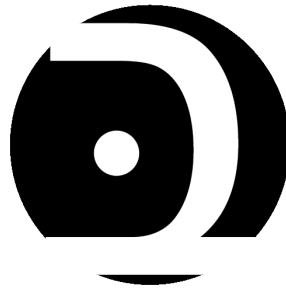


**BILVAVI**

**MY  
HEART  
ASKS**



**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**  
**LECHA LECHA 5783 · ISSUE 266**



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## WHEN CAN I BE TOTALLY SPIRITUAL?

When I follow the Rav’s path outlined in sefer *Bilvavi*, I feel like Hashem’s Light is enveloping me all the time, and sometimes I feel it within me. Also, when I concentrate on the words of davening, I feel like my soul is leaving my body, soaring up to Heaven, and I feel like I’m not on this world at all.

My question is: When do I need to be making use of the Rav’s approach taught in the sefer *Bilvavi*, and when can I allow myself to access my ability to have this outer-body experience of going up to Heaven?

### ANSWER

Being too disconnected from this world can cause problems.

Generally, most people need to spend most of their time involved with the world – following the Torah’s ways, that is – and spending only a little bit of time being divested of their physical body, such as when one is *davening* or doing *hisbodedus*.

## CHALLENGES IN GIVING UP MY SMARTPHONE

I’ve seen the Rav’s very sharp words about Internet and smartphone use so I decided to switch to a regular, kosher flip-phone. I was having a hard time trying to take care of my usual affairs with a flip-phone that couldn’t access Internet, e-mail, or links, because the people I needed to get through to only communicate through social media. I left it in my car one day to go daven, and when I came back it was stolen. I needed to do things then that required a smartphone. I needed something that could take pictures and access e-mail. I felt like I had no choice but to switch to a smartphone, because I needed a week’s worth of accessing all the services that it offers, plus I needed to deal with my insurance, the police, and other things. I won’t go on and on about all the different services I needed since then, which required a smartphone with Internet access.

Yet, in spite of all these hurdles, I am still interested in switching to a simple flip-phone that can’t access anything. I am just trying to make sense of why I am going through this. Is this all a *nisayon* for me – am I being tested by Hashem to see how serious I am about doing His will? Do I need to be stubborn and remain committed to my decision of abandoning my smartphone? Or is the opposite true, and I am being shown from Heaven that I can’t do anything about it and therefore it must mean that Hashem wants me instead to remain with my smartphone? All of these hindrances have caused me to weaken my resolve, plus, my wife is angry with me for wanting to switch my smartphone for a flip-phone....

### ANSWER

**Yes.** It is a *nisayon*. It is known from the teachings of *Raboseinu* that this is the way it must be – whenever a person wants to enter into *kedushah* (holiness), he faces challenges. This is the rule known as *kelipah kodemes l’pri*, “the shell comes before the fruit”, there will always be some challenging factor, which is like the “shell”, which will try to prevent one from getting to the “fruit” – or holiness.

## FLASH MEMORIES

Recently I am starting to experience sudden random memories that pop into my head, like a trip that I once went on and random memories from childhood. They come like a bolt of lightning. I might be in middle of doing something or I am totally relaxed, and suddenly a random memory from my past will surface. Certainly there's something in the present moment that's triggering the memory from the past. This would happen to me in the past but not as much, and usually I would be able to see why the memory got triggered. I would discover let's say that seeing a certain color of sunlight would connect me to a memory of the past where I had last seen that color, etc. But with the sudden memories which I am experiencing lately, I cannot find the connection between the present and the memory of the past that it's triggering. What does this all mean? Would it have to do with the current time-period we are in right now...?

### ANSWER

Sometimes this [sudden flashes of memories] is an indicator of internal noise that has been bottled up in you until now and which is now pouring out, just like shaking a bottle of wine or fruit juice very hard will cause all the sediments to rise up to the surface.

And in other cases, this [sudden flashes of memories] is an indicator that you have grown very much and you have attained a certain inner calmness, you have entered further into your soul, so it awakens whatever's been buried and hidden in there. You need to sort it out and purify it, meaning that you need to purify [rectify] the past.

In your case, it seems like this second aforementioned reason is what's causing your sudden memories.

## WHAT TO THINK ABOUT IN THE SHOWER OR RESTROOM

What should a person think about while he's in the shower or in the restroom? And, is it fine to do *hisbodedus* there?

### ANSWER

You may think about anything business-related or anything you are busy with which you need to take care of.

You may also think about any of the 7 secular wisdoms (i.e. mathematics, science, machinery, etc.) as long as you don't think about Torah thoughts.

You may also use this to calm yourself down.

According to some views, you are allowed to think about *emunah peshutah* there.

If you cannot get yourself to focus on anything, you can think about anything mundane.

## CHILDREN – WHEN & HOW TO DISCUSS *SHEMIRAS EINAYIM*

At what age for a child is it appropriate to speak to him about the topic of *shemiras einayim* (guarding one's eyes), and not looking at girls who are immodestly dressed (and not to stare at girls in general)?

### ANSWER

Primarily, from when a boy turns 9, begin to talk about with him in a refined, sensitive way. Later when he gets close to the age of keeping mitzvos (13) you should then explain to him clearly these *halachos*, and that the general concept that it can bring a person to *tumah* (defilement) if he isn't careful.

This all pertains to the average child, but there are some rare exceptional children [whom this will not apply to].

## SPIRITUAL BENEFITS OF NURSING A NEWBORN

From a Torah perspective, Is there a benefit of nursing a baby, both physically and spiritually? If so, what are the benefits? And for how much time should a mother nurse her baby? Is it better to use prepared formula?

### ANSWER

1) Yes, there are physical as well as spiritual benefits. It forms a deeper connection between the baby and mother. The baby is being replenished through his mother – a human being - as opposed to formula or animal derivatives or plants, which are lower-level creations. The duration of nursing is mainly for 24 months, but this is not that common today. It should

all be done within the mother's capability and only when possible. Each case is different, and it should only be done if the mother can be relaxed and happy to do it.

## A GIRL STARTING SHIDDUCHIM

*1) Does the Rav think that living a Kolel life is the ideal, l'chatchilah lifestyle to live? If yes, why, and if not, why?*

### ANSWER

There is no one way to serve Hashem. Hashem gave each person their capabilities, and if someone has the capability to learn Torah day and night, then "Praiseworthy is he, and praiseworthy is his share!"

### QUESTION

*2) Does a girl starting shidduchim (dating) have to want a boy who is going to learn in Kolel? (Because, theoretically, if a boy says he wants to learn in Kolel, it seems that he's choosing Torah more than anything else).*

### ANSWER

It is appropriate to elevate her thinking and her aspirations, and to want this with all your heart.

### QUESTION

*3) I think I want to be a teacher or go into chinuch. But I'm not sure if those are my capabilities. How can I know if a teaching position is 'for me'?*

### ANSWER

Check if you have the following abilities – Patience, love for others, understanding of another's soul [personality], having a good understanding of a subject, and being able to explain a subject.

### QUESTION

*4) I learned a lot of mussar and Chassidus. It's very important for me to find a boy who values these areas. Is that what I need to look for in the boy? Or is it enough if he just learns Gemara? I don't know if I can respect a boy who only learns Gemara and never mussar and chassidus.*

### ANSWER

It is much more ideal to look for such a boy, and at the very least, it should be recognizable on him that he values such areas.

### QUESTION

*5) How can a person become great on this world? I am a 20 year old girl and I have so much dreams for the future....*

### ANSWER

Create a clear picture of all your aspirations. Organize a practical way of how you can take small steps to begin this growth process. Then, organize a list of how you can continue the growth. However, it has to be done with awareness that life will play out differently. In spite of that reality, be clear about what the purpose to strive for is, taking the first small step to get there. Every other step will also be important, but those factors will be subject to change, depending on the different situations that will come up.

## ELEMENTS, SOUL-ROOTS, SEFIROS & COLORS

Can the Rav list the correlations between the 4 elements, the 4 soul-roots, the Sefiros, and the 4 root colors?

### ANSWER

The “right line” corresponds to the element of water, the emotive Sefirah of Chesed and active Sefirah of Netzach, and the color white.

The “middle line” corresponds to the element of wind, the emotive Sefirah of Tiferes and the active Sefirah of Yesod, and the color green.

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The “left line” corresponds to the element of fire, the emotive Sefirah of Gevurah and the active Sefirah of Hod, and the color red.

The “vessel” is the element of earth, the Sefirah of Malchus, and the color black.



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