

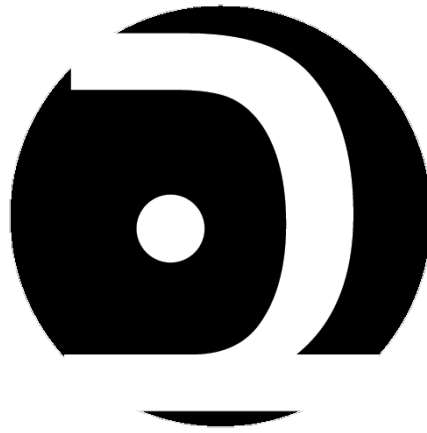
BILVAVI

**MY
HEART
ASKS**

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

PARSHAS TAZRIA 5782

ISSUE 235



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DIFFERENT WAYS OF TZADDIKIM

1) In the sefarim of *Chassidus*, as well as in the earlier *sefarim*, it is mentioned many times that the purpose of life is *d'veykus* (attachment with Hashem). Did all *tzaddikim* throughout the generation agree to this, or were there other *tzaddikim* who held that the purpose of life is to fulfill all of the 613 *mitzvos*, and mainly the *mitzvah* to learn Torah?

ANSWER

1. The purpose of life is always *d'veykus* with Hashem, and it is just that there are several angles to this, which are all needed: (1) To connect to Hashem out of *emunah peshutah*, simple faith in Him, with a simple sense of His reality, which is called “the Infinite”. (2) To connect to Him by way of His garments, which is the Torah, which enables a person to become “one” with Hashem so to speak, since Hashem and His will and wisdom are one. (3) To connect to the middos of Hashem, by emulating His compassion, etc. (4) By revealing Him on this world, through doing the mitzvos. This is the lower aspect of *d'veykus* in Hashem, which is to listen to Him. All of the above are the different form of *d'veykus* in Hashem.

QUESTION

2) The *tzaddikim* throughout the generations disagreed with each other, both in areas of Torah as well as in areas of how to serve Hashem. There is a well-known fundamental that this was because they had differing soul roots (*shorshei haneshamos*). When the *tzaddikim* disagreed with each other's views, was it because they each had a clear knowledge that the other *tzaddik* was presenting a view according to his unique soul root? Or was it instead that each *tzaddik* held that the other *tzaddik* was totally wrong?

ANSWER

It depended on the situation. Usually, a *tzaddik* whose soul root was in *ohr pnimi* (internal light) did not recognize this concept [of validating the other *tzaddik's* view], whereas a *tzaddik* whose soul was rooted in *ohr makif* (surrounding light) was more aware of this concept [of validating the other *tzaddik's* view in spite of their disagreement].

QUESTION

3) How is it possible for a *tzaddik* to have an influence on his students, or a *Rebbe* on his *chassidim*, and draw others in to follow his own way? How did the *tzaddik* or *Rebbe* know that this was good for his students or *chassidim* [since every person has a different soul root]?

ANSWER

Either it was because [the *tzaddik* or *Rebbe*] knew through *Ruach HaKodesh* [that his teachings were appropriate for his students and *chassidim*], or it was because he had *emunah peshutah* that if Hashem directed this person to him, it was the will of Hashem that it should be this way – this was the approach of the Chazon Ish.

QUESTION

4) In certain sects of Jewry, there is a view of “My way is the right one”, and that anyone else who isn’t part of their following, or anyone who isn’t a chassid of their own Rebbe, is deemed as someone who doesn’t serve Hashem. I am talking specifically about those who are following a statement that was said by any of the true *tzaddikim* or *Rebbs* of the past. How it is possible that a *tzaddik* should say that someone needs to attach himself with his Torah teachings? Aren’t there many ways to serve Hashem, as we see from the 12 different tribes, who are called the “12 tribes of G-d”, who each represent a different path of serving Hashem?

ANSWER

Each *tzaddik*’s intention was, that his particular approach was the “gateway” that was all-inclusive of the 12 general paths in serving the Creator. This is well-known. [Therefore, each *tzaddik* held that] anyone who didn’t become attached to his all-inclusive “gateway” would merit [only] a “diffused” light (*ohr prat*), without a “collective” light (*ohr kolel*).

CHILDREN – SELF-ESTEEM

How can we get a child to feel satisfaction from what he or she does? How do we uncover a child’s strengths? And how do we give a genuine compliment to a child that will make the child feel good about himself?

ANSWER

Get to know the child's personality and strengths, not just how the child acts and what he does. In order to do this, you need to get to know the child by observing what he does and how he expresses himself. For example, take note of how energetic the child is, what he's like when he gets angry, and what makes him happy, etc. You can know this by learning about the 4 elements in the soul and how they are expressed in one's behavior.

And you also need to compliment a child whenever you notice his particular good points, by giving a genuine compliment to the child about the quality that the child has, without adding anything else to the compliment, just stating the pure truth – for example, if the child cleans and tidies up well, say “You clean so nicely”, and don't add anything else to the compliment.

ACUPUNCTURE & SEEING AN IRRELIGIOUS THERAPIST

1) Is acupuncture an acceptable method of therapy according to the Torah?

ANSWER

It is a possible method of therapy, but it is only acceptable if it just acupuncture alone without any other 'additions' to it.

QUESTION

2) Can an observant Jew get treated by an irreligious therapist (under pressing circumstances)?

ANSWER

Firstly, we need to be concerned about the following factors.

(1) By seeing a therapist who does not keep Torah and mitzvos, the client is exposing himself/herself to a different worldview [contradictory to the Torah's views] and it is not possible for it not to bleed into the therapy sessions. Even worse is that many times the advice of the therapist is against halachah. In addition, we must know if the the actual method of therapy being used is problematic or not.

(2) Since an irreligious person lives in a different world than the world of a Torah observant Jew, many times the therapist will introduce certain concepts or ideas from the outside world, and gradually the client becomes open to those ideas that are not in line with the Torah.

(3) Another problem is the connection that is formed between the therapist and the client. When the connection is properly achieved between a therapist and the client, a genuine and deep emotional bond is formed between the therapist and the client [which enables the healing process for the client]. But this is inappropriate when the therapist is not observant of Torah and mitzvos, because such a connection has a bad influence on the *ruchniyus* of the client.

(4) Sometimes the client begins to hold the therapist in high esteem, and slowly the client begins to feel that a Jew can be a good, decent and productive person even through the therapist doesn't keep Torah and mitzvos. If a person is not strong about his *ruchniyus* – whether consciously or subconsciously – he will begin to feel that “a Jew can be a good person even if he doesn't keep the Torah”, and this can also lead him to think that a Jew can lead a good life even without keeping Torah and mitzvos. To my great pain, I am intimately aware of situations in which this actually happened, where the client actually stopped being religious and abandoned all of his Torah observance!

Therefore, as a general ruling, the answer to this question is: Absolutely not! In a case where there is no alternative and an exception must be made in order to save the person, we need to carefully consider the above factors and see if each individual session is causing a breach in any of those factors, and in addition the person would need to strengthen his *ruchniyus* after each session, so that he can “suck the fruit and throw away the peel.”

THE DEPTH BEHIND GIVING UP THE SMARTPHONE

I gave up the internet and email totally and I have a third party check my emails for me once a week and do whatever necessary business I have. I have a question regarding an insight I have gained from having done this.

1) The insight I have is that when I had my smartphone, I felt powerful and in control, with the world at my fingertips. I thought I was in control and could get whatever I needed

but really I was addicted and enslaved. My question is, would the Rav agree that the pleasure of feeling powerful and in control in general is the same thing?

2) In other words, the more we seek power and control, the more enslaved we are to the force in the root of all our personalities that seeks to exploit our potential for negativity because of the eating, that we cannot see Hashem is doing everything and loves us and that all there is in the world is He? If this is so, many people believe that having power and control, self-determination if you will, show that they care about themselves. It has become a measure of self-esteem in that way I believe.

3) Is our true test regarding our connection to Hashem going to take place the moment after we are niftar, in that darkness where we have to have built into our soul the truth that Hashem is concealed In the dark and to cling only to Him and His Greatness?

4) And is this sense of power and control within the darkness where we are to make the effort to nullify so that we build deveykus here and thereby for all eternity when we are niftar?

5) And is this the place the Moshiach will uplift us to the world to come?

ANSWER

1) Very good insight. The root of this took place at the sin with the forbidden tree of knowledge (*eitz hadaas*).

2) Very good insight. Upon subtler analysis, self-worth is not the same thing as self-love.

3) Very good insight. It is a way to live life, and it ends on this world, at the day of death.

4) Very good insight.

5) The light of Mashiach will uplift a person even further: It will bring a person to the place of simple and total *Ain Od Milvado*, meaning that there will be no reality recognized other than the reality of Hashem, with the understanding that all creations are nothing but a revelation of Hashem's reality.

CAN UNDERSTANDING 4 ELEMENTS HEAL SEVERE PHYSICAL ABUSE?

If a child was molested, is no longer *shomer Shabbos*, fell into drugs, and is currently living a life of total carelessness, and now as a teenager this boy or girl is turning to therapists for help, can understanding the particular 4 elements of the soul (earth, water, wind and fire) be helpful in treating the abuse of this teenager?

ANSWER

No one has the same soul as another person, and therefore, even if every person were to experience this same exact situation, they would each experience it differently [due to the unique makeup of the 4 elements of each person's particular soul]. Therefore, it is necessary for the therapist to (1) Understand the child's particular personality [by seeing which elements are most dominant in him or her], and also (2) The teenager [or any abused person in question] would need to have a very strong, determined will to work hard at understanding himself, and (3) The teenager in question would need to have a strong desire to come out of the trauma that he/she experience.

WOMEN & GETTING TO KNOW YOUR THOUGHTS

I am a woman who is learning the Rav's series Getting To Know Your Thoughts, which talks about how men can develop their analytical abilities and Torah study. The Rav explains how a person needs to reach the inner source of thought. How can a women reach this since women don't learn Torah in-depth like men do?

ANSWER

Women mainly need to become connected with simple faith in Hashem, which includes *peshitus* (simplicity), *temimus* (earnestness) and *emunah* (faith in Hashem). That is how woman gain deep, inner understanding.

There are some women who are exceptions, who are able to think analytically like men can. For them, it's different. In any case, each woman has to figure out what her personal capabilities are when it comes to this.

EMOTIONAL SUFFERING

1) There's a well-known principle of Chazal that Hashem doesn't send someone a *nisayon* (test or challenge) that he can't handle. Why then are people who commit suicide? And, alternatively, what about when people need to take pills or when they feel like they don't have any energy to deal with anything?

ANSWER

Because that is what they have "chosen." Their difficult feelings that they feel are part of their challenge. This is like what happened with Acher (the sage Rabbi Elisha ben Avuya, who later abandoned the Torah and became a heretic), who was tested when he heard the heavenly voice proclaim, "Everyone can repent, except for Acher." The Baal Shem Tov explained that part of his challenge was this discouraging message that he heard from the Heavenly voice, which told him that he can't do *teshuvah*.

QUESTION

2) Sometimes we see people who have far more *nisyonos* than others. Their challenges seem to be much more difficult than the average person's. What is the explanation of this? Is it because Hashem gives more rebuke to those whom He loves more? Is it a *tikkun* (soul-repair) for a previous lifetime for that person's *neshamah*?

ANSWER

That is true. Their suffering has been allotted to become their personal portion. This can either be coming as a result of effects of the primary root of evil which preceded even the six days of Creation, or it has become their portion due to Adam's sin of eating from the Eitz HaDaas, or it became their portion due to previous lifetimes.

QUESTION

3) And what about children who were abused, either emotionally, physically, spiritually, or sexually? How can any of these situations be good for them when they will continue throughout their lives?

ANSWER

It is part of their *nisayon*, to gain a *tikkun* as they continue to grow and mature. Each case is unique in how we can see the good in it.

PERCEPTION OF OLAM HABA

Is Olam HaBa the perception of Binah or Chochmah?

ANSWER

Olam HaBa, which is the stage that comes after this world (Olam HaZeh) is first revealed as the world of Binah, and then a higher level of Olam HaBa is revealed, from the world of Chochmah. This is followed by an even higher level of Olam HaBa, from the world of Keser.

PNIMIYUS - IGGULIM, HISHTALSHELUS & HALBASHAH

Can the Rav clarify what the 3 different systems of *pnimiyus* (inner spiritual growth) are?

ANSWER

- 1) The System of “Iggulim” – Smaller Circles Encompassed By Larger Circles. This refers to the concept of higher knowledge (*yediah*) above *bechirah*/free will. It is a perspective that is primarily explained by the Izhbitzer, and it is also explained a little in the sefarim of Reb Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin. It is essentially about going out of one’s self.
- 2) The System of *Hishtalshelus* – The Chain: This refers to the concept of *bechirah* (free will), the concept of fluctuation between growth and descent, and the way of *mussar* (ethics and discipline). It is essentially about expanding one’s self.
- 3) The System of *Halbashah* – Garments: This refers to the concept of *bittul* (self-nullification), submitting to a *tzaddik*. It is the general path of Chassidus. The *tzaddik* is the garment of all spiritual light, and that is why connection to a *tzaddik* is central in Chassidus. It is essentially about nullifying oneself that which is more inner (*bittul*).

HOW TO REACH AYIN

The Rav explains in “Getting To Know Your Soul” that a person can identify his main element by accessing the spiritual element of “*ayin*” (nothingness) in the soul, which is 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 these ways will be enough to reach “*ayin*”, being that “*ayin*” is a very deep point in the soul.

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.

AFTER THE 7TH MILLENIUM

Will the timespan between the 7th century and 10th century be an actual time period, as it simply sounds? If yes, then why does it take so long for us to reach the purpose of Creation? Also, what happens to the parts of one’s soul that aren’t *zocheh* to exist for a particular century – where do those parts go?

ANSWER

You have brought up many different points here, but in order to understand these topics you need to learn them. This is not the format for such a question, because it is too lengthy and expansive to answer. These matters are explained a lot in Kaballah. I will answer you briefly. It won’t be a time period (*zman*) as it simply sounds, but a process (*tahalich*), and

the process is lengthy. The parts that aren't *zocheh* to stay around after each century will become attached to the *chalul hapanuy* (the space that is empty from infinite light). I know very well that this answer won't satisfy you, but I don't have the capability to write a lengthy treatise on this topic. You should learn these matters in organized fashion, at their sources where they are discussed.



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