

BILVAVI

**MY
HEART
ASKS**

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

PARSHAS KORACH 5782

ISSUE 247

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DEPENDENCY

There’s a boy who feels a tremendous emotional dependency on one of his friends in yeshiva. Because of this, he is also experiencing problems in his personal holiness, because he fantasizes about how much he “loves” his friend, and he feels actual physical desires towards him. In this case, the “friend” in question doesn’t even know that his “pursuer” is fantasizing about him and having lustful thoughts about him. Would this boy need to work on “cooling off” the friendship? Or does he need to use the love and dependency that he feels towards his friend as a parable for love towards the Creator? Can he use these intense feelings of dependency as a parable of feeling dependent on the Creator? If that is the case, can he continue his “warm” friendship that he has with the friend he is pursuing, and it is just that he would need to daven to Hashem to be saved from feelings of dependency and physical lust that he has for his friend?

There is a letter from Rav Shlomo Wolbe zt”l about such a case and he wrote that the boy should learn *b’chavrusa* (as a Torah study partner) with his friend, so that their bond becomes spiritual, and with the power of Torah, the situation can be repaired. However, there is a letter from Rav Shach zt”l about such a case where he says that the two boys need to be separated and be put in different yeshivos, and if that doesn’t work, the “pursuer” has to leave the country, so that the other boy isn’t in spiritual danger from him. Perhaps that was a more severe situation, but I am not aware of the details. What is the Rav’s view about this matter?

ANSWER

The more powerful the attachment is, the more it should be cooled off. If the attachment is weaker, one should learn how to connect and disconnect from his friend, in a cycle, back-and-forth.

CHILDREN – IRRITABLE PRE-TEEN

My oldest daughter is 12 and a half, and she is always giving critique and orders to the other children, in a negative way. Lately this issue has gotten a lot worse. She screams at all of the children – and at my wife too - in a very dramatic way, about any little thing they do. The smallest thing can bother her and cause her to have an outburst. We are trying very hard to show her love and to help all the other children be more sensitive to her, so that she can get a good feeling about herself from all of us. Does the Rav have a bit of advice for this?

ANSWER

For every issue that exists, there is a root of the issue, and there are branches. First we need to identify the root of the issue. This includes getting to know her main personality traits, the way she has been until now throughout her childhood – her qualities as well as her weak spots. After that, we should try to see which aspects of her personality are causing her current behavior.

This suggestion is really a “test” to try – it is not the actual solution. After you can pass this “test” successfully, you can then attempt to solve the problems.

SOCIAL ANXIETY

Through *hisbodedus*, I feel that I have entered into the “inner world” that the Rav describes. I have begun to take this journey within, and I have been prompted to do so because I have social fears – I am afraid to be with people. Whenever I speak with people, I become very anxious and it is hard for me to keep a conversation flowing. When I *daven* or learn, I feel that I have entered into the inner world and this elevates my avodas Hashem, but in spite of this, I feel anxious when I speak with people. Is there a way for me live in the inner world and still carry a conversation with other people, without becoming afraid? (By the way, I don’t even know what’s causing me to be afraid.)

ANSWER

Since you do not know right now what exactly is causing you to be afraid, let’s present here a practical way to go about this issue, without getting into the deep subtleties of the human soul.

1. Firstly, make a list of people whom you are not afraid to speak to, and make sure to speak to them, with the awareness that you are not afraid of talking to them. Through doing this, you will become stronger in the area of speaking to others.

2. Write down a general list of all the people that you speak to regularly, as well as the people you speak with only sometimes. Then decide which of these people is the easiest to speak to, which one is the second-to-easiest person to speak to, etc. and which of these is the most difficult person to speak to, second-to-most difficult, etc. Then begin to speak to the person on this list whom you find easiest to talk to, and make sure to speak to all the people on the list, until you eventually talk to the most difficult person on the list.

3. If possible, try to get hold of a picture of someone whom you find it uncomfortable to talk with, and speak to the person in the picture, in a closed, private room. Keep repeating the same thing to the person in the picture, and speak confidently. Keep doing this until you feel more confident with yourself.

4. After doing the above, go to the person whom you find it uncomfortable to talk to, and talk to him, in the same way that you spoke to the picture of him. Continue with this approach towards this person, and with anyone else whom you find it difficult to speak with, and do so gradually.

5. Come up with a few general phrases and sentences that you want to say to a person, and practice reviewing it with yourself, until you feel confident in what you are saying. Say those words to most of the people you encounter, and slowly you can add more words and phrases to your “list” of words that you say to people.

SENSITIVITY

1) How can a very sensitive kind of person attain a balance in his heart and emotions, so that he can become more objective and focused (in spite of the fact that he is a very “feeling” kind of person)? 2) The Rav has said that if a very sensitive kind of person learns how to balance out his personality, he is able to reach a level of *Ruach HaKodesh*. How indeed can a sensitive person use his sensitivity in a good way?

ANSWER

The most superficial way to deal with this is by learning how to connect and disconnect, in a cycle, from all outer stimuli in one’s environment. 2) By developing the soul’s power of *gevurah* (strength). 3) By entering inward, one is not “found” with the antagonist, at least for this short time period. This is the true and inner way to live, for those who are *bnei aliyah* (truly spiritual and growing people), who are able to live in two “worlds” at once – they live deep within their own inner world, and they are also able to be involved with the external world when they need to be. 4) By entering into the deepest place in the soul, which is called “*Aisan*” (might), one draws forth true power and strength, at its root. There

are two parts needed in order to connect to this deep place in the soul: By acquiring strength that comes from the soul, and by entering deeply within oneself. 5) By developing the power of the intellect, one is able to think clearly, and thereby attain a balance between his intellect and his emotions, between his mind and his heart.

When one's emotions are not simply emotional reactions, but instead they are coming from deep within the person, one can then feel the refinement of his soul. Within this sensitivity, one can absorb information that comes from the *neshamah*, and this is one of the ways to reach *Ruach HaKodesh*.

UNLOVING PARENTS

How are we to understand that which we see today, that there are many parents who don't have a love for their children, and they merely put on a show for others as if they love their children? There are even parents today who call their children by demeaning names. Is this like the generation of the Destruction when there were mothers who killed their own children, and it's just that in today's times this [indifference] is at the emotional level? Or can we say that on the other hand, we also find this problem by the gentiles? Or does this problem stem from the evil of the *yetzer hora*?

ANSWER

In the inner nature within every parent, there is a self-love which extends to include one's offspring. However, sometimes this love is more revealed, and sometimes the love is more concealed. But the love is never completely covered over.

Here is a list of several reasons which "cover over" a parent's love:

- 1) When a parents is self-centered.
- 2) When a parent is bombarded with various responsibilities, or confusion, or a lack of peace of mind.
- 3) When a parent lacks self-awareness, and a lack of awareness to the surroundings.
- 4) When the parent has an emotional blockage.
- 5) When a parent has a faulty approach concerning child education.
- 6) When a parent falls short in the area of expressing love, whether in speech or action.
- 7) When a parent doesn't attribute any importance to the very idea of expressing love.
- 8) When a parent has a generally negative perspective and focuses on other's faults. This causes a parent to overly focus on the faults of a child, and thereby the parent deprives himself/herself of deriving satisfaction from the child. This causes the parent to "close up" his or her love for the child.
- 9) When a parent has any impaired or unbalanced *middos*.
- 10) When a parent has a coarse, unrefined nature which comes from being overly materialistic.
- 11) When a parents is coarse and unrefined, as result of his or her sins.

WHAT I SHOULD BE DOING

Which factor determines what kind of actions a person needs to do that will be uniquely tailored to his own soul? Is the source of this the *neshamah*, or does it come from the physical experiences a person has went through, such as how he grew up, environmental factors, etc.?

A: Good question. Any behavior of a person can be influenced either by internal factors within the person, or from external factors in one's life. A person may act a certain way because of external factors that shaped his personality, because that is how he grew up, that is what he saw, and etc. Or, he may be acting based on internal factors, his inside. When he is acting in a way that comes from his inside, this is coming from his own *nefesh* (lower soul). The *nefesh* is rooted in a higher source, the *neshamah* (Divine soul), but the actions mainly come from the area of the soul that is called "*nefesh*", which is the root of a person's power of action. Each person needs to do actions that are in accordance with his unique personality, and accordingly, that is how he can redeem his soul [in the area of action].

...So it is possible for this [a person's main area of activity that he is meant to pursue] to be influenced either from external factors, or from internal factors. To say this in subtler terms, it may not always come from the *neshamah*, and it instead coming from the *nefesh*, because the "world of action" is rooted in the *nefesh*.

Q2: Is it possible to know whether this [the main activity that a person needs to pursue] is coming from the *nefesh*, or from the *neshamah*? Also, is there a practical difference of where it's coming from?

A: There is certainly a difference, because if a person's main area of activity in life is stemming from external/environmental factors, it is not coming from the person himself, and a main part of one's *avodah* is to reveal his own potential. Sometimes, anything a person does which is influenced by external/environment factors can have nothing to do with the person's unique essence, yet he is mainly doing this particular action. Either way, the main *avodah* of a person is to reveal his true potential. That answers the question of if there is a difference or not.

How does one know it, though? By attaining internal quiet, one can better recognize if he's doing something that suits his personality or not.

Q3: How can a person know if action is his primary power, as opposed to the powers of speech, emotion, thought, or will?

A: The more a person gets used to acting from within himself, and from internal quieting, his actions will become deeper, and then he will feel more connected to his inner being, and then he will slowly be able to identify where the main strength of his soul lies in.

Q4: Can a person fluctuate between what his primary power is, depending on his current stage on life? Can it change, based on the current circumstances in one's life?

A: Yes, it can definitely change. For example, a child's main strengths may change by the time he is a teenager or adolescent, and a teenager or adolescent may change entirely by the time he is an adult. The changes happen due to maturation in general, and they are also influenced due to various events and periods in a person's life, which move the soul in different directions. So there can be always be changes in whatever stage of life a person is up to (which are usually subtler kinds of changes), and certainly there are changes of orientation when different stages of maturation are reached, such as going from childhood to adolescence, or from adolescence to adulthood (which are more dramatic kinds of changes). But the root primary power of the person will always remain as it is.

Q5: I used to do a certain action because I thought that this action was my primary action to do in life, and then I had to give it up because I realized that it wasn't really for me to do, because it felt pressurizing for me to do, and I also that it was making me conceited. Is there a way for me to know how certain actions are meant for me to do?

A: Feeling conceited while doing a certain action is not a sign that it isn't for you to do. It is merely a sign that the action isn't being done for totally pure intentions. As for how a person can know if a certain action is meant for him to pursue or not, that is related to the above question, and the answer was that the more a person is acting from within himself and from having internal quiet, he can slowly become more connected to his inner being and then he will know better which actions he should mainly pursue or not.

Q6: What does it mean exactly to act more from within oneself? Does it mean that a person feels *sippuk* (fulfillment) when doing it? What does it mean exactly to act more from within?

A: Feeling fulfillment from what you do is the result. The more a person gets used to doing things not because of what others are thinking and not because of what they are doing, and instead he does things because he feels this is the right thing for him to do, he is acting more from within himself. This is the beginning of inner redemption. Slowly with time, as a person continues like this, he will act from a much more inner place in himself, and then he will feel great *sipuk* (fulfillment) from what he does, but that is a much later stage, and it is but the result of the entire process.

The first step, then, is to make sure that you are doing things not because of what others are thinking, what everyone else does, what is socially acceptable, what will others think about me, etc. Instead, do what you feel is right for you to do. Slowly as a person gets used to this, he enters further [into the path towards inner redemption]. Then he will be able to slowly awaken his own inner potential, and then he is closer to feeling a personal sense of fulfillment from what he does.

Q7: If a person was used to doing a certain action which he\she got satisfaction from, and then he\she gave it up because he realized it wasn't appropriate according to *halachah* to do – how can one replace that action or talent that was given up?

A: This is a very delicate question. Maybe if you can give more details of what you mean I can then understand what you are asking about.

Q8: I used to figure-skate in public and then I gave it up because I realized it was not appropriate. Perhaps I can do it in a private setting and in such a way I can give expression to this talent of mine...?

A: This is not your main talent in your life, it is just an aspect of childhood fun which is seeking to express itself. It is enjoyable for you to do, but that doesn't make it your primary action in life; it feels good for you only because it is a youthful experience which you enjoy. I am confident that this is not your main action in life.

There is a verse, "*For the inclination of man is evil from his youth*" – at first a person thinks that what he wants is who he truly is, but when he comes to know himself better and he reaches his true "I", he then realizes that those actions are not really meant for him to pursue and want, and instead he is shown what actions he really needs to pursue.



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