

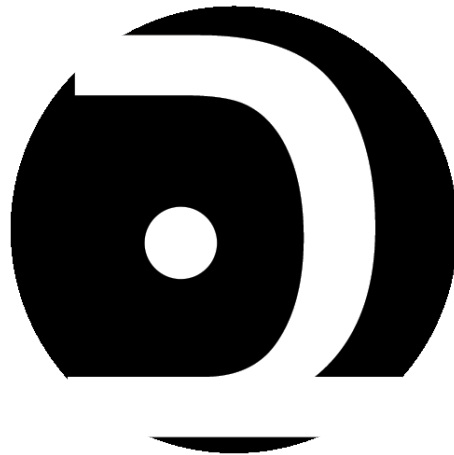
BILVAVI

**MY
HEART
ASKS**

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

PARSHAS MATOS 5782

ISSUE 251



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THE POWER OF SEEING TZITZIS

Seeing *tzitzis* is supposed to remind a person of the *mitzvos* [and prevent him from sinning] every time he sees them. I want to know then: Why seeing *tzitzis* doesn't remind me of Hashem and doing *mitzvos*?

ANSWER

This question was asked by Rav Dessler zt"l. He answered that a person is awakened and reminded of something that's part of his "world". Reb Yisrael Salanter said that a shoemaker

sees shoes everywhere he walks, and a blacksmith sees benches wherever he goes, etc. And so too, if a person is actually cognizant of his purpose in life, then when he sees tzitzis and it will remind him to do the mitzvos, because that is the world that he lives in. But if a person is living for the materialism of this world, then even if he does mitzvos, it's not what he's living for, it's not his "world", so he will not be reminded of mitzvos when he sees tzitzis. It is up to each person to decide what kind of "world" he wants to live.

WHERE CAN I LEARN ABOUT TMIMUS?

Where can I learn more about the power of *tmimus* (earnestness)? I love to think, analyze and intellectualize, so it is hard for me to just simply and earnestly connect with Hashem without all the intellectual aspects. How then can I develop my power of *tmimus*?

ANSWER

There are 2 aspects of how to uncover this ability. (1) Directly build the power of *t'mimus*. This is explained in *sefer Bilvavi*, parts 1-2. (2) Learn how to penetrate to the deep power of *lo yeda* ("not knowing"), which is a power above the plane of logical understanding. This is discussed in the sefarim of *Bilvavi* parts 8-9.

HOW EVIL IS ROOTING FOR US TO WIN

Is it possible that the *yetzer hora* (evil inclination) is really our "friend" who is challenging us and thereby pushing us all the time to enter more inward, and his hidden intentions are really good? Is it possible that the name of the S" M, short for *Samae"l*, is really a hint that the S" M is only the external layer, but at its internal layer it is really *E-L*, Keil, a messenger of the Almighty? And if that is true, then all evil temptations of the S" M are really a tool to help us, precisely by challenging us? If this is true, then even the total evil of the S" M is not in fact evil, because the S" M really has an inner intention of fulfilling Hashem's will [to challenge us and thereby compelling us to go more inward], and it is just that it dresses itself up in the form of evil. Is that the proper attitude to have towards the S" M?

ANSWER

Yes, the S" M will become transformed from *sam maves*, deadly poison, into *sam chaim*, an elixir of life.

ZERO PATIENCE

Lately I have no patience for anything, both in worldly matters and in ruchniyus. I just eat breakfast without even preparing it, eating whatever's around. When talking to my friends and even to my students whom I teach, I don't have patience to hear them talk for too long. What is this impatience coming from and how can I fix it?

ANSWER

Sometimes it comes from being stressed from the various pressures of life. It can also come from despair – either you are in despair over the general situation of our generation today, or you are in despair over yourself individually. It can also come from maturing, in which you see life from a different perspective and now you lose value for so many things which are no longer important to you. You should clarify deeply where the impatience is coming from and then you can know how to treat it.

TALKING TO HASHEM VS. CONNECTING TO TZADDIKIM

1) Rebbi Nachman of Breslev teaches that a person's *tefillos* can't go up unless he connects to a *tzaddik*, who then takes his *tefillos* and elevates them to above. Before Rebbi Nachman when this concept wasn't known, how then did everyone's *tefillos* go up? Did they always connect to a *tzaddik*...?

ANSWER

1) By talking simply to Hashem, just as one talks to his friend (as the Ramchal teaches in *Mesilas Yescharim*). This is the *temimus* and *p'shutus* (earnestness and simplicity) which elevates everything.

QUESTION

2) It seems to be that there are many different views in the sefarim of how to develop *yiras shomayim*. For example, the *Sefer HaBris*, *Mesilas Yescharim*, *Rambam*, etc. each say different ways of how to fear Hashem. Which particular approach is the Rav teaching in *sefer Bilvavi*? Also, Reb Nachman says that *yiras shomayim* isn't possible unless a person connects to a *tzaddik*, but it seems not that way from all the other *sefarim*, and also from this approach of just talking to Hashem [as taught in the Rav's sefer Bilvavi]...

ANSWER

The sefer *Bilvavi* is a combination of many different approaches together. All of the ways are true. It is not deciding between any view over the other, it is rather unifying them all together. Every *chochom* (*tzaddik*) speaks according to their soul root. Rebbi Nachman of Bresslev was speaking according to his own soul root.

QUESTION

3) I very much enjoy the Rav's "Bilvavi" and "Da Es" sefarim and I find them very helpful. But when I open a sefer *Pele Yoetz* it seems that *avodas Hashem* is much simpler – just follow certain advice, and there's no need to find an "approach" or deeply analyze the soul. Is this because Rebbi Nachman of Breslev teaches that in our avodas Hashem we just to go with *t'mimus* and *p'shitus* (simplicity and earnestness) and not try to be too smart?

ANSWER

Are there not many different approaches of *avodah* even within the teachings of Rebbi Nachman?

HOW DO WE TEACH PNIMIYUS TO CHILDREN

Clearly it's very important to teach children about *pnimiyus*, of how to connect to the internal world that's inside us. At what age do we teach this? And how?

ANSWER

The subject of *pnimiyus* has to become a natural topic of conversation in the house. Just as we speak in the house about the need for eating, sleep, and clothing, do we do need to discuss spiritual topics in our homes, such as Torah, davening, honoring parents, etc. The subject of *pnimiyus* has to be a topic that's discussed simply as if it's any other normal topic. That is in general, but more specifically, once a child is nearing maturity [almost bar mitzvah], a parents should explain to a child more about internal matters, by giving short explanations, a little here and a little there, so that these concepts will be part of his early childhood education that makes an imprint on him forever. This is something that is very, very, very important.

LEARNING SELF-DEFENSE

We've seen how the Arab population is getting wild at the border walls, burning down houses, and the police didn't succeed at doing anything to stop them. I've heard that it's only a matter of time before all the Arabs in the country will break out a civil war against our brothers here. Would it be the right thing now to teach others self-defense, even if this takes off time from our Torah learning? Would it be bittul Torah?

ANSWER

It would make sense to do this for the purpose of *hishtadlus* (making effort), and it depends on what one's level is and also on how beneficial it is for the *tzibur* (communities). But since this usually cannot be taught in a holy manner, and it also increases the sense of "*My strength and the might of my hands*" in most cases, one should therefore hold back from this and not involve himself with this at all.

TROUBLE WITH TRANSITIONING FROM AMERICA TO ISRAEL

SOME DETAILS LEFT OUT

The Rav's advice has been very helpful to us in the past. We have moved from America to Eretz Yisrael, but it has come with so many challenges.

What special gain did we get in coming here, when we have so many challenges and hardship here? It has not been an easy move at all....

I am having a harder time staying away from Internet than I did in America.

To a certain degree, I even felt more spiritual when I was in America. I was more focused on my *ruchniyus* and I felt more separated emotionally and internally from my surroundings.

My efforts to come here were also very time-consuming.

The language barrier is hard sometimes, and especially because I need to consult the Health Department a lot to be aware of all the latest developments on corona.

Going to the bank is difficult...

On one hand, I am aware that I have made great sacrifices in coming here. I was living in a spacious home in America, and now I live in a tiny apartment.

I know that I'm going through a process of cutting all my ties with my old country, America, and with my previous life. But I am trying to understand what I gained in coming here. Why was it worth it for me to give up my comfortable life in America to come here? I understand that Eretz Yisrael is one of the 3 things that are acquired with suffering, but what I have gained from Eretz Yisrael? Torah is acquired with suffering, but at least Torah has Daf HaYomi and other programs to make it easier to learn. I know that a religious person in Eretz Yisrael gets more Olam HaBa and other qualities, but I still don't feel like it was worth it to make *aliyah*. Maybe I haven't really "come" here in the true sense, because I want to go back. I know that I sacrificed so much to come here – is that all worth nothing now?

Are those in America better off than me because they're calmer and more relaxed, unlike me who is struggling how to make doctor appointments because I speak a broken Hebrew?

I see people here who came from countries where they had it much harder, who were coming from Africa and France, and they are better off here, but as for me, I came with idealism that this was the right thing to do, but now I feel like I was crazy for coming here.

I have no drive to go to shul to daven, or to have any morning schedule.

My focus here is always on how to keep to all the health laws....

So I am trying to understand: What did I gain by coming to Eretz Yisrael and having it so hard here? It would be so helpful and encouraging for me to know what I have gained in coming here, and thank you for all the true guidance.

ANSWER

Ashreichem! Ashreichem! Ashreichem! (You are praiseworthy!) Every hardship and suffering you have experienced in coming here has endless value!



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