

BILVAVI

**MY
HEART
ASKS**

DOUBLE ISSUE

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
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COMPUTER ADDICTION

I became a baal teshuvah a few years ago. Before that, I used to play a lot of computer games. I was like a “*masmid*” at my computer for the entire day. When I became a baal teshuvah, I decided to give up my computer addiction. I was successful, and for 3 years I didn’t touch a computer. I just sat and learned Torah all day, from morning until night. I thought I overcame this yetzer hora. But today, I found myself once again at the computer, playing games on it for a few hours straight. I felt such a strong desire for it that I felt I couldn’t hold back. Is there any advice from the Rav on what I can do about this?

ANSWER

Slowly decrease the amount of time the time that you spend on it.

Take small breaks in between.

During the breaks, try to learn a bit.

Sit on a chair that’s not so comfortable.

Every so often, stare at the sky.

WHAT’S SO BAD ABOUT THE EREV RAV?

The Rav explained that the Erev Rav is the most dangerous of the previous exiles because they are mixed into Klal Yisrael. Does that mean that the Erev Rav can be Chareidim? And what is the confusion that they are able to introduce into the Torah-observant community? Also, what’s the difference between the Erev Rav with other groups that mixed into Klal Yisrael such as the Tzadukim (Saducees) and Misyavnim (Hellenists)?

ANSWER

Yes [the Erev Rav can be “Chareidim”].

The Erev Rav’s influence includes: (1) Views that are contrary to *daas Torah*. (2) A cold indifference [to *halachah*]. (3) A way of life of becoming connected with the world at large, and mixing with the world. That is the goal of the Erev Rav, which means “big mixture.”

In simple language, the Erev Rav’s influence is the permissive attitude of “Everything is permitted, except for....”

DE-TOX BEFORE YOU TALK TO HASHEM

Should a person first talk to Hashem and then write down a list of how one feels, or should it be the other way around?

ANSWER It is better to first write down the list of what you are feeling, because first we need to calm ourselves down before we talk to Hashem, so that we can talk to Hashem from a calmer place in ourselves. In order to be able to daven properly to Hashem, we need to first be calmed, and then we are speaking with Him from a more genuine place in ourselves.

THE MATRIARCHS ACCORDING TO KABALLAH

Rochel and Leah are both identified with the Shechinah. Why only them, and what are the roles of Sarah and Rivkah?

ANSWER

Rochel is a complete *Sefirah*, called *Malchus*, also called the *Partzuf* of *Nukva*. Leah is a specific spiritual illumination called *Malchus d'Tevunah*, which eventually was turned into its own *Partzuf*.

Sarah is neither an illumination of a *Sefirah*, nor an independent *Partzuf*. The *Arizal* (*Eitz Chaim 11:8*) says that “Sarah” is really “Rochel”, and when she was called “Sarai”, she was “Leah”. The *Arizal* says elsewhere (*Sefer HaLikutim*) that Sarah is the secret of *Binah*, and the *dinim* (judgments) of *Sarah* are called *Tevunah*. Elsewhere, the *Arizal* says that Sarah was a degree of *Keser*, specifically *Keser d'Malchus*.

As for Rivkah, she was a soul reincarnation of Chavah, as the *Arizal* says (*Likutei Torah, parshas Toldos*). *Sefer Me'il Eliyahu* says that Yitzchok was the masculine aspect of *Gevuros* while Rivkah was the feminine *Gevuros*. The *sefer HaPardes* says that Rivkah was *Malchus*.

The *Rema m'Pano* writes that Rivkah and Rochel were in the place of *Gevurah*, while Sarah and Leah were in the place of *Hod*, and according to a second view, Sarah and Leah are at the point of *Gevurah*, while Rivkah and Rochel are at the point of *Hod*.

HOW TO CLARIFY A DOUBT

Ever since corona broke out, I have been trying to follow the Rav's words. Baruch Hashem I have been zocheh to true growth, especially when it comes to keeping a distance from all forms of medial/Internet...I have asked the Rav about personal issues, as to how go about corona and the vaccine, so that I could receive the daas Torah of the Rav...I believe that if it will be easier for me to listen to the Rav's daas Torah if the Rav will please “make

the decision” for me about something. Although I know that it is not the Rav’s way to decide for other people, I want to know if the Rav can make an exception for and decide for me about a certain issue...because it’s too hard for me on my own to reach a decision.

ANSWER

Usually, whenever a person faces a doubt and he has difficulty deciding what to do, he should take one little note and write down one option, and he should take another note and write down another option. Then he should fold the little notes up. 2) Then, he should learn Torah lishmah [i.e. by setting aside the first few minutes of his Torah learning session to be entirely for Hashem’s sake and not for any reason of self-gain, honor, reward, etc. Or, alternatively, he should strengthen his emunah that no one is in control besides for Hashem. Then, from clear emunah that Hashem is in charge, he should [hand the 2 notes to a little child] and ask the young child to hand him one of the notes [and whichever note the child hands him, that is the option he should decide on].

WHY CAN’T WOMEN LEARN KABALLAH?

Why can’t a woman learn Kaballah?

ANSWER

Because women are rooted in *temimus* (non-analytical simplicity and earnestness), while men are rooted in *chochmah* (analytical wisdom).

AMITAS HAVAYAH – HIS TRUTHFUL EXISTENCE

1) The Rav explains how our entire existence is nothing but a revelation of the *ohr EinSof* (Hashem’s infinite light), and that the very first “revelation” (*giluy*) which Hashem revealed was His *ohr EinSof*. How can this be reconciled with the Kaballah teachings of *Chabad Chassidus* [The Torah of the Alter Rebbe] as explained by his student, Reb Aharon of Strotcheleh, which explains a level/revelation beyond the *ohr EinSof*, called *atzmus haMeor*?

ANSWER

The teachings of *Chabad* are discussing three levels of revelation: *ohr EinSof* (the infinite light), *Meohr* (the Source of illumination) and *atzmus haMeohr* (the intensity that comes from the Source of illumination). The revelation *Me’ohr* implies “from it, is the light”. *Atzmus haMeohr* refers to “integration of opposites” (*kelilas hafachim*), in which revelation (*giluy*) and concealment (*he’elam*) are fused together, and this level is above revelation/*giluy* alone or concealment alone/*he’elam*. But even this level is not yet *Amitas Havayaso*,

the Truth of His Existence [which we have no understanding, definition, or grasp of]. When “Hashem wanted to make a dwelling place for Him below”, this is referring to His *Atzmus haMeohr*.

QUESTION

2) The Rav explains that through our own *havayah* (through becoming connected to our very innermost existence) in our soul, we can connect to the *Havayah* (Existence) of Hashem. Does that mean that through my own *havayah* I can connect to the “revelation” of His *Havayah* (but not His actual *Havayah* itself)?

ANSWER

Our own *havayah*/existence is a *kli* (vessel) to reveal the “revelation” of His *Havayah* – the revelation that He exists, which is the “revelation of His *Havayah*”.

QUESTION

3) The Rav is implying that all we can grasp of *Havayah* is the “revelation” (*giluy*) of His *Havayah* but not beyond that. However, Reb Aharon of Strotcheleh speaks about how there is a revelation of His *Ohr EinSof* which really has 2 different revelations to it, as well as a level called *Atzmus EinSof* where there is only one undifferentiated concept that isn't divide into 2 revelations. And, to my understanding, Reb Aharon of Strotcheleh is even explaining *Atzmus EinSof* in terms of an actual *avodah* to reach [and not as something totally abstract that we have no connection to]. And the *Chabad* teachings also speak a lot about the level called *Atzmus* that's above concealment (*he'elam*) and revelation (*giluy*). This seems to imply that there is a level beyond the *giluy* (revelation) of *ohr EinSof*.

ANSWER

Reb Aharon of Strotcheleh developed further the Torah teachings of Chabad Chassidus, that there is a unified level of Infinite Light which is at the level of *Radla d'Atik*, of which no questions can be asked on. It is “unknowable” (*lo isyada*) and it remains hidden (*tzniyu*) – a level in which His *Havayah* is unified with His creations. This particular concept was either a novelty of Reb Aharon of Strotcheleh, or, it was his sharpened understanding of the teachings of his Rebbi (the Alter Rebbe, the Baal HaTanya). The level that he is describing cannot be understood, because it is unknowable (as mentioned). His root was to say something about the *EinSof* even though we cannot understand it at all. This was really a resemblance of the Torah teachings of *sefer Yosher Levav*, who said that the *tzimtzum* (contraction of Hashem's infinite light) was *k'pshuto* (literal), meaning that the *EinSof* itself was removed – but not that we can understand this. However, we do not take this approach at all!!!

In the teachings of *Chabad*, the level of *Atzmus* which is above *giluy*/revelation and *heelam*/concealment is still not describing *Amitas Havayaso*. The *Leshem* also describes the *EinSof* as being the “first revelation”, but he also mentions *Amitaso HaNeelemes*, “His Truth That is Hidden”, meaning that it is hidden and

therefore not revealed [it is higher than even the first revelation, which is *ohr EinSof*]. Yet, both the teachings of *Chabad* [which discuss *Atzmus*] as well as the teachings of the *Leshem* [which mentions *Amitaso HaNeelemes*] are still not discussing *Amitaso HaGemurah* [lit. “His absolute truthful Existence”].¹

28 QUESTIONS ON AVODAS HASHEM

1) Which part of the soul is my “I” in – is it in my nefesh, ruach, neshamah, chayah or yechidah?

ANSWER

Generally, on this world, your “I” is experienced through your Ruach part of the soul. But specifically, each person is at a different level of the soul.

QUESTION

2) Is my nefesh, ruach, neshamah, chayah, and yechidah entirely good with no evil in it? If there are evil aspects of the soul, which part of the soul is it in?

ANSWER

It depends on which of the “4 worlds” the particular part of the soul is in. The *Leshem* discusses this.

QUESTION

3) Which parts of Torah does a mesivta (high-school) age bochur needs to know?

ANSWER

The masecta that is being learned in the yeshiva, the weekly parsha, and learning Mishnah Berurah. Learn mussar sefarim during mussar seder. During Bein HaZemanim you can learn Nach with Mefarshim.

QUESTION

4) What is the Nefesh Chaya (spirit of life) which was breathed into Adam? Which part of the soul is it?

ANSWER

¹ In summary: Thus, according to the Kabbalistic teachings in Chabad Chassidus (as explained by Reb Ahron of Strotecheleh in his sefarim *Shaarei Hishtalshelus* and *Avodas Levi*), above all *giluy* and *heelam* is *Radla d’Atik*, which is *Atzmus*. The *Leshem* explains a higher point, called *Amitaso HaNe’elemes* (His Hidden Truthful Existence). The highest point, which is not explained and which cannot be, is *Amitas Havayaso* (His Truthful Existence), which here the Rav refers to as “*Amitaso HaGemurah*” (His absolute Truthful Existence). Elsewhere, in a different response, the Rav has explained that we have no knowledge and no understanding of this, and all we can do is have *emunah* (believe) in it, and that is how we gain a connection to this absolutely highest point.

It is the illumination of the Chayah within the Neshamah (the Chayah d’Neshamah) level of the soul.

QUESTION

5) On Shabbos, does a person need to eat more? And if yes, how does a person know when he should stop?

ANSWER

The *Shelah HaKadosh* says to taste a bit more food than you usually do.

QUESTION

6) How can a person know what the ratzon Hashem is by clarifying what he wants, in a case where he doesn’t have a particular desire for anything?

ANSWER

The more a person removes his *negios* the more he can feel what he wants, and what the ratzon Hashem is. This is possible.

QUESTION

7) Which is a good sefer to learn about Chassidus?

ANSWER

Sefer *Chasidus Mevueres*.

QUESTION

8) Why did Hashem first give a reason to Avraham and to Yaakov and only afterwards did He give them advice?

ANSWER

Because the reasons are a higher level of understanding, and it is given to the elderly and wise. The reasons, the *taamei Torah*, will be the reward in the future.

QUESTION

9) What should a yeshiva bochur do during Shovavim?

ANSWER

To be focused on his learning, calmly, and thinking into his learning.

QUESTION

10) What can we take out of the time period of Shovavim?

ANSWER

See previous answer.

QUESTION

11) What can a person do that's meaningful which will impact him for the better?

ANSWER

Take on a small resolution and keep to it, come what may.

QUESTION

12) When going home for Shabbos should I be learning less, or should I be learning at every spare moment?

ANSWER

Act with *yishuv hadaas*.

QUESTION

13) How much should I be offering my mother to help in the house?

ANSWER

Every so often, offer your help.

QUESTION

14) What should I think about before learning? What should I be feeling as I'm learning?

ANSWER

Remember Who gave the Torah, and remember that it is He wants that we should become connected to His Torah – which is His wisdom and His will. Try to be clear about what you learn.

QUESTION

15) How can we return to our original state of purity and holiness?

ANSWER

By returning to your childlike purity (*temimus*).

QUESTION

16) How do I gain humility and yiras shomayim from wearing Tefillin?

ANSWER

Feel how Hashem is on top of you.

QUESTION

17) When I am enjoying my learning and learning out loud enthusiastically, but I don't learn as good when I don't feel enthusiastic about my learning, is that okay at this age (16) or do I need to learn more lishmah?

ANSWER

Do this a bit on Shabbos.

QUESTION

18) What should be the attitude about graphology? Is it good to do it?

ANSWER

There is truth to it, but at this point you have no need for it.

QUESTION

19) Is there a source to learning about one's nature and middos based on his name?

ANSWER

Yes, the Sage Rabbi Meir would do this, and there are other places in Chazal as well like this.

QUESTION

20) Are the 4 elements stronger at different intervals of the month? And if a person was born in a certain month will he have the dominant element of that month?

ANSWER

Yes.

QUESTION

21) If a bochur feels an emotional need to talk to his mother during Bein HaZmanim, is this fine? How much time should he spend talking to her?

ANSWER

Yes. Each case is different.

QUESTION

22) What can I think about to help me overcome my yetzer hora when getting up in the morning?

ANSWER

Feel a joy in being *zocheh* to serve Hashem and in what you will reach today.

QUESTION

23) How can a person gain enthusiasm?

ANSWER

Find a point that you are enthused about and expand it by thinking about it and verbalizing it.

QUESTION

24) What is the purpose of Mashiach coming?

ANSWER

A complete recognition of Hashem, in His will, in His wisdom, and in His attributes.

QUESTION

25) Does a person need to think about the purpose of why he is about to do a mitzvah and why he is about to learn Torah? If yes, what should he be thinking about?

ANSWER

No, he just has to think that he is doing this because it is the will of Hashem.

QUESTION

26) The Rav said that before Mashiach comes, doing teshuvah means to become an individual. But the Zohar says that even if one beis hakneses (shul) does teshuvah, this is called doing teshuvah before the Geulah, so it sounds like people need to come together and do teshuvah.

ANSWER

That is correct, but that would have been the case if Mashiach would have come (in haste) before his time, but now this isn't the case anymore and he is going to come in his preordained time of arrival.

QUESTION

27) I try not to talk in a shul or in a beis midrash. What should I do if someone comes to chat with me?

ANSWER

Shorten the conversations.

QUESTION

28) What should a person think as he's eating?

ANSWER

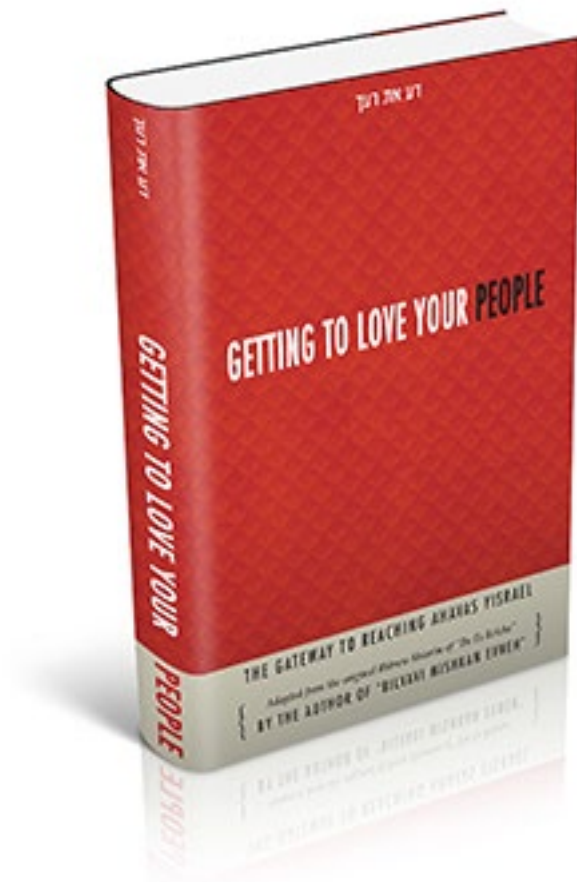
Who gave me this food? And for what purpose did He give it to me?

4 ELEMENTS & SUGAR LEVEL

I suffer from high sugar levels [diabetes] and I need to constantly be vigilant of my sugar intake because of this. I happen to have a strong element of “fire” in my soul [i.e. issues with anger, pride, ambition, power, control, etc.], and I was wondering if perhaps that is what causes my sugar levels to be high, and if I'm able to control my sugar level by working with my emotional 4 elements of fire, water, air and earth.

ANSWER

Yes [high sugar levels are an outcome of an imbalanced fire in the soul]. Before an emotional issue affects the body, it is possible to treat the issue at its root before it spreads to the body where it causes physical issues. However, once an emotional imbalance in the soul spreads to the body and the body has developed a physical condition from it, it is not enough to treat the emotions in the soul that caused it, it becomes necessary to also treat the physical issues in the body that resulted from it.



IN BOOKSTORES SOON

Ahavas Yisrael (loving the Jewish people) is one of the great fundamentals of the Torah. When we merge with another Jew, and when we are connected with the Jewish people collectively, we gain one of the greatest keys to perfecting our souls in this world and becoming closer to HaKadosh Baruch Hu. It is one of the three loves – to love Hashem, to love the Torah, and to love the souls of the Jewish people which actually begins with a healthy self-love, as explained in the author’s Da Es Atzmecha“ ,Getting To Know Your Self.”

In a powerful style that speaks to our hearts, the author shows us the way towards developing our powers of ahavas Yisrael and the emotion of loving another human being in general. By learning this sefer, we can heal ourselves and heal our relationships with others, as we grow in the process of what it means to love another Jew. We discover that there are levels upon levels of loving another, and that there is always room to grow further in this area. An additional chapter explains the necessity to hate evil and several chapters explain how to repair unwarranted hatred, so that our ahavas Yisrael will be pure, genuine, and aligned with the will of the Creator.