't sure which approach to take, he should only follow the approach that makes him happier and calmer if the two choices in front of him are each proper paths in general. And every so often, a person still needs to take an approach that is more truthful even if it doesn't make him happier and calmer, so that he can be humbled and learn how to work hard at serving Hashem.

QUESTION

6) What should a man be thinking about most of the day (when he's not in front of the Gemara learning)? Should he thinking all the time about the Gemara he's in middle of learning or should he be thinking about serving Hashem (including emunah, etc.)? Should a man only think about avodas Hashem for a little bit of time a day and mainly be learning Gemara, or should a man be thinking most of the day about Hashem and how to serve Him, how to have good middos, subjects of mussar, chassidus, Kaballah, etc.?

ANSWER

It depends on one's shresh neshamah (soul root). There were Gedolim who spent most of the day thinking about what they were learning in the Gemara, while other Gedolim spent most of the day thinking about Hashem.

QUESTION

7) If a person has received Torah knowledge and guidance from many different mentors and teachers (which seems to be the case for most people, who all had a lot of Rebbeim and Torah teachers throughout life, sometimes even having several different Roshei Yeshivos that they were connected with, and later receiving from additional

mentors), does that mean that a person becomes an integration of all the Torah teachings he learned? Or is he just a confused mixture of many different approaches? For example, let's say a person doesn't know which area he should be focusing on in his avodas Hashem and he doesn't know what the main priority should be and what the proper attitude should be towards something, etc. Is it a good thing that he has heard so many different approaches, or will he just be confused and not know what he's supposed to do?

ANSWER

This is relative to each person. Most people are not clear about what exactly they received from each of their Torah teachers.

QUESTION

8) Can a person be involved with several different approaches at once? And if yes, would that only be true about two approaches that are very similar to each other, or would it even apply to vastly different approaches? For example, can a person connect himself to a Rav or Rebbe who is very far removed from this world, barely taking pleasure in the physical and always smashing his middos, and at the same time can a person also connect himself to a Rebbe who focuses more on joy and trusting Hashem and having no worries? Or, in a different example, can a person connect himself to a rebbe whose approach is more practical and mainstream and grounded, who focuses more on the revealed parts of Torah and on what's yashrus, and at the same time can a person also connect himself to a rebbe who mainly talks about Hashem's hidden mode of conduct? Another example: Can a person connect himself to a rebbe whose main approach is seriousness and yirah (fear of Hashem) and at the same learning from a rebbe whose main approach is ahavah (love of Hashem)? Or, can a person take an approach based on mussar and at the same take an approach of chassidus and d'veykus?

ANSWER

It depends on how much one can absorb, how much he is able to expand, and it also depends on one's personal shoshon neshamah.

QUESTION

9) After a person figures out who his main rebbi is (at least for the time being, because it seems that a person can change who his main rebbi is later in life, for example if his rebbi is niftar and now he needs to find a new rebbi), how should he view his previous Rebbeim and Torah teachers that he has learned from? Does he simply need to feel grateful to them and to express his gratitude to them, or does he need to actually view all of them as being part of his chinuch (education) in Torah and avodas Hashem?

ANSWER

As long as one received a recognizable chunk of understanding from any of his teachers, he should view that teacher as a major part of his Torah education in both Torah and avodah.

QUESTION

10) What does it mean that the Gadol HaDor (the greatest one in the generation) is automatically one's rebbi muvhak (the main rebbi) whom he must follow? If one has a main rebbi who doesn't always do like the Gadol HaDor, which rebbi should he follow, his main rebbi or the Gadol HaDor?

ANSWER

Out of concern that the answer to this won't be understood properly, I will choose not to answer this question.

QUESTION

11) Does it make sense that there are two types of people, "Yosef" and Yehudah", and that if one has a shoshon neshamah of Yehudah, it means he is more independent and he doesn't need a Rebbe to guide him, because he can turn directly to Hashem, whereas someone with a shoshon neshamah in Yosef needs a rebbe to guide him, just as

we see that Yaakov guided Yosef but he didn't guide Yehudah? (And Kalev, who came from Yehudah, went to daven for himself before going with the Spies, whereas Yehoshua, who came from Yosef, had Moshe davening for him, because the "Yehudah" type of person doesn't need a rebbi as much and he can go straight to Hashem for help, whereas a "Yosef" type of person needs a rebbi to help him?)

ANSWER

That is very true. Yosef is rooted in Yesod which is rooted in Chochmah, which receives wisdom from the level above it [from Keser]. Yehudah is rooted in Malchus which is rooted in Keser, which has nothing above it except for Hashem.

QUESTION

12) Since most Rebbeim seem to have an approach that is usually an "integration" and combination of several approaches that they learned from their own Rebbeim, the question is, that there are an endless amount of permutations of different combined approaches, so how can a person ever choose a Rebbi, if every Rebbi is really an integration of a few different approaches together then how do we need if one integration is better than a different integration?

ANSWER

This is a general and fundamental question: What path of avodas Hashem should a person choose? That is why a person needs to choose a Rav or rebbi who is the closest to that integration.

QUESTION

13) If a person went to Litvishe yeshivos and feels a connection to Chassidus, does he need to find for himself a Rebbi who knows both the Litvish and Chassidish approaches, or does he need to remain Litvish and not integrate any Chassidus into his approach (and therefore he should not choose a Rebbi who teaches Chassidus, since this goes against the Litvishe path that he's part of)?

ANSWER

One should choose a Rav who generally understands him (who knows the general personality of his nefesh).

QUESTION [abbreviated]

14) The Rav says often that a person should recognize different approaches of serving Hashem and not to look at others as being mistaken or having a wrong approach in serving Hashem, since there are many ways to get to Hashem. What about certain paths of avodas Hashem which hold clearly that only their way is the right way and they do not accept anyone else's view, because as far as they are concerned, the truth only stands with them and everyone else who doesn't have their view is crazy or mistaken? Does that come from immaturity or does it come from having a different shoshon neshamah than others?

ANSWER

It doesn't seem to me that everything you mentioned in your question is on the mark. Only the hamon am (the general crowd, the 'street talk') thinks like that, but the actual leaders of those paths aren't thinking in those terms. Every wise person has a limit of how much he understands, and he can also grasp the thinking of others. Every wise person will stick to his approach, but he will also make sure to understand others, at least a little bit.

QUESTION

15) If a person doesn't have a Rebbi, should he bind his soul with the soul of Rebbi Nachman of Breslev? Or is this not enough and a person needs an active Rebbi who is alive on this world?

ANSWER

At the very least, one needs to follow a rebbi for some time of his life, and during that time in which he follows a rebbi, he must humble himself to him. That is what R'

Avraham Yurevitch zt”l told me. It is better to choose a Rebbi who is alive, because our physical body is able to relate better to someone who is alive rather than someone who is not on this world, and thereby feel more humbled, to the rebbi.

QUESTION

16) If a person has a nature to see faults in everyone and therefore he also sees faults in his rebbi, is that a sign that he can't follow this rebbi because he won't feel bittul to his rebbi? Or should he just work on his bad middah of seeing faults in others and he should continue to follow his rebbi even though he sees faults in him?

ANSWER

He needs to work on his middos.

CORONA – DARKNESS & STRIKING DOWN OF FIRSTBORN

The Rav explained the corona was like the plague of darkness, and recently the Rav said that now we are entering a bridging stage between “darkness” and “smiting of the firstborn”, with all the heads of the world being knocked down, and that the ten plagues in Egypt corresponded to the 10 Sefiros, and so will the ten plagues in the world before Mashiach comes correspond to each of the 10 Sefiros. According to that, corona corresponded to Chochmah and the current “striking down of the heads” corresponds to Keser, but the Rav had said that corona corresponded to Keser d’Keser (the final stage within the revelation of Keser), so I’m a bit confused, can the Rav clarify this better for me? And how do we see a striking down of firstborn in the world now?

ANSWER

It is all one matter. The “coldness” represented by corona (corona/kor/kerirus/cold) is the cessation of every head or the end of every beginning point in the world. Every head (beginning point) is a new movement, a heat, whereas the cold cancels out new beginnings and stops any movement. Everything is falling apart from where it begins,

and this is all that's falling apart in the world now. These are not simply branching outcomes that are falling apart, these are the very roots of the world that are falling apart. But it cannot be clearly and openly seen yet.

BILVAVI & RAV YITZCHOK GINSBERG - 1

Rav Yitzchok Ginsberg's view is that the highest faculty is emunah, and that Keser divides into emunah, taanug, and ratzon, so that altogether there are 12 root soul faculties (and 13, if you count daas in the absence of Keser). However, from the Rav's teachings we learn that the highest soul faculty is havayah. My understanding from the Rav's teachings is that havayah is part of the three upper worlds that are above Keser (which are clothed in the lower world as well), adding up for a different list of the 13 root soul faculties. Is this all the same, or is it a major difference on how we need to view the 13 root abilities of the soul?

ANSWER

Yes, it creates a fundamental difference on how to view the soul's faculties. I once spoke with him when HaKadosh Baruch Hu arranged for us to meet on a flight from the USA to Canada, and [in the conversation] he did not agree with me.

[This is what our argument was about]. There are 10 Sefiros, the highest being Keser which is also called ratzon. Above Keser are the "three prongs atop the crown", which are (from lowest to highest), taanug, emunah, and havayah. Beneath them are the three Sefiros of CHaBa"D, which are chochmah, binah, daas. The daas rises up until Keser. We can never be discussing Keser itself, and therefore we are never discussing havayah itself either.

This is the root of the difference [of Rav Ginsberg's view with my view], and as a result, his way of thinking and his way of avodah are different [than my view]. He [Rav Ginsberg] is coming from the area of CHaBa"D in which there are three levels, called maskil (understanding), oved (serving) and tamim (wholesomeness). In contrast, our [Bilvavi] path is dealing with the revelation of havayah.

THE PATH OF RAV YITZCHOK GINSBERG - 2

What is the path being taught by Rav Yitzchok Ginsberg? Is it Chabad? And, can the Bilvavi approach be integrated with Rav Ginsberg's approach?

ANSWER

The root of Rav Ginsberg's path is in the Chabad path, but he has also expanded his path to include the paths of other great leaders.

From an external viewpoint, there is a big difference between the two approaches [between Rav Ginsberg and my approach]. His views about Eretz Yisrael, the Israeli government, and the Israeli army, and using internet [for kiruv and Torah], and other matters, differ with my view on these matters. And, going deeper, his view differs from mine regarding the structure of the spiritual world. Rav Ginsberg's view about the 13 soul faculties is that the highest points are emunah-taanug-ratzon, but my view is that the highest points are havayah-emunah and taanug-ratzon. This is a fundamental argument, because it is about the root of all roots, and therefore it is an argument which also affects the branches of these roots.

THE PATH OF RAV YITZCHOK GINSBERG - 3

What is the path being taught by Rav Yitzchok Ginsberg? Is it Chabad? And, can the Bilvavi approach be integrated with Rav Ginsberg's approach?

ANSWER

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From an external viewpoint, there is a big difference between the two approaches [between Rav Ginsberg and my approach]. His views about Eretz Yisrael, the Israeli government, and the Israeli army, and using internet [for kiruv and Torah], and other matters, differ with my view on these matters. And, going deeper, his view differs from

mine regarding the structure of the spiritual world. Rav Ginsberg's view about the 13 soul faculties is that the highest points are emunah-taanug-ratzon, but my view is that the highest points are **havayah**-emunah and taanug-ratzon. This is a fundamental argument, because it is about the root of all roots, and therefore it is an argument which also affects the branches of these roots.

It is not my way to speak about certain people, only the ways of serving Hashem. I don't know what his way of treating issues are [so I cannot give my opinion on his ways]. I recently [made an exception to my rule and] stated an opinion on the Amshinover Rebbe whom I was asked about, and this was because I had to defend him by saying that he serves Hashem with mesirus nefesh.

BEING VERY ORGANIZED & DEMANDING

What should I do if I have strong amount of “earth” in me which makes me very demanding of others to be more organized, precise, and symmetrical (in an extreme way) in everything they do? Which particular aspect of “earth” does this nature come from? And what can I do to fix it? (Can it be coming from the angry, demanding nature of “fire”)?

ANSWER

Precision and organization comes from “earth”-of-earth, while being demanding of others comes from “fire”-of-earth. Whenever this issue comes up, make sure to leave over one aspect that's not organized, with awareness that you are trying to minimize this nature.

HEALING TRAUMA

I use a therapy for my clients who are dealing with fears, in which the client imagines what happened to him in the past, and he images his child self going through the experience and imagining his present adult self to go back into the past to help him. I find this therapy very effective for many people who want to overcome their fears and

traumas. But I am wondering: Why don't the mussar sefarim discuss this? I've seen the Rav's derasha of Teves – Overcoming Fear and Trauma about imagining the trauma again and repairing it, and it sounded very similar to the therapy I use, except that it adds on the “emunah” element. I am wondering what the source for the Rav's approach in dealing with trauma is, and also I want to know if the one with the trauma needs to think about emunah specifically, or if it's enough just to remember the event and say to himself, “I'm okay now”.

ANSWER

The way to fix anything from the past is through teshuvah, which means to “return”, and Chazal said that a baal teshuvah is when one is faced with the same challenge in the very same place or time that he was tempted in. Meaning, one needs to either actually return to that very scary situation, or he returns to there in his soul. That is why teshuvah erases the sin retroactively, as if the person never did it – because he returns to that very situation, to that very time [and he can ‘alter’ the situation/time through the current experience in his soul].

Whenever a person fixes an issue with any method that doesn't involve emunah, it can only fix the external level of the nefesh habehaimis area of the soul. Any repair that involves emunah through is drawing on the “light of the infinite” (ohr EinSof), which extends all the way down to the lowest point of the nefesh habehaimis.

ALIYAS NESHAMAH VS. CLINICAL DEATH

What's the difference between aliyas neshamah (soul ascent) versus “clinical death” (N.D.E.), which are both the soul leaving the body?

ANSWER

Aliyas neshamah takes place in the soul's level of thought. Every soul ascent takes place in the soul's thoughts, as explained in sefer Shaarei Kedushah (III), by the Gra

and in many Rishonim, and explained extensively in sefer B'Tiv Yerushalayim. By contrast, “clinical death” is where part of the soul actually escapes the body.

MARRYING 2 WIVES

1) Does every man have “two feminine halves” of the neshamah that are supposed to be married to him, just as Rochel and Leah were the two feminine halves to Yaakov’s soul?

ANSWER

Sometimes the other parts of a man’s soul appear as “parts” to his soul, sometimes the parts appear as “one” unit, and sometimes a man only needs one “part” alone [to complete his soul].

QUESTION

2) Since a woman can also have two halves to her soul, was a woman allowed to be married to two men?

ANSWER

It is forbidden for a woman to be married to 2 men at once. Sometimes, in order for a woman to find all of her “parts”, she has to become either divorced or widowed.

QUESTION

3) Is marrying 2 wives the ideal situation according to the Torah? And if it is, then why is this forbidden today?

ANSWER

Yes [it was ideal in the times of the Torah], but it became forbidden later because the two wives become tzaros, “co-wives” (and bothersome) to each other, and the tikkun for this is to forbid such marriages.

QUESTION

4) In today's times where a man is not allowed to marry 2 wives at once, does that mean that today a man only has "one" other feminine half of his soul? Or can it be that a man also has two feminine halves to his soul, even today?

ANSWER

Sometimes, if a man is zocheh (meritorious), both of the feminine parts of his soul are included in one woman. In other cases, he has to marry 2 different wives in the same lifetime [in order to become connected with both of his feminine parts] or in another lifetime.

In most cases in the later generations [today's times], a man's soul is only a "part" of his soul and he isn't living with his complete soul, and that is why one wife will be enough to complete that "part".

TORAH LEARNING STOLEN BY THE SITRA ACHARA

The sefarim hakedoshim say that if a person learns Torah and then does aveiros, his Torah learning goes to the Sitra Achara (Other Side). Is such Torah learning still considered to be a mitzvah and will he get rewarded for it (even if he doesn't do teshuvah)?

ANSWER

After he becomes purified from his aveiros [i.e. through teshuvah or through suffering], he will then get rewarded for each time that he learned Torah.

READING THE NEWS

What's wrong with reading the news? Don't we have a responsibility to know what's going on? If I'm not a Gadol and I'm just an average layman, wouldn't it be irresponsible for me not to read the news? Or should I just have bitachon and let

Hashem run the world and I just need to focus on my needs, my family's needs, and my neighbors' needs?

ANSWER

You should only get general information without reading into the details – for example, just read the headlines and headers. Unless you have a need to read about a specific topic that's necessary for you need to know about. And even then, don't believe everything you read, and instead you should merely suspect that what you are reading may be true.

THE YESHIVA OF SHEM & EVER

What did our Avos learn in the “beis midrash of Shem and Ever”? And do we have any connection today to that level of Torah, now that we are after the Torah was given at Har Sinai?

ANSWER

In the yeshiva headed by Shem, they learned about sheimos, holy names of Hashem. When the yeshiva was headed by Ever, they learned the Torah when it was yet in a state of ibur (pregnancy). Thus when Rivkah was pregnant, she went to the yeshiva of Ever to learn about the meaning of her pregnancy. Before the giving of the Torah at Har Sinai, the Torah was at level of katnus (lower-level consciousness) which is the level of sheimos and ibur. The Torah we received at Har Sinai was a higher level, gadlus.

SYNTHETIC SHEITELS

I read the Rav's new book “Gateways To Hashem For Today's Jewish Woman” and I loved every word of it. I read the part where the Rav discusses head-coverings for women. I have a question on it.

I wear a very short sheitel (wig) which looks like a wig, but lately I hear a lot about the need to wear a synthetic sheitel. Does Hashem really want me to switch to a synthetic sheitel? It would cost me a lot of time and money to switch, and I don't think it would make a difference to onlookers.

Are people switching to synthetic wigs today because there may be issues of avodah zarah, or because a wig shouldn't look like real hair, or because a woman's hair shouldn't be covered with someone else's hair?

ANSWER

It's certainly better to wear a synthetic sheitel, and for the 3 reasons that you mentioned, which are all very true! It is worthwhile to spend time and money on getting it (a synthetic sheitel), because the neshamah is less impacted from a synthetic sheitel.

WHO IS MASHIACH?

1) Is Mashiach alive today? 2) And if he is, then who he is?

ANSWER

1) In every generation there is someone who can become Mashiach, if the generation is zocheh (worthy).

2) I don't know!

PROPER DIETING

What is the ideal kind of diet? Vegetarian? Or to eat a bit of meat and also fish?

ANSWER

Eat a bit of meat and also fish, especially on Shabbos, Yom Tov, Rosh Chodesh, and by any seudas mitzvah!

AHAVAS YISRAEL IN THE FINAL DAYS

1) What did the Rav mean that the counterforce to Gog and Magog in the final days is the power of ahavah/love which is becoming more revealed in the end of days, a deep feeling of unity with the heart of every Jew?

ANSWER

It is a connection to “Klal” Yisrael – to the collective unit of the Jewish people – as opposed to a connection to Jews on an individual level.

QUESTION

2) What is the source of this concept?

ANSWER

It is the “50th Gate of Holiness”, the all-inclusive gate, the collective unit which is above all individual parts.

QUESTION

3) Where is this deep love today that is becoming more revealed? All we are seeing is more and more separation between people, where people are so distant from each other, full of unwarranted hatred that is so rampant today. (Especially because each person today is so absorbed in himself.) So where is the love and unity that is being revealed in Klal Yisrael now in the end of days?

ANSWER

From the individual’s point of view, there is separation today between one individual Jew and another. But from the collective view, there is a connection between all Jews. For example, there are many tzedakah organizations today, which connects so many Jews together. This is a result of the great spiritual light of the collective unit of Klal Yisrael that is becoming more revealed. Another example is Daf Yomi, which connects

together tens of thousands of Jews in the same endeavor, and this creates an inner connection with each other.

HOW DO I GET AN ENEMY TO LIKE ME?

What should a person do if he suspects that someone is jealous of him? Or if he thinks that someone else thinks negatively of him, or dislikes him, or hates him? Does he need to flatter the other person or try to find chein (favor or charisma) in the other's eyes? Should he humble himself in front of the other? Or should he daven and have bitachon in Hashem? Is there anything else a person can do to get rid of an enemy (besides for davening and bitachon)?

ANSWER

The main thing to do is to increase a deep feeling of love for the other, even if the other isn't aware of this at all. This will cause him to like you back, because "Just as water reflects a face to another, so does the heart of man to a man", his heart will be turned in your favor when you increase your feeling of love towards him.

MAKING IT TO THE GEULAH

According to one approach, not everyone will be zocheh to see Mashiach, and there will be a sorting process to determine who is from the tzaddikim and who is from the reshaim. There is also the approach of Chassidus, that since all of the Jewish have a portion in the World To Come, the final Redemption will be the complete Redemption which every Jew will be zocheh to.

How should we understand these two different views? Is it an argument at face-value about who will make it to the Geulah or not, or can both views be true?

ANSWER

Both views are true. The era of Mashiach will be the beginning of a process, which starts at the end of the 6th century and carries on into the 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th

centuries. In the end of everything, everyone will be zocheh (worthy). But each person will be zocheh only in the parts of their soul that weren't damaged – or in the parts that were damaged and later fixed. In each century, only those who are deserving of that century will be zocheh to that century. The 10th century, which corresponds to the Yechidah level of the soul, is where everyone is zocheh, because it is the [century that corresponds to the] part of the soul which can never become damaged.

THE NEED FOR A REBBI

The Rav was asked [Q&A 13376 – Guidance In Finding A Rebbi] if it's true that people with a soul-root in Yehudah are more independent and they don't need a Rebbi (Torah teacher) to guide them, whereas those with a soul-root in Yosef always need to be guided by a Rebbi. The Rav confirmed that this is true

What does it mean that those with a soul-root in Yehudah don't need a Rebbi? What is a Gadol tells such a person that he must do differently than what he thinks? Are those souls rooted in Yehudah able to be clearer without needing a Rebbi, whereas those with a soul-root in Yosef are lacking in clarity and therefore they need a Rebbi? And does a person with a soul root in Yehudah also require a Rebbi sometimes?

ANSWER

Let me clarify: **Every person needs a Rebbi** (Torah guide).

It is just that if one has a soul-root in Yehudah, at first he will need a rebbi constantly, but later when he matures, he can become more independent. Even then, he will still need a rebbi from time to time. But a person with a soul-root in Yosef will also need a rebbi close by him.

SEFARIM CORRESPONDING TO DIFFERENT SOUL LEVELS

Can the Rav specify for me any sefarim (which may include either chassidus or Kaballah) which correspond to a specific soul level, and how one can ascend to that

level? From what I understand, the sefer Tanya explains how a person can rise from the level of nefesh habehaimis (animal soul) to the level of nefesh Elohis (G-dly soul), but I don't know anything more than that.

ANSWER

The following are just examples. There are many different sefarim which correspond to the different soul levels, and this is because each of the five levels of the soul (Nefesh, Ruach, Neshamah, Chayah and Yechidah) have five subdivisions [i.e. Nefesh D'Nefesh. Nefesh D'Ruach, etc.].

The spiritual growth at the level of the nefesh habehaimis is the main, underlying theme of what the mussar sefarim are coming to explain.

The higher level of the nefesh [the nefesh Elohis] is reached through observing all of halachah, as explained in Shulchan Aruch and its commentaries.

The “Ruach” level of the soul is depicted in the sefer Yesod V'Shoresh HaAvodah.

The “Neshamah” level of the soul is depicted in the Torah teachings of the Rebbe the Rashab, and also in the Torah teachings of Reb Chaim of Brisk.

The “Chayah” level of the soul is depicted in the Torah teachings of Reb Pinchos of Koritz [i.e. sefer Imrei Pinchos].

The “Yechidah” level of the soul is called razin d'razin, “secret of secrets”, a level of Torah which unifies together the secret meaning with the simple meaning of Torah, as well as the secret dimension of Torah with halachah. This level is often mentioned in the Zohar, mainly in the Tikkunei HaZohar. It is also spread out in the works of the Gra and in the works of chassidus, and in sefer Taamei HaMitzvos of the Arizal, as well as sefer Toldos Yaakov, and in the sefer of the Shelah HaKadosh entitled Dimua B'Mitzvos.

On a deeper level, the “secret of total oneness” (echad) is the source of the light of unity (ohr ha’achdus), which will unify the secret dimension of understanding in Torah (sod) with the simple, surface dimension of Torah (pshat).

WHICH SEFARIM EXPLAIN SOUL ROOTS?

I would like to learn about the concept of shorsh haneshamos (soul roots). Can the Rav recommend any sefarim on this topic that I should learn so that I can know this part of Torah? I am aware that sefer Shaar HaGilgulim of the Arizal discusses the different soul roots of people. Is there anything else besides for this that I need to learn?

Also, I heard from the Rav that some souls are mainly rooted in the dimension of “place”, some souls are mainly rooted in the dimension of “time”, and other souls are mainly rooted in the dimension of “soul.” Where can I learn more about this?

ANSWER

Besides for what you mentioned, also make sure to learn the sefer Shorshei HaNeshamos authored by the Rema m’Pano. To organize this information better, it is recommended to learn sefer Toras Nasan which organizes together all of the information of sefer Shorshei HaNeshamos. See also the commentary of Bnei Aharon to the sefer Shaar HaGilgulim.

As for the different soul roots that come from place, time, and soul, this is a concept that is barely explained in any of the works of our Sages in terms that apply to the soul.

AYIN, OHR EINSOF, KAV, RADLA & MORE

What is the concept of ayin?

ANSWER

Ayin does not simply mean a “nothingness” as it implies, but when the unlimited dimension dominates the limited dimension. This is explained by the Ramchal in Kelach Pischei Chochmah.

QUESTION

2) What is the difference between the Radla (unknowable head), Adam Kadmon (Primordial Man), the kav ohr EinSof (ray that extends from the infinite light) and the ohr EinSof (the infinite light)?

ANSWER

The concept of the Radla is the “integration of opposites”. Adam Kadmon is oneness. The kav extends “from above to below and “from below to above” - from above to below, it is one continuous heavenly flow, and from below to above, it is the power of “hope” in Hashem. The ohr EinSof (the infinite light) is the all-inclusiveness of everything (kelalut hakol).

QUESTION

3) What is the concept of the “unifying of the two Mashiachs” (Mashiach ben Yosef with Mashiach ben Dovid)? Does it mean the integration of the tosefes (additional increase upon the infinite light) onto havayah (the all-inclusive reality)? If Mashiach ben Dovid represents havayah (the all-inclusive reality) then what else is left to do and how can anything else become added onto this revelation? If havayah is an unchanging and perfect reality and the source of everything, how can there be an additional revelation upon havayah?

ANSWER

4) Mashiach ben Yosef reveals the tosefes, the additional revelation, and Mashiach ben Dovid reveals havayah, the all-inclusive reality. Moshe is the fusion of these two perspectives together. There was a tosefes even before Hashem made the tzimtzum (contraction of His infinite light), there was a tosefes/addition in that the unlimited dimension of His infinite light dominated the limited dimension of His infinite light, and this is Mashiach ben Dovid's revelation. There is also a tosefes/addition that came after the tzimtzum, for the purpose of integrating together the unlimited with the limited, and this is the revelation of Moshe.

QUESTION

What is the connection between the concepts of daas, keser, and havayah?

ANSWER

Daas connects one to emunah and taanug, which then connects one to Keser, and that is where Havayah is.

QUESTION

How can learning Kaballah be applied to my personal soul and not as a mere intellectual study?

ANSWER

Learn and try to understand each level, and then see where it is found in the soul, and then understand the level from within you, which is "From my flesh I see G-d."

THE 13TH GATE

What is the “13th gate” (the all-inclusive path of serving Hashem) of the Arizal? Does the “13th gate” give one the ability to take on different customs of different communities? Can a person take from the best of all the different ways of serving Hashem?

ANSWER

13 is equal to the word echad (1). The external understanding of it is that the 13th gate takes a part from every gate and that is how it unifies all the gates together. But the inner understanding is that the 13th gate is the root of all the other gates (ways of serving Hashem), and that enables one to take on many different customs from different paths of serving Hashem. However, this requires daas (sense) because if done incorrectly, one will only confuse himself and mix everything up, like the idea of the Erev Rav, a mixture that mixes everything together in a state of ruination. Daas is needed in order to mix everything together properly. It also needs great wisdom, and expansive, deep knowledge.

I WANT TO GIVE MONEY TO THE RAV

I am so grateful to the Rav for all the Torah the Rav has taught me. I saw in a sefer that it's important to give money to a tzaddik. In my eyes, the Rav is a talmid chochom and tzaddik and I want to give some money to the Rav, for himself and for his family. How can I send the money?

ANSWER

“The heart knows the bitterness of his soul” that I am not a tzaddik!



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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ספר נפש החיים שער ד'
עם ביאור בלבבי משכן אבנה
בקרוב

