



QUESTION What practically should a person do to gain a connection to pnimiyus today?

ANSWER After one becomes clear about the reality which we are amidst, the deep avodah in our souls that we have (which is more of a mindset rather than a practical course of action to take) is, to be clear that since This World is about to end, one is now standing and choosing: What do I truly love, what do I truly wish for? Will I direct myself to a true place, or will I continue to allow myself to follow the way the world is going, with no end in sight to this? What does a person today love, where is a person today placing his main thoughts and focus on? Where is his soul found? Certainly a person can't change his entire lifestyle at once, but a person has to slowly start placing himself in the right direction.

Another way of looking at it is that if we realize we are about to all leave This World behind, it's not an "avodah" to stop loving This World – for if a person is told he will soon leave the world, and still he continues to love the world and go on with his life as usual, then he's simply not mentally well. He knows his life is about to end, so that clarity will naturally change his heart and feelings and all that he senses.

QUESTION Today when there's so much evil, has it become easier today for a person to connect to holiness?

ANSWER Very good question. On one hand it's more difficult and at the same time it's easier. It's more difficult because there's a very strong attraction today towards the forbidden, but at the same time if one is moser nefesh [if he goes against the trend] and he disconnects from all of these things [internet devices] then it becomes easier for him to go inward into his pnimiyus. There is an equal strong pull in the other direction, towards evil, so it is more difficult. But if one tries to connect to the good today, it is easy to get there.

QUESTION What if a person lives a more external and superficial kind of life and he can't be pnimi (inward and

spiritual)? Will he have an easier time with the challenge, does he have less of a need to connect to pnimiyus (innerness) and to holiness when he feels pulled towards the tumah (impurity and bad influences) of today's times?

ANSWER To live totally in pnimiyus (one's internal world of spiritual truths) is a high level which isn't for most people. But every person must attain some strong connection to something inner. As for what to do practically in order to become connected to pnimiyus, which was the previous question, the most fundamental way which connects a person to an inner point is the power of mesirus nefesh (giving up one's will to do Hashem's will). There is mesirus nefesh of dying for Hashem and there is mesirus nefesh of living life for Hashem. Any person needs to choose for himself one point in an area of ruchniyus and give his soul towards it. The best area to work on this is in Torah learning, to be moser nefesh in exerting oneself in Torah learning. But not everyone is at this level, so for anyone else who can't do this, he should just take one point and be moser nefesh in that one area. That mesirus nefesh will be enough to connect him deeply to a reality of kedushah (holiness). Though it's not the most complete level, this bit of mesirus nefesh can connect him to the inner world so that nothing can disconnect him away from it. So it is upon every single individual – in order to enter inward – to choose just one area which he will be moser nefesh in, and that connects him to the inner world so that he won't be easily be pulled away from it.

QUESTION If one is prepared to be moser nefesh, does he need to have all of the clarity too [about why he needs to separate from media-devices]?

ANSWER Clarity is relative to each person, but in any case a person has to be clear about the basic idea, that there is a war today taking place between absolute good and absolute evil. There has never been as much absolute good revealed as in today's times (except for the time of the giving of the Torah). Though there have been many levels of good that we could tap into throughout history,

but now we are close to the light that will be revealed in the End of Days, though we don't know how long it will take. Against all of this good is a force of absolute evil that has never been here before in history. This very idea is the root that everyone on any level needs to be clear about.

QUESTION But many times a person wants to want only the spiritual and has a lot of aspirations, many times he can't fulfill it, it's all just in his inner feelings but practically he finds it too hard to be better?

ANSWER You are certainly correct. For this, let's go back to the example of a person who is told he will die soon, who naturally begins to let go of the world. Today there are foolish people who react in the opposite way - when they are told they will soon die, they go indulge in every worldly pleasure before it's all over for them. These stories happen every day in the world. These are people who live totally in superficiality. But a Torah-observant Jew, and certainly one who learns Torah (each person according to their level), if he is told that today is his last day on earth, to what will his soul feel connected to? Certainly he connects himself to kedushah when he knows that soon he will be leaving the world.

Now, practically speaking – if a person strengthens his emunah every day of waiting for Mashiach, and he truly feels that maybe today is his last day on the world – maybe – that itself will make him deeply disconnect from the entire way of living that is in today's world. It is clear that if the Chofetz Chaim or Reb Chatzkel Levenshtein would be here today, what would they say about the events that are happening in the world today? If we look at the words that they said regarding the world events in their times, certainly what they said will apply to our days.

Any person who lives inwardly in their pnimiyus today is able to grasp the following attitude: Though it's not guaranteed that Mashiach is coming today and it's not guaranteed that the war in Russia is Gog-Magog and that the world is ending – even if we would find hints and signs that it is indeed so and even if we assume it is all accurate, still we can counter to it that “Hashem wanted to make Sancheriv into Gog-Magog and Chizkiyahu into Mashiach” already a long time ago and it didn't happen in the end. All of the hints and signs, even if they are accurate, still do not mean that this is certainly it. But

it's certainly a possibility. Therefore, if we see that Hashem is running the world in a way where there's a very clear possibility that we are about to greet the end of the world – though it can certainly take more time until this happens - what happens in the meantime until then? It should become natural for us to let go of any connection that we feel to the world.

But what happens? Certainly a person knows that believing in Mashiach's arrival is one of the main principles of having emunah, but not always does he always live it with his heart. Then he sees the world continuing on with life as usual, and he tells himself that just as there were wars in the past so are there wars today, but the world certainly, or almost certainly, is going to continue on as usual. So he doesn't end up feeling the disconnection from the world.

There is an avodah for a person to remind himself of death, but people don't like to think about death. The simpler way to disconnect from life on this world than thinking about death is to think about Mashiach coming. If one is truly living in a reality that “Maybe Mashiach will come today”, and when he knows that the way he looks today is the way he will look for the rest of eternity – this will cause him to slowly let go of his connection to the world today. A person who lives all day with the feeling that “Maybe today is my last day on earth” will have a much easier time disconnecting from the world, and it will become much easier for him to connect to kedushah.

One just has to do this in the actual sense and internalize the fundamentals of emunah, and clearly feeling those truths, because a person might say all the 13 Ani Maamin's every day, he might say it thousands of times in his life, but he doesn't live it. If he will live by it though, his connection to the world will begin to weaken.

We aren't speaking here of lofty, esoteric things that are far away from us to do. We aren't speaking here of deep spiritual concepts that are hidden which require a person to know the secrets of Torah in order to decipher. We are speaking here of emunah peshutah – just, it has to be an emunah that one can also feel, in the coming of Mashiach. It is when a person feels, “Maybe today is my last day on this world.” If one has that attitude, he will begin to feel less and less connected to the world and it will become much easier for him to return, and to connect, to kedushah.

QUESTION So our avodah now is not to do anything in the actual sense but just to gain clarity?

ANSWER Acting practically and doing what we have to do is the basis of keeping halachah and keeping all of the minhagim (customs) and chumros (stringencies) that there are, but will increasing doing mitzvos enable one to practically feel that Mashiach is coming more? We can't say it's not the right thing to do, but this alone doesn't bring a person to the inner place that is needed in order to practically await Mashiach.

QUESTION A deathly ill person is able to quickly let go of everything on the world and embrace ruchniyus as being the only thing that matters to him now, but a regular person living day-to-day life needs to live normally and there are things he needs to regularly take care of...

ANSWER You are asking a good question. On one hand a person lives on the world, if he is married then has a wife and family to support, he has debts to pay, etc. Many of these things he is obligated halachically to do. Certainly if a person feels that this is his last day on the world and because of this he shirks his responsibilities, it only means that he is not perceiving the situation correctly. That is why we emphasized that although one must believe that Mashiach can certainly come today, there is also the other possibility that he might not come today. If let's say we have experts who come say that there's a 50% chance that there will be an earthquake tomorrow which can shake half of the world, how would we react?

Would a person say that it's only a 50% chance and it might not happen so we shouldn't be concerned about it? The right thing to do would be to take both possibilities into account, to take each possibility seriously. That is exactly how to relate to the situation of today. We aren't getting into percentages and odds of certain things happening, but the attitude has to be, that (a) on the chance that Mashiach doesn't come, we are still continuing all of our responsibilities tomorrow no less than how we are responsible to do them today, because maybe the world will continue the way it is and our obligations tomorrow will be exactly the same as our obligations today, but also (b) we should take the other factor into account – that it's very, very possible that this is the end. We should take both possibilities seriously, and that will be enough to help us disconnect internally in our souls from our con-

nection to the world. For when we know that everything might end today, naturally our connection that we feel to the world will wither away.

QUESTION So this is not just the attitude to have about disconnecting from internet-devices, it's really something that has to be expressed in all of our nisyonos (challenges)?

ANSWER Let us review and emphasize again, that the main point here is not the device [smartphone]. There is an inner force in the world that's pulling all of mankind beyond all limits to a connection with evil. It is just that the main way by which this inner force is being revealed is, through internet-devices. If we think that our challenge is only with internet-devices, then the way to deal with it is through takanos (guidelines) of how to successfully deal with the challenge – but we need to be dealing with the inner root of evil that's behind all of the internet-devices.

QUESTION Can it be, then, that a person has no connection whatsoever to any internet-devices and yet he still has no pnimiyus, no internal world of truths within him to be connected to, then he will also end up going lost?

ANSWER That is true, but really there's no person today who's completely disconnected from all internet-devices, because the reality doesn't allow this. The question here is how much a person will be connected to these devices – by force or because has to use them, and if he will use it himself or through a second-party. Each person has reasons in which he will need to make of use these devices at some point. It's clear to any sensible person that even if we take the most kosher cellphone, it still works through the same waves [of internet connection] and although a person isn't directly connected to it in the end he is still using it.

So we need to understand that the entire world is going in one direction, in which even the streetlight that a person needs to get to the other side of the street is also working with the same things [using internet connection]. That is exactly the difficulty. In previous generations there would be an obligation for a person to move to the deserts in order to escape a bad environment, and there was a possibility of building one's own private life,

like being in an Ark of Noach, where one could build a life of kedushah. But today this wouldn't even help. The electricity for the Beis Midrash runs through internet connection, etc. Of course, a person enjoying electricity today isn't being affected from the Internet nearly as one who is sitting in front of a computer [on the internet], but still, it is impossible for a person to have a complete disconnection from it.

The only way would be to leave this world entirely, to live alone in a desert somewhere so that one doesn't have to be involved with anything that will require him to use Internet connection, and of course that is not feasible.

A person has to live on this world normally and with his family, and we never found any Gedolim who divorced their wives so that they could run away to the desert and not have to deal with the bad environment of the world. It's obviously not what Hashem wants. Hashem wants us to live in the reality of the world today, but within that we need to disconnect as much as possible. The more one is connected to the tide of kedushah, the less he will be influenced by the world today.

QUESTION But even if one would have nothing to do with internet-devices and he would live in the desert, if he has no pnimiyus that he's connected with, he won't be able to survive anyway, so the evil in the world today isn't limited to internet-devices.

ANSWER True. The waves are beamed all over the world, so it doesn't matter if there's a device or not to house it, and even a person going to the desert is still within the grasp of these waves. The same technology that's photographing everything in the world is photographing him too.

QUESTION So is all evil today coming through internet-devices, or can evil affect people today even without internet-devices?

ANSWER The true answer to this is that the power of evil can affect people even without having any devices to house it. Evil is also being clothed in these devices today, but it stands on its own... Certainly a person who's using it is being much more affected than one who merely gets some bad influence from it. Yet a person can be sitting in

the desert far away from these devices, and his mind can still be affected by the world today, since he will always be affected to some extent by it - unless he can quickly return afterwards to a deep connection to his pnimiyus.

QUESTION Just like any shefa (Heavenly bestowal) from kedushah (holiness) needs something to contain it in order for it to take effect, does tumah (evil, impurity) also need a container in order for it to become actualized?

ANSWER Kedushah needs something to contain it so that it remains permanent, but now we live in a world where all of the air is filled with impurity. Just like there is the holy air of Eretz Yisrael which makes people wiser, so is there a concept of impure air, such as today when the entire air of the world is filled with impurity - even before these devices came.

But the devices enable the impurity to be settled somewhere permanently and where it can be activated. But the truth is that even if there would be no internet devices today, the air of the world is filled with a certain impurity, and even if a person is thousands of miles up in the sky he is affected by it, that is the reality.

QUESTION So in the end of the day, internet-devices are the tools today which are enabling the tumah (impurity) of the world.

ANSWER That is true, and that is why on one hand we have an avodah to separate from these devices as much as we can so that we never have to use them. But we also have to understand that these devices are merely devices, and there is an evil behind it which is what we mainly need to be dealing with.

On one hand it's clear that we need to actively deal with the challenge of these devices by staying away from them, but we also have to realize that it's not the internet-devices that are the entire problem here, rather it's that there's a powerful evil behind it which just so happens to be clothed in these devices.

QUESTION So there is an external avodah here as well as an internal avodah here to do.

ANSWER Very good - exactly so.