

BILVAVI

**MY
HEART
ASKS**

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

PARSHAS PEKUDEI 5782

ISSUE 231



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Getting Past Our Guf & Revealing Our Neshamah

What should a person do if he has already tasted some *ruchniyus*, he feels a tremendous burning desire to grow higher in *ruchniyus*, as if he's found the light, and he connected to his *neshamah* – but afterwards he finds that this experience is gone, because his *guf* (body) has taken over again? How do we get past our *guf* and subjugate it to our *neshamah*?

ANSWER

The sefarim hakedoshim say, “Smash the body”. This is by (1) Developing pure, unquestioning *emunah* in Hashem. (2) Connecting to the depth of the Torah's wisdom. (3) Crying out to Hashem for help, both externally and internally (“their hearts cried out to Hashem”). (4) Through *hisbodedus* (solitude and reflection), until a person reaches a place of inner silence in his soul. (5) And finally, it entails improving one's *middos*.

The Birth Contractions Before Mashiach

When corona first began 6 months ago, can it be said that we have entered the 9-month period in which the “Roman exile” will take over the entire world before Mashiach's arrival?

ANSWER

The 9 months are not to be literally understood as 9 months, but as a period of “pregnancy” [which will precede the “birth”, a metaphor for the coming of Mashiach]. We are already in it.

Rav's Comprehensive Approach To Avodah

1) Is the concept of *tikkun* (repairing the soul) limited to only Bresslev and Sefardim, where this particular word is used a lot, or does it also apply to the Litvishe world and also to all branches of Chassidus? Does the Litvish yeshiva world hold that a person gets a *tikkun* for his soul just by learning Gemara on condition that he also learns *mussar*, and that we don't need to be worried about how to get a tikkun for our souls, since learning Torah brings a person to everything? For example, does *Tikkun HaKlali* also apply to the world of yeshivos who are going in the Litvish way, in particular because the Litvish world didn't approve of Rebbe Nachman and they also don't make a big deal about repairing sins of violating *Bris Kodesh*?

ANSWER

Not necessarily. There are many different ways to get a *tikkun*, and the root of all of them is through *mesirus nefesh* in general, and in particular by learning Torah with exertion. Accepting suffering with love is also a form of tikkun for the entire soul, and there are other ways of tikkun as well.

QUESTION

2) How is the Rav able to take the “middle path” between all of the many different approaches in *avodas Hashem* and integrate them all together? How are we able to do this? How is the Rav able to combine together the Litvish and Chassidic approaches together (and also different Chassidic approaches together), if each path is based on a certain approach that totally does not agree with the other approach? How can a person fuse together different approaches in his avodas Hashem when each approach was diametrically opposed to the other? How can a person “take from everyone”, isn't this a problem of being

mehapech tzinoros, mixing different channels of Heaven that oppose and contradict each other? For example, if the Gra would be around today, would he approve of a *Litvish* kolel avreich applying a concept of the Baal Shem Tov or Baal HaTanya in his *avodas Hashem*...?

ANSWER

I already asked my Rebbi, the Rosh Yeshiva Rav Gershon Edelstein, earlier than 15 years ago about this, especially after I received sharp critique from others because I was mostly using a lot of Chassidic approaches in the shiurim I gave. He answered me that I had already received this way of *avodah* from the approach of Rav Dessler, who taught in the yeshivah I learned in. You can see very well in sefer *Michtav M'Eliyahu* of Rav Dessler that he often combines together the approaches of *mussar* and *Chassidus*. Rav Edelstein told me to take the same approach and to continue teaching in that way. If we analyze this from a deeper perspective, it is really because the End of Days enables a spiritual light of integration, which enables an approach that encompasses together every approach in *avodas Hashem*. It is the secret of unifying all of the Torah together, and also the secret of unifying Klal Yisrael.

QUESTION

3) Why isn't this going against each person's mesorah in *avodas Hashem* that each person has based on his yeshiva or community that he's part of?

ANSWER

You can see that today a person can be "generally Chassidic" without identifying himself with a particular *Chassidus*, and there can be many different external reasons for this, but the deeper reason is because the light of the End of Days is shining, in which everything can be

integrated together. That is why Rav Dessler taught mussar and chassidus together in the yeshiva of Ponovezh which he taught in. And also from the approach of Rav Hutner [taught to me by Rav Yonasan David] I first received the ability of deep Torah thought, and it was Rav Hutner who said about himself “To the chassidim, I am too Chassidish, and to the Litvish, I am too Chassidish....”

Making Aliyah To Eretz Yisrael Now

1) If my children are fine to make *aliyah* to *Eretz Yisrael*, and I can find good yeshivos and schools for them there, does the Rav think that it’s actual *ratzon Hashem* to make *aliyah* to *Eretz Yisrael*? Or is it just that it’s “permitted” to go to *Eretz Yisrael* under those conditions? 2) Also, my wife thinks it’s irresponsible to pick up and move to *Eretz Yisrael* and she doesn’t really believe that my kids are really fine with moving to *Eretz Yisrael* – she thinks that the kids don’t really know what they want. However, she is ready to accept the Rav’s ruling on this matter. 3) If we’re really supposed to be making *aliyah* to *Eretz Yisrael* must we move right now or can we wait until the end of the school year, so that my kids won’t lose out on a school year? 4) And, if we are supposed to be making *aliyah* to *Eretz Yisrael*, what is the reason for it? Is it because it’s physically dangerous for a Jew to live in *chutz l’aretz* during these times, or is it because we need to be in *Eretz Yisrael* when Mashiach comes? Is it just a personal ruling given to us? Does it have to do with the *mitzvah* of *yishuv Eretz Yisrael*?

ANSWER

1) It is the *ratzon Hashem*. That is what HaGaon R’ Chaim Kanievksky shlit”a rules for anyone who asks him about this.

2) [Regarding your wife:] She needs to be strong in her *emunah* (faith) in Hashem and in having *bitachon* in Hashem (to feel reliant on Him).

When she will feel that she is on that level, it is then appropriate for you to make *aliyah* to *Eretz Yisrael*. The Sages taught that *Eretz Yisrael* is acquired only with suffering. For that reason, making *aliyah* to *Eretz Yisrael* requires *emunah* and *bitachon* in Hashem.

3) Make the decision now that you will move at the end of the school year when your children are finished their studies. Rabbeinu Yonah says that when you resolve that you will do something, it is considered as if you are already doing it right now.

4) There is [currently] not enough physical danger [in *chutz l'aretz*] according to *halachah* that would be enough to obligate you in moving to *Eretz Yisrael*. However, it is still proper to make *aliyah* to *Eretz Yisrael* [even when you are not obligated]. And, yes, it is for the reasons you mentioned [to be in *Eretz Yisrael* when Mashiach arrives, and also because it will be good for you personally]. As for the mitzvah of dwelling in *Eretz Yisrael*, according to some views it is a Biblical mitzvah today, and especially because of the holiness of *Eretz Yisrael* there is reason to live there.

Being In Eretz Yisrael For Mashiach

1) What is the necessity to be in *Eretz Yisrael* in order to greet Mashiach? Don't Chazal say that that at the time of the *Geulah* all of the *batei midrashim* and shuls will fly to *Eretz Yisrael*? (And this would probably include all houses where Torah was learned, especially since corona when everyone had to be quarantined at home and there was so much Torah learning done at home, which transformed all of our homes into a beis midrash...so wouldn't our houses just fly to Eretz Yisrael when Mashiach comes? Why do we need to actually make *aliyah* to Eretz Yisrael?)

ANSWER

Chazal's words about *batei midrashim* flying to Eretz Yisrael at the time of the Geulah is not meant to be taken literally. Chazal were referring to something deeper: to use the inner light of holiness that is found in those holy places.

QUESTION

2) Should a person make *aliyah* now to Eretz Yisrael even if this will bother his parents, because now the parents will be upset that they can't see their married children and they won't have the *nachas* of seeing their grandchildren? Although there is a discussion if a person is obligated to listen to his parents if they want him to stay with them when he will learn better in Eretz Yisrael, here we are talking about making *aliyah* to Eretz Yisrael not for reasons of learning Torah there, but to greet Mashiach and be saved from *chevlei Mashiach* in *chutz l'aretz*. So what's more important, honoring parents or making *aliyah* to Eretz Yisrael?

ANSWER

Honoring parents is never a reason to forego any mitzvah. Just as one is not obligated to listen to his parents if listening to them will cause him financial harm (*parnassah* overweighs *kibud av v'aim*), certainly one is not obligated to listen to his parents if they are causing him not to fulfill a mitzvah. And certainly when there is possible physical danger involved if one listens to them [i.e. enduring *chevlei Mashiach* in *chutz l'aretz*] that one is not obligated to listen to his parents.

QUESTION

3) If the husband is ready to make *aliyah* to Eretz Yisrael but the wife doesn't want to go, what's more important - *shalom bayis* or moving to Eretz Yisrael? On one hand *shalom bayis* should be the deciding factor, but on the other hand, we are living in dangerous times in *chutz l'aretz*

and it's like when Sodom was about to be destroyed and Lot's family was escaping, and Lot's wife refused to come with him. In the times we are living in, when we are at the end of the *Galus* and there is possible danger for Jews in *chutz l'aretz* due to the intensifying *chevlei Mashiach*, is it upon husbands to pressure their wives into making aliyah to Eretz Yisrael? What should a husband do if his wife doesn't want to make *aliyah* to Eretz Yisrael?

ANSWER

The Gemara (Tractate Kesubos 111a) states that everyone should go to Eretz Yisrael, and *Tosafos* there says that we are not allowed to force anyone into doing this mitzvah. The *Tashbetz* takes this further and says that not forcing a wife to make *aliyah* to Eretz Yisrael means that if one were to divorce his wife for refusing to come with him to Eretz Yisrael, he does not have to pay her a *kesubah*. The *Chazon Ish* says that not forcing a wife to make *aliyah* to Eretz Yisrael just means that she's not regarded as a rebellious wife if she refuses [and therefore she is still entitled to her *kesubah*. See also *Rambam Hilchos Ishus 13:20* and *Tzafnas Paneach 1:21*].

In order to convince one's wife to make *aliyah* to Eretz Yisrael, a husband should speak to her in a pleasant way about it, and with common sense, about when and how to move.

QUESTION

4) And, what if the wife has absolutely no interest in moving to Eretz Yisrael with him and gives her husband an ultimatum, "It's either me, or Eretz Yisrael. If I move to Eretz Yisrael, I'll go crazy there. You must choose what's more important to you – your wife, or Eretz Yisrael."

ANSWER

This requires *tefillah* to Hashem.

Questions About Mashiach's Arrival

1) Besides for King Chizikiyahu, were there any others throughout the generations who were eligible to be either Mashiach, and can the Rav name them?

ANSWER

Certainly there were many examples of those who were worthy of being Mashiach, in every generation. There are great souls in every generation who are worthy of being Mashiach in that generation.

QUESTION

2) If a tzaddik has a neshamah that contains the soul of Mashiach, or even a “spark” of Mashiach in his soul, does that mean that this tzaddik is worthy of being Mashiach?

ANSWER

Not necessarily.

QUESTION

3) And by extension, we can also ask that every person has a spark of Mashiach in his soul, so that would make any person worthy of being Mashiach...?

ANSWER

Every person contains a personal spark of Mashiach, but it is only a private level of Mashiach in his soul. In order to be worthy of being Mashiach, a person needs to have a soul that contains the “collective” Mashiach, not just the “personal spark” of Mashiach.

QUESTION

4) Just as the greatest tzaddikim of history were accused of committing horrible sins (Moshe Rabbeinu and Yirmiyahu HaNavi were accused of rape), is it possible that Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben Dovid will also be accused of committing the worst sins? Or will Mashiach be so righteous that he will be above any possibility of controversy?

ANSWER

Yes [it is possible that they will be accused of sinning].

QUESTION

5) The Rav said that it's possible that at first there will be controversy about Mashiach, but later the controversy about him will settle and he will be accepted by everyone. Can this controversy about Mashiach happen only before he arrives or even after he arrives? How can it happen after he arrives, when our *emunah* will be so clear?

ANSWER

When the doubts and arguments about Mashiach cease, that will be Mashiach's complete arrival.

QUESTION

6) Is it possible that the false Messiahs of our history (Bar Kochba, Shabtai Tzvi, etc) were really worthy of being Mashiach, and it is just that they went bad because the generation wasn't worthy yet of the *Geulah*?

ANSWER

When viewed from the perspective of our free will (*bechirah*), yes, there is such a possibility that they had been worthy. But from the perspective of the higher awareness (*yediah*) that Hashem is

orchestrating everything, these individuals were not worthy of being Mashiach.

QUESTION

7) The Rambam in *Hilchos Melachim* discusses the process of Mashiach's arrival and everything that has to happen in order for Mashiach's arrival to be sanctioned. Why is it that he does not even say one word about Mashiach ben Yosef?

ANSWER

According to the Talmud Bavli (*Succah 52a*) Mashiach ben Yosef will be killed in the final war, and also because according to the simple understanding of the Torah, Mashiach ben Yosef is not the actual Mashiach [since he is followed by Mashiach ben Dovid].

QUESTION

8) The Rambam differentiates between a person who is “possibly Mashiach” versus a person who is “certainly Mashiach”, and that even if a great tzaddik gathers together all of the exiles and he builds the Beis HaMikdash (!!!) he is still not “Mashiach for sure”, until he wins the final war against Gog and Magog. If he dies in the final war, he cannot be Mashiach. This is astounding. How can it be that he might accomplish so much, gathering together all the Jews from all over the world and rebuilding the Beis HaMikdash, yet he's still not Mashiach unless he survives the final war?!

ANSWER

If the tzaddik reputed to be Mashiach dies in the final war, he was a potential Mashiach, who couldn't emerge completely as Mashiach. We are allowed to assume that he will be Mashiach from all of the accomplishments he has done so far (i.e. gathering together Jews from

all over the world and building the Beis HaMikdash), but he is not yet “Mashiach for sure” until he wins the final war. He will only be “Mashiach for sure” when he completely emerges as the Mashiach, when he is not just a “potential” Mashiach, but a Mashiach that has fully utilized his potential as Mashiach.

QUESTION

9) How will we know who Mashiach ben Yosef is and who Mashiach ben Dovid is, when they arrive? Will Eliyahu inform us?

ANSWER

It will be just like how a person senses when it becomes day and when it becomes evening, which is a simple feeling that you just know about. That will be the case when Mashiach completely emerges from his potential state, from his hidden state to his revealed state. Mashiach ben Yosef will emerge when he fully utilizes his potential, whereas Mashiach ben Dovid will emerge when he stops being hidden and he becomes revealed.

QUESTION

10) The Chofetz Chaim wrote several sefarim on how to be worthy of the Geulah. Is that our entire avodah right now (to do what the Chofetz Chaim says about doing teshuvah before the Geulah) or is there anything else we need to do that isn't mentioned in the Chofetz Chaim's words?

ANSWER

Become connected to the *shaar HaNun d'kedushah* (the 50th level of holiness)!

Joy & Serenity

How do we reach *simchah* (joy)? There seems to be so many conditions that are needed in order to find true *simchah* – we need to find our “true portion in Torah”, we need to utilize our potential (which can take so long and which may be a lifelong task), and we also need to have *emunah*, *bitachon* and a positive outlook. It seems that there’s a very long path to take in order to get *simchah*. Is there a shortcut to reach *simchah*? Or will it be impossible to have a deep feeling of *simchah* unless we reach our special part in Torah and we utilize our potential?

ANSWER

It is a long way to reach true *simchah*, but one has to be happy already now with whatever he has reached (*someiach b’chelko*). One also needs to be happy with even the smallest point that there is to be happy about, for one can always find the light of Hashem that shines in even the smallest point that can make him happy.

QUESTION

Does *simchah* correspond to the *Yechidah* level of the soul? If yes, how can that be, if the *Yechidah* level of the soul is also described as *menuchah* (serenity), and the Rav explains that *menuchah* and *simchah* are actually opposite feelings?

ANSWER

The *Yechidah* corresponds to the faculty of *ratzon* (the will) in the soul. *Simchah* is the surrounding light of the *Yechidah* which equally surrounds the *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah*, and *Chayah* layers of the soul.

Menuchah (serenity) is when the will is nullified. Both *menuchah* and *simchah* correspond to *Keser*, but within *Keser* there are two levels: *Arich*

and *Atik*. The *ratzon* aspect of *Yechidah* corresponds to *Arich* of *Keser*, while the *menuchah* aspect of the *Yechidah* corresponds to *Atik* of *Keser*. *Simchah* is the surrounding light of the *Yechidah* which equally surrounds the *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah* and *Chayah* of the soul (as mentioned above).

Predicting Mashiach's Arrival

The Gedolim said that the Israeli government will not last for more than 70 years, because Mashiach will be here by then. It seems that the 70 years have passed, unless we count the establishment of the government from a later date. According to the Zohar, the *chevlei Mashiach* can last for 2 years once they begin, and it seems that the *chevlei Mashiach* have already begun....It would seem according to all of this that Mashiach is coming on a certain date....

ANSWER

We await his arrival every day! After all of these calculations you may have to predict the day of his arrival, you must realize that Mashiach's arrival will come from a hidden and concealed place that is beyond all calculations. Therefore, you must put aside all of your calculations and instead have simple *emunah*, and simply awaiting his arrival.



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