

**BILVAVI**

**MY  
HEART  
ASKS**

**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

**PARSHAS SHELACH 5782**

**ISSUE 246**

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## THE GAINS OF THINKING THAT THERE IS A CREATOR

The Rav in “*Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh*” (Part 1) discusses that one should think of the simple fact that there is a Creator. 1) If a person does this consistently, will this also rectify him in the area of “*Yesod*” (personal holiness)? Will he find it easier to do *teshuvah* from this practice, and will he reach *Ruach HaKodesh*? 2) Also, can it be said that every possible gain is contained in this practice?

### ANSWER

1) “*Yesod*” corresponds to “*hiskashrus*”, connection, and the more a person becomes connected and attached with the Creator, he rectifies “*Yesod*” on an inner level. 2) Yes, but a person also requires all of the “branches” [all others of our *avodah*], at the root level and also in the active sense.

## FINDING THE TRUE TZADDIK

I have a question on the topic of the “true *tzaddik* that is in every generation”, which is oft-discussed in the *sefarim* of Rebbi Nachman of Bresslev and his student, Rebbi Nosson.

Being that I am a Bresslever *chassid*, how can I actually find the true *tzaddik*?

It's known that in every generation there is a *tzaddik* like Moshe, who was the true *tzaddik*. Rebbi Nachman writes in *Likutei Moharan* that merely looking in the *sefarim* of *tzaddikim* is not as effective as hearing the Torah teachings from the *tzaddik*, and the *Moharash* said that in every generation there is a student, or there are several students, who are well-versed in the Torah teachings of Rebbi Nachman, and that these people are true *tzaddikim* of the generation. But how can I find the true *tzaddikim* who have the aforementioned criteria?

Rebbi Nosson of Bresslev said that the *yetzer hora* lets a person to get close to all of the *tzaddikim*, but it will not let a person get close to the *tzaddik yesod olam* (the true *tzaddik*). If there is a person whom people say about him that he is the true *tzaddik* of the generation, but there is also a lot of *machlokes* (disagreement) about him, how can I discern the truth about him? After all, all of the holy brothers of Yosef HaTzaddik were opposed to him, and even Moshe Rabbeinu was opposed. So how is it possible for me to know if a certain person is the true *tzaddik* that I must get close to, especially if there is much disagreement about him?

### ANSWER

The more a person purifies his being, the closer he gets to understanding who the true *tzaddik* is.

## PRAYING BY GRAVES OF TZADDIKIM

QUESTION 1- Shalom, in honor of the Rav, who gives of his soul and time to bring the Jewish people to the revelation of HaKadosh Baruch Hu within our hearts. I want to ask a question which has been on my heart for a long time, which I do not know the answer for: How important is it in our current times - where we are momentarily before Mashiach's arrival – to go the graves of *tzaddikim* and pray there for our spiritual and material needs?

On one hand the Rav has taught us that when a person goes to a great person for a blessing, we are supposed to learn from how the great person always prays to Hashem, without any means in between. The Rav has also said that we need to turn directly to Hashem, and that this is how Hashem wills it. Therefore, according to my feeble mind, I have kept a distance for some from visiting the *tzaddikim* of the generation, because I understand that it is Hashem's will for me to turn to Him directly, and not through using a *tzaddik* as a go-between. On the other hand, I have learned that praying by the graves of *tzaddikim* was always the way of the *tzaddikim* throughout all the generations.

Does the Rav recommend going to graves of *tzaddikim* to pray there? And if yes, how many times of the year should this be done? Are there any particular graves of *tzaddikim* which the Rav recommends us to go to nowadays?

I know that the Rav will tell me that this depends on whatever a person feels drawn towards, but even so, I want to know if there is any one particular *tzaddik*, or several specific *tzaddikim*, who contain an “all-inclusive” soul of the Jewish people, whose graves we would be obligated to go to, at least once a lifetime.

Also, it is possible to reach the “*Yechidah*” level of the soul without going to graves of *tzaddikim*?

#### ANSWER 1

There are two ways of *avodah*: [Connecting to Hashem] by means of an intermediary, and by connecting directly with Hashem. Each soul is different when it comes to this, so it is a matter which depends on a person's soul root [some souls will connect to Hashem through a *tzaddik*, and some souls will connect directly to Hashem].

But the particular time period we are in is also a factor. Throughout all of history, there has always been the way of “the entranceway which leads to the palace”, meaning [that a person can get to the “palace”, Hashem] through the means of an intermediary [i.e. through *tzaddikim*]. As the light of the future shines more strongly now, a person is closer to reaching Hashem more directly, without the means of an intermediary.

However, this does not invalidate the approach of using an intermediary [a *tzaddik*] to reach Hashem, *chas v'shalom*. Most souls reach a “direct” connection with Hashem [only] after they have connected to Him via an intermediary [i.e. through a *tzaddik*].

Connecting to Hashem through the means of an intermediary is not only via visiting the graves of *tzaddikim* – rather, it is mainly by connecting to the Torah teachings of the *tzaddik*. Therefore, there is no specific requirement to go the graves of *tzaddikim*. As the Sages state, “We do not erect monuments for *tzaddikim*. Rather, their words [of Torah] are how they are remembered.”

However, we do find as well that there are certain places to daven in, where one can connect more “directly” with Hashem. One can connect “directly” to Hashem in any place he is in, but especially in holy places. Getting more specific, the holy places to daven in [which enables one to have a more direct connection to Hashem] are: the Kosel, the Me’aras HaMachpeilah, and Kever Rochel.

#### QUESTION 2

When coming to pray by the grave of a *tzaddik*, what is the main *avodah* (inner work) of a person there?

#### ANSWER 2

1) Connect to the Torah teachings of the *tzaddik*, if possible. 2) Be disconnected from materialism, and become connected to the spiritual world of the soul.

## SKIPPING LEVELS

1) Does a person need to go in a certain order of steps [in *avodas Hashem*], or is it possible for a person to skip and go straight to the desired level? 2) Did the *tzaddikim* throughout the generations reach the levels which the Rav describes?

#### ANSWER

1) By way of *mesirus nefesh* (self-sacrifice) a person can skip levels. This is only for individuals.

2) Each one reached it, according to his level and according to his soul root.

## UNCOVERING YOUR PERSONAL SHARE IN TORAH

The Rav has said that the main kind of Torah learning is to learn in order to know how to fulfill all of the *mitzvos*, and that besides for this, one also needs to learn certain parts of Torah which are aligned with his personal soul root (*shoresh haneshamah*). The Rav has said that we see this from the fact that there were some *Gedolim* did not learn *Kaballah* (the mystical secrets of the Torah) [for this part of Torah was not needed according to their personal *shoresh haneshamah*]. The Rav referred me to the words of the *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* in *Hilchos Talmud Torah* (1:4) who writes, “The Sages of truth said that every soul, in order to reach its *tikkun* (repair), needs to study the *PaRDeS* (the four parts of Torah, which includes *Pshat* [surface understanding], *Remez* [hints, *gematria*, etc.], *Drush* [homiletics, *agadta*, etc.] and *Sod* [the mystical parts of Torah, the *Kaballah*, etc.] according to one’s capability of comprehension. One needs to know all of it, and this is the complete *tikkun* (repair) for the soul.” From those words it is apparent that each person needs to study all of the *PaRDeS*, and it is just that he is only required to do so according to his level of comprehension – and it seems that vice versa, if a person is not able to know and comprehend all of *PaRDeS*, then he is not obligated to know all of *PaRDeS*.

But how can a person know what the capabilities of his soul are, when it comes to learning all of the parts of Torah? How can a person know how much he can or cannot understand in the Torah? If one spends time learning a certain part of Torah in favor of other parts, maybe this is stemming from laziness, even if he’s exerting himself to understand what he’s trying to understand.

After having this question I later came across a statement in the name of the kaballists that the colleagues of Rabbi Akiva rebuked Rabbi Akiva for learning matters of *agadta* and told him that he should instead learn the laws of *negaim* and *ohalos*, and this was because they looked into the soul of Rabbi Akiva and saw that his main share in Torah was in *halachah* [specifically, of *negaim* and *ohalos*] as opposed to *agadta*. The kaballists then cite the words of the *Arizal* that each person needs to learn the areas of Torah that are according to his personal soul root. This is brought in *sefer Shaalos U’Teshuvos Rav Pealim: Yoreh Deah* 1:56). It seems from this that even Rabbi Akiva didn’t know his personal root and what his personal share in Torah should be, until they told him.

So, the question is: Nowadays, who can tell a person what kind of *neshamah* (soul) he has?

#### ANSWER

The very *pnimiyus* (inner essence) of our *neshamah* is at first hidden from a person, due to internal “bribery” – various self-serving interests (*retzonos*). When one nullifies these *retzonos*, he reaches *hishtavus* (equality), and then he can know what his personal share is, in which area of Torah learning he should be spending his

## UNDERSTANDING THE EVIL WITHIN

[The Rav has explained that] there are three parts in our soul: a part that is totally good and pure, a part that is a mixture of good and evil, and a part that is completely evil. What is the part in ourselves that is completely evil? Is this the *yetzer hora* (the evil inclination)?

#### ANSWER

Study the *sefer Tanya*, chapters 2-7, who explains at length about the soul and its general design. To give a brief description, the actual essence of the soul is one piece, but it divides into two parts – our intellect and our character traits. Upon that, there are three “garments” of the soul: thought, speech, and action. The “G-dly soul” (*nefesh Elohis*) of a Jew is entirely good, whereas the “animal soul” (*nefesh habehaimis*) is called *kelipas noga*, which refers to permissible actions [which are neither evil nor holy]. The soul of a gentile consists of the three impure *kelipos* (li. “shells”). When a Jew sins, *chas v’shalom*, he is connecting his soul to the three impure *kelipos*. However, it is merely a connection to the evil. Besides for this, there are also “evil” character traits which can be manifest in a Jew’s soul, but those character traits are only “evil” because there is a lack of balance in the Jew’s soul. When one’s soul is imbalanced, the result will be any of the “evil” character traits. However, it is nothing but an imbalance in the soul’s abilities, because there is never any intrinsic evil in a Jew’s soul.

## WAYS TO CONNECT TO THE TRUE TZADDIK

(Abbreviated):

Rebbi Nachman of Bresslev wrote that one must gain a connection to the "true *tzaddik*" of the generation. Who is the *tzaddik* of this generation? If we do not know who the *tzaddik* of the generation, how are we able to gain a connection to him?

### ANSWER

The further the generations are from the source, the more distant we are from our beginning point, and there is less spiritual light, with increasing spiritual darkness. This is especially the case in our generation, of which it is said, "*And darkness will cover the earth.*" The idea of this darkness is that the trait of *malchus* ["leadership", which refers to the leaders of the Jewish people] seems to be only a single small point, with all other spiritual light (the rest of the nine spiritual *Sefiros*/emanations) becoming concealed.

That is why the trait of "*yesod*" (the "foundation", which refers to personal holiness) is also very concealed and hidden today. For this reason, there has been an especial resurgence today of the sins of the generation of the Flood, the "damaging of the Holy Covenant" (sins involving personal holiness).... Since there is laxity today in the trait of "*yesod*", the "foundation" (personal holiness) in the area of actions which damage one's "*yesod*", this external damage to the trait of *yesod* has also placed the perfected level of *yesod* into a state of concealment. That is why it is almost totally impossible today to find the "*tzaddik yesod olam*", the *tzaddik* who upholds the world. This is why it is very difficult to know who the *tzaddik yesod olam* today is. We are a soul living inside a body on This World [thus our physical body and existence on This World conceals our soul's view]. It is most difficult to recognize such a lofty soul residing in a body that lives with us on This World. This is why there is much confusion among those who seek to know who the *tzaddik yesod olam* is: due to the fact that we live with a soul and a body, which are each telling us different things.

Practically speaking, Chazal state that the original light which Hashem created was hidden away for the *tzaddikim* in the future, and it became hidden in the Torah. Therefore, when we are in a situation where the "*tzaddik* has gone lost", the "light" [of the *tzaddik*] returns to its root, in the Torah. So one should seek to find the "light of the *tzaddik*" by studying the



wisdom of the Torah. In terms of the *Sefiros*, the *sefiros* of *Keser* [“crown”, the highest spiritual point] and *Malchus* [leadership] correspond to each other, and so do the *sefiros* of *Chochmah* [wisdom, Torah] and *Yesod* (foundation, personal holiness) correspond to each other. That is why a person can find the spiritual light of “*yesod*” (personal holiness) in *chochmah* (the Torah’s wisdom). This is the depth behind the view of several of the sages throughout the generations who did not seek to rectify the *yesod* in the active sense – rather, they attached themselves only to *chochmah* [to studying the Torah’s wisdom]. Understand this well.

Additionally [the way to become attached with the *tzaddik* of the generation] is through having *emunah* (faith in G-d) during trying times. It is written, “*And your faith, at nights*”. Through believing in something, one becomes attached to it. When we are in a time period of “daytime”, we can know who the *tzaddik* of the generation is, but in a time such as ours, which is likened to the “night”, our task is to believe in the existence of the *tzaddik* and become attached to him through the light of *emunah*, as opposed to “knowing” the *tzaddik*. The spiritual light of *emunah* (believing) is greater than the spiritual light of knowledge. Therefore, connecting to the *tzaddik* through *emunah* [in the existence of the *tzaddik*] is a greater level of connection to the *tzaddik*, for it is at the root.

Additionally, Chazal state [concerning our final generations], “We have no one to rely on except for our Father in Heaven.” In the name of Rav Chaim of Volozhin, this is explained to be a part of the curse of the final generations. That is the simple understanding. But there is also an inner *avodah* contained in this. It is a message from the Sages that in the final generations, we need to nurse forth spiritual vitality from a higher source than human beings. We need to nurse forth our vitality directly from the Creator, Himself. On a deeper level, the entire 6,000 year era we are in corresponds to “knowledge”, *chochmah* (wisdom), which also corresponds with *yesod*, and which corresponds with *tzaddik yesod olam*. In the current era, *chochmah* corresponds with *yesod*. But in the very end, it will be revealed that “The purpose of knowledge is to know that we do not know”, and this refers to the correspondence of *keser* with *malchus*. This concept, in the side of evil, is manifest whenever there is a damage to *yesod*. In the side of holiness, it is when one rises from the level of *yesod* to *malchus*.



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