

BILVAVI

**MY
HEART
ASKS**

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

PARSHAS KI SISA 5782

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HOW TO GET RID OF MY INTERNAL EREV RAV

What is the source of what the Rav said that if a person suspects that he may have a “Erev Rav” part in his soul, he should fulfill the mitzvah of “erasing Amalek” in his own soul, specifically through being ready to die *al kiddush Hashem*?

ANSWER

The root of the *Erev Rav* is the evil that counters the holiness of the *kutzo shel yud* (the apex of the letter *yud* in the name of *HaVaYaH*). In the side of devastation, the root of the *Erev Rav* belongs to the *chalal hapanuy* (the vacant space which is empty from Hashem’s infinite light), but in the side of *tikkun*, dying *al kiddush Hashem* repairs it.

HOW TO ACHIEVE A TIKKUN TODAY

(1) Up until the last few decades, people could go to great *Rabbonim* and *Mekubalim* to do *tikkunim* for them, or to have them daven special *tefillos* for them. But today this is almost non-existent. How can we manage without this when this had always been a central aspect of life?

(2) How can a person achieve a *tikkun* (soul-repair) today and remove all the things that are holding him back? Of course we all know that a person need to *daven* a lot, but many times a person can daven a lot and he doesn’t see any changes, and we know of many stories of people who *davened* a lot and one day they go to a certain Rav who saved them in a short amount of time, or the Rav tells them what their real issue is, etc. In today’s times, where we don’t have this, how can a person get a *yeshuah*?

ANSWER

(1) Chazal already said (*Sotah 49b*) of the final generation, the *ikvesa d’meshichah* (the footsteps before Mashiach) that “We will have no one to rely on except for our Father in Heaven.” That is the main *avodah* of the generation today – to rely primarily on Hashem.

(2) First a person should fix whatever he knows he needs to fix. After doing that properly, he will be awakened by *Shomayim* (Heaven) to fix whatever else he needs to fix.

HOW TO STOP LITTLE CHILDREN FROM FIGHTING

How can I stop my little kids from bothering and fighting with each other so much?

ANSWER

Create a calm atmosphere in the home, adding a little dose of humor into the home. Whenever they are fighting, try to overturn the fighting with a little bit of joking/humor, and do this gradually.

HOW TO LEARN ANY SEFER

What is the best way to learn any of the *sefarim hakedoshim*?

ANSWER First go through the entire sefer quickly, and afterwards go back and review it from the beginning, piece by piece, trying to understand well each section you learn. For every section you finish, write a summary of it. If you have any questions, answers, and explanations on it, write those down too. Think about how you thought before you learned the sefer, and what new insights you have learned from it. Every so often, at the end of learning any section, briefly review the main highlights. Think about what the general approach of the sefer is, and, if you are lucky, Hashem will cause your heart to understand what the view of the author of the sefer is, and what is unique about his sefer, in relation to other sefarim.

HOW DO I DEVELOP ANALYTICAL ABILITIES IN TORAH STUDY?

The Rav speaks about developing the ability of “subtle analysis” and other such intellectual abilities, and how we are able to reach these intellectual abilities through

Torah study. How does a person actually get there? All of us learn Torah yet we don't reach this ability of "subtle analysis" that the Rav is describing.

ANSWER

Practical guidance on how to develop your analytical abilities in Torah study is given in the series of "*Darkei HaLimud*" (Getting To Know Your Way In Torah Learning). To learn how to actually apply your intellectual abilities in Torah study, there are currently over 200 "Bilvavi" *shiurim* that are available on *Gemara* [on Bava Basra, Beitzah, and other tractates) and *Shulchan Aruch* (*Choshen Mishpat*) which may be beneficial to you. However, you mainly will need to find the approach of in-depth learning that is particularly suitable to you, and the above *shiurim* (on *Gemara* and *Shulchan Aruch*) are just examples. Anyone who is used to learning the style of Reb Chaim of Brisk, Rav Shimon Shkop and the Rogotchover are able to recognize very well what "subtle analysis" is.

When it comes to learning *agadta* parts of *Gemara*, the ability of "subtle analysis" can be discerned, for example, in the sefarim of "*Pachad Yitzchok*". When it comes to learning *Kaballah*, an example of "subtle analysis" can be seen when learning the sefarim of the *Leshem*. And when it comes to learning *Chassidus*, this can be discerned for example in the teachings of *Chabad Chassidus*, especially in *Sefer HaErachim* of *Toras Chabad*.

HOW TO RELATE TO GOYIM

I live in America, and when I walk by *goyim* in the street I try to smile at them and I will think of them as being created in the image of G-d. I do this because of *darkei shalom* (to have peaceful relations) but I also think to myself that I am trying to be unified with all of Creation, to reveal G-dliness on the world and reveal the light of equality (*hishtavus*) on the world. Am I having the right perspective, or do I need to change my *hashkafah* of how I should relate to the *goyim* around me? 2) Just like it is forbidden to have any form of connection to Erev Rav, as the Rav explains, does the same also apply to all other *goyim* (for example, living in America amongst *goyim*),

who are part of Esav? 3) Many times when I see a *goy* who is sad I want in my heart for him to be happy. I feel this towards Jews as well but I also feel this towards *goyim*. I want them to have a good life and I don't want to see them sad. I just feel compassion in my heart towards the *goyim* who don't have good lives. I also want to shine the light of G-dliness upon them, and especially because the Rav mentions the concept of "loving the entire Creation". Do I need to change the attitude and the way I relate towards *goyim*? This is especially because the *Sefer HaBris* says that it's forbidden to hate a gentile simply for being gentiles, and to the contrary, we must love them, especially those who are decent. Others will say that you should feel dislike and disgust towards them. Certainly I find their lives to be disgusting in my eyes, but because there is a concept of loving the entire Creation, I want to feel connected to them inwardly because I am supposed to love the entire Creation, and because I want the level of the future to shine even now. Is this the right perspective or not? Much thanks to the Rav for all of the purity and holiness that the Rav constantly gives my soul through all of the *shiurim* and *sefarim* and all of the guidance through these responses.

ANSWER

There is an inner perspective of unifying with all of Creation, but this can only be an inner perspective, and it is not meant to be practiced outwardly. Outwardly, the souls of gentiles are connected at their root to the three impenetrable *kelipos* (husks), and therefore looking at their faces and certainly feeling an inner connection to them is dangerous, because it connects you to their *tumah*. Therefore, it is only rare individuals who can remain very deeply connected to their inner spiritual self, attached to the Torah and to Hashem, who are able to sometimes connect with gentiles. And even then, they need to cleanse themselves afterwards, disconnecting from any traces of *tumah* which may have become attached to their souls. But most people need to disconnect in their souls (emotional disconnection) from *goyim*, except for rare circumstances where they may allow this connection. This is very hard for people with a very loving and compassionate nature, to do.

Chazal teach that we must be the first to initiate a greeting for each person. Since there is *darkei shalom*, the need to live peacefully with the other nations of the world, one needs to greet every person he meets, Jew or non-Jew. This was how the Sages conducted themselves, always being the first to greet any *goyim* that they met. However, the souls of the “Erev Rav” are worse than all other gentile souls. This is because they are the roots of *tumah*, and we should not have any connection with them at all, as much as possible.

There is no need to hate a gentile, unless he is in the category of “Those who hate Hashem, I will hate.” But it is dangerous to reveal any love towards a gentile, as explained above.

HOW A YESHIVA BOCHUR CAN BE INTRODUCED TO PNIMIYUS?

A yeshiva bochur asked me that he wants to really serve Hashem and work on his *pnimiyus* (internal world) and he would like to learn some of the *kavanos* of the Arizal. What does the Rav think about this, and which sefer about *pnimiyus* does the Rav recommend for a *yeshiva bochur* who wants to serve Hashem?

ANSWER

It is recommended to learn the *sefarim* of Reb Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin, such as *sefer Tzidkas HaTzaddik*, and also *sefer Michtav M'Eliyahu*. After learning these sefarim, one can move on to learning *sefer Nefesh HaChaim*, and also sefer “*Chassidus Mevueres*”. It is appropriate to begin with these sefarim, and at a more mature age one can go further from there.

When entering into the study of *pnimiyus ha Torah*, it is more appropriate to enter into this kind of study through developing one’s emotions of the soul, as opposed to studying kabalistic *kavanos*. At a later point, only if it is suitable for the person to do it, one can eventually learn the *kavanos* of the Arizal.

HOW CAN A CHUSSID FEEL MORE CONNECTED WITH HIS CHASSIDUS?

This question bothers me very much. I come from a certain *Chassidus*, and I don't see any particular way of thinking or *hashkafah* running through it, except for a few opinions and views on certain matters and a bit of advice when it comes to *avodas Hashem*, but there is no particular approach to it. My personality is more intellectual and I am a deep thinker, and I don't feel connected to my *Chassidus* or to my *Rebbe*. Except for coming to *tish* – which I anyways feel that it's all external and superficial - I have no sense of connection to my *Chassidus*. For stimulation, I learn the sefarim of *Chabad* and also the sefarim of Reb Tzadok. My *Chassidus* really has its roots in Lezhinsk, where the underlying theme is connecting to the *tzaddik* and realizing that the *tzaddik* is the center. My question is: How can I become more connected with my *Chassidus* or with my *Rebbe* if I don't feel a connection to the *Divrei Torah* and if I don't feel connected to the *hashkafos* of my *Chassidus*? I have a lot more questions about this topic, but I'll leave it at this for now, so that the discussion doesn't get too heavy.

ANSWER

[The root of your way of *Chassidus* is the concept of] Connecting to the *tzaddik*, seeing the *tzaddik* as a “pipe” which can connect you to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, and to thereby derive *shefa* (Heavenly blessing) from Him. [All ways of] *Chassidus* [in general] is about really connecting to all other Jews through *ahavas Yisrael*.

HOW TO INCREASE SELF-ESTEEM

What can a person do if he or she feels a low self-worth about himself (or herself).... to the point that a person doesn't feel like getting out of bed in the morning and going to daven in a minyan, and certainly whenever he has to do anything different from what everyone is else is doing?

ANSWER

The person should make for himself a list of all of his qualities. One should also try as much as possible not to be “into” others’ lives and other’s successes, and instead be focused on one’s own personal development of their own inner world. Sometimes, lack of self-worth comes from being overly involved with thinking about how others are successful. In order for one to get past this issue, one needs to develop their own rich and expansive “inner world” within oneself, and this is actually a degree of *kedushah* (holiness) because it resembles the concept of the those *tzaddikim* who would not look out of their own *daled amos* (their direct space) [because they each had a personal, inner world within themselves to always be focused on].

HOW TO VIEW THE STATE OF ISRAEL

Is the state of Israel a *chilul Hashem* or a *kiddush Hashem*?

ANSWER

It nurses its vitality from the *chalal ha-panuy*, the “void that is emptied” [the space devoid of G-d’s infinite light], which contains in it the *rishimo*, the “imprint” that remained from the infinite light. That is why the Chofetz Chaim that he we been *zocheh* instead of the establishment of the state, Mashiach would have come and we would have returned to the *chalal ha-panuy* in a repaired way, a new world, where we would have been “revived from the dead”, due to the *rishimo* (imprint left from G-d’s infinite light). We weren’t *zocheh*, and instead we were left with just the *chalal ha-panuy*, an abrogation of Hashem’s infinite light, with only a few “sparks” from the *rishimo* that remain which keeps the empty void (the existence of the state) in existence.

HOW TO SWALLOW MY EGO & PRIDE

I very much want to acquire the concept of “nullifying the ego”, *bittul ani*, which would help me let go of myself more and which would be the greatest redemption for

my soul. But I have a hard time with this idea when it comes to 2 areas in my life: When I am learning in kolel, and when I am at home. When I am at yeshiva, I learn in a huge kolel and I'm just another guy sitting and learning. On one hand, it's an opportunity for me to let go of my ego and just melt into the surroundings, which would help me feel more *bittul ani*, but many times I feel like I want to stand out in the kolel and to be noticed more and held in esteem by others. Also, at home, when my wife argues with me or complains about something, she hurls lines at me that are hurtful to me. On one hand, I feel like it's an opportunity for me to let go of my ego and work on *bittul*, but on the other hand I find it too hard. Am I supposed to use such situations as opportunities to let go of my ego, or am I supposed to just be quiet and accept the suffering with love, even though my ego is hurting?

ANSWER

When you are learning in a big yeshiva or kolel, your avodah is both – to find your own individuality as well as nullify your ego by melting in with everyone else. However, you need to act according to your level right now. When you feel lowly about yourself, you should awaken your individuality and focus on your mind on your accomplishments and strengths. When you feel conceited and full of yourself, you should allow yourself to let go of your ego. Many times, though, you will need to take your mind off this matter entirely, and just concentrate on your learning, and ignoring what's going around you.

At home, when your wife is arguing or fighting with you, you should realize that part of what she is saying is correct, and you need to consider how you should change your behavior towards her. Usually, the course of action to take when your wife hurls insults at you is to be quiet and accept the suffering with love. When you are at a heightened state of consciousness, you can sometimes work on the concept of nullifying your ego.

HOW TO VIEW THE MEDICAL WORLD TODAY

[abbreviated]

There's a lot of reason to suspect that the entire "corona pandemic" is all hype, which is manipulating everyone into taking the corona vaccine (which is new and which has its many possible dangers). In spite of the newness of the vaccine, everyone is running to take it, because they are so desperate to be saved from coronavirus, and they are not even willing to hear the other side of the story, that this vaccine has its dangers. And it's not even clear if the vaccine helps at all. All of the information we have about the benefits of the vaccine and all of the "positive corona tests" we are told about is all coming from evil people, who are just trying to scare the world from this seemingly 'terrifying' coronavirus epidemic, so that everyone will be psychologically motivated into taking the vaccine, when it really makes no sense to do so. It seems that we are living in times of total uncertainty and darkness. Why are we viewing all of the dangers about the vaccine as nothing but a conspiracy theory? Shouldn't we be taking this situation very seriously? What does Hashem really from us in this situation? Shouldn't we be doing everything in our power and to create an awareness in the world that the vaccines will put 5G tracking technology in everyone that will overturn our world completely as we know it, creating a new society? Why is this not a concern to most people? Doesn't Hashem want us to make a cheshbon hanefesh on why He has had to bring us into such a terrifying situation with such dangers like this?

ANSWER

Due to a few reasons, I have recently gone through all of the material on this subject that was sent to me, and I even reviewed it several times, and after that I wrote several responses on this topic. This was in addition to reading through all of the additional material on the subject, from carefully researching the scope of the matter, just as with any other matter, which needs to be clarified from all of its angles, in the proper frame of mind.

I want to make clear that Chazal have already taught, that in every generation, our enemies rise up to destroy us. And in this generation, they are rising up against us, both on a spiritual level, through their influences of the *Shaar HaNun d'Tumah* (the 50th and worst level of impurity), as well as on a physical level, and included in this is the medical world, of whom the Steipler said about that we are found in a *galus* (exile) of the doctors. And ever since, this “exile of the doctors” upon us has only gotten worse for us, because it is an institution of lies, money, power, glory, and other self-serving motivations they have. And therefore, we need to work very hard at strengthening our *bitachon* (our trust and confidence) in Hashem, and to feel less confident in the medical world. Therefore as a general rule, we should keep as far away as possible from the entire medical world, and we should only turn to them when we have no choice or when there is a strong necessity to use them.

Regarding our current situation [with the corona vaccine], anyone who is in substantial danger [from the virus] should take the vaccine, because the danger for him will be greater if he doesn't take the vaccine. There is certainly an existing danger in taking the vaccine, but it is a much smaller danger than not taking it [for one who is in danger from the virus].

We should know that in general, every topic has opposing views from all different angles, from one extreme to another. The medical world is no different. Therefore, we need to see all of the different views and then we can acquire an expansive and broad knowledge on the topic. That is always the way of the Torah, and that is how the Gedolim acted throughout the generations.

HOW CAN WE OPEN UP OTHERS TO PNIMIYUS?

How can we deal with all of the *katnus* (small-mindedness and immaturity) in our communities? The more I live a life of *pnimiyus*, the more I am seeing how the *tzibbur* around me is not, living in total *katnus*, closed off from their *pnimiyus*, as if they are all asleep, and it's hard to go into detail about it. When I'm alone, I can concentrate on my relationship with Hashem, but when I'm around others, I hear all of the silly and

meaningless conversations that people have, and often I heard people talking nonsense, *lashon hora*, *machlokes*, etc. But mainly I am seeing a babyish, immature attitude in most people. People often have a childish and superficial perception. Over the years, my thinking and my life has changed, due to listening to the Rav as well as others who opened me to what *pnimiyus* is and who helped me have a burning desire for truth. My perspective matured so much that I can even notice how my own *Rebbeim*, *maggidei shiur* and *Roshei Yeshiva* have a very superficial way of looking at things, and how they're full of issues in their own souls which they never sorted out yet, and I'm not seeing a burning desire for truth in them. It's hard to describe this, but this is the painful reality I am seeing. What is the proper attitude to have about this?

ANSWER

There is a statement from a wise person, brought in the writings of the Alter of Kelm, that "The entire world are fools, and the wise ones are like strangers among them." **HaGaon Rav Shmuel Auerbach zt"l already said to me close to 20 years ago that we should view the entire world as a giant playgroup full of children, who are all playing with their toys, and you are the mature adult who needs to worry for all of them. That is how he guided me** in how to act in the practical sense. Certainly the other side of the coin is also needed: One also needs to be humble.

QUESTION

2) How can we open up another's heart, if the other person has a childish, immature perspective, and he doesn't like to hear the truth? How do we get another person to be more truthful, how do we open up another's heart?

ANSWER

Look for a small way in which you can introduce the other to have a more spiritual perspective about something. Do this gradually with another, introducing another to a greater level of awareness, step by step, beginning with very small steps and gradually increasing the others' awareness to truths.

HOW TO LEARN SEFER LESHEM

1) Is it appropriate for every person to learn sefer *Leshem*? And if yes, are there any conditions that are necessary before learning this sefer?

ANSWER

The condition needed [to learn sefer *Leshem*] is that one needs to live a lifestyle that is far from *tumah* (depravity of today) and drawing close to *kedushah*.

QUESTION

2) There are 3 parts to sefer *Leshem* – The Sefer *Hakdamos V'Shearim*, The Sefer *HaBiurim*, and the Sefer *HaDeah*. What is the right order to learn sefer *Leshem* in?

ANSWER

Start sefer *Leshem* with learning Sefer *Hakdamos V'Shearim*. Then move onto Sefer *HaBiurim*. Not everyone can learn Sefer *HaDeah*, which are long expositions that not every mind can handle. Any of the topics learned in Sefer *HaBiurim* should be completed by learning those corresponding parts in Sefer *HaDeah* which explain them more, but one should only learn it according to his capabilities.

QUESTION

3) If one is beginning to learn Kaballah, can he start with learning sefer *Leshem* or does he first need to learn other Kaballah sefarim as an introduction to this?

ANSWER

Learning *Kaballah* must begin with learning (1) Sefer *Otzros Chaim*, and also Sefer *Pischei Shearim* of Reb Eizik Chever. (2) Then one should learn Eitz Chaim and with the commentaries of Shemen Sasson and Yafeh Shaah (at the very least). (3) After that, one can learn *Leshem Sefer HaBiurim*.

QUESTION

4) Are there any commentaries on the sefer *Leshem* which the Rav recommends to learn?

ANSWER

I am not aware of them.

QUESTION

5) Why did the Chazon Ish say that the *Leshem* was the last *Mekubal*? Weren't there *Mekubalim* who came after him, such as the *Sulam* (Rav Ashlag), Baba Sali, R' Shalom Sharabi, R' Yitzchok Kaduri, and others?

ANSWER

The *Leshem* was the last *Mekubal* whom the Chazon Ish recognized in his times, because the *Leshem* formulated a more detailed explanation of the words of the *Mekubalim* before him. However, the *Sulam* developed an entirely new approach. After him, there were no other new views in *Kaballah* and there have only been *Mekubalim*, but not new views in *Kaballah*.

HOW TO REACH AYIN

In “Getting To Know Your Soul” the Rav explains that a person can identify his main element by accessing the spiritual element of “*ayin*” (nothingness) in the soul, which reached through inner silence in the soul. Since this is a book that is geared towards most people (as opposed to the Rav’s other sefarim which describe how to reach “*ayin*”, such as in “Bilvavi” Part 7 and sefer *Da Es Nishmatecha*), I want to know: What is the simplest way which is attainable for most people, to reach the place of “*ayin*” in the soul? I was thinking that the way to reach it is through listening to a *niggun* that calms the soul, or by smelling something pleasant or by tasting something pleasant, as the Rav describes in the “Inner Silence” series. But I was wondering if

ANSWER

The deeper of an inner silence that one reaches in the soul, to that extent, will one touch upon the point of “*ayin*” in the soul. That is why listening to a calming *niggun* or smelling something pleasant can possibly help a person reach inner silence in the soul.

However, usually, if a person hasn't yet given a balance to his worst character trait and he hasn't yet calmed his desires, he will not be able to reach a deep and subtle inner silence, and thus he won't be able to penetrate into the place of “*ayin*” in the soul.



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