

LISTEN TO BILVAVI ON KOL HALASHON ISRAEL 073.295.1245 USA 718.521.5231 (2>4>12)

PRIORITIZING MY TALENTS & INTERESTS

QUESTION I tend to be involved with many different subjects that interest me. I am good at all of them. In the musical industry, I am good at singing. I can also advise people on their health. I can learn well as an avreich Kolel. I can help families sort out their feuds and 'put out the fire'. How can I know if I should continue to be involved with all these different interests? What should I be focusing on? Which of these should I leave on the side? I enjoy all of these things, but I feel scattered between all my many different interests. I am the same when it comes to my learning. I'd rather take many different sefarim and learn a little bit of each of them, rather than focus on one sefer at a time. And when it comes to my musical interests, I love to sing in many different styles and in different languages. I don't know how I can feel my main shelichus (*unique task*) that I was meant to fulfill on this world. What can I do to give a nachas ruach to Hashem? Please help me and guide me. Thanks.

ANSWER There are two different parts of our soul, a power of individuality and a power of collectiveness. Our individuality is called the tribe of "Yehudah" within the soul, for Yehudah's name comes from the four-letter name of Hashem [which, on an individual level, is the root of the essence of one's unique soul]. The other power in our soul, "collectiveness", is called the tribe of "Don" in the soul – the tribe Don was called the one who "collects all the camps", representing a power to integrate everything into one unit.

Therefore, each person needs to clarify these two powers in his soul. Concerning your "individuality" aspect, you should write down a paper all your different possible talents, such as music, giving health advice, etc. After that, make a list of these talents in order of primacy: Your best talent, your second-to-best talent, etc. Also, write down your interests in order of primacy: The thing that interests you the most, the thing that interests you second-to-most, etc. This gives you a "map" of

your abilities. That all refers to the "individuality" of your soul. The result of this will be that you will be able to connect mainly to your primary talent, both in how much you are using it as well as in the quality of how you are using it. You should do all of this with the awareness that you are involving yourself in the "individuality" aspect of your soul.

Concerning your "collective" aspect, you should clarify what your collective task is, just as you did regarding your "individuality" aspect, and you should set aside a considerable amount of time, as necessary, to get in touch with your "collective" aspect. You should do this with the awareness that you are involving yourself with your "collective" aspect. Understandably, even when it comes to your "collective" aspect, you should also make a list of your collective tasks in order of priority, based on your personal interests.

WHAT EXACTLY IS THE BILVAVI SEFER ABOUT?

QUESTION 1) Who is the "Bilvavi" sefer especially catering to?

ANSWER 1) It is a sefer that is speaking to the simple, earnest part of every Jew's soul. It is meant to fulfill the words of the prophet Chavakuk who said that the entire Torah can be summed up in one point: "A righteous person lives by his emunah (*faith in G-d*)."

QUESTION 2) What type of audience did the Rav deliver the classes to upon which the sefer is based on? It is targeting kolel people or working people?

ANSWER 2) It is meant for all of Klal Yisrael to learn and it is not targeting any specific group or community of Jews.

QUESTION 3) Also, what is unique about this sefer which isn't included in sefer Mesillas Yesharim?

ANSWER 3) Sefer Mesillas Yesharim is based on ten steps of growth that are rooted in the Ten Expressions which Hashem

created the world with, which span the entire gamut of the soul. The sefer Bilvavi, in contrast to this, is addressing the simple, earnest point of a Jew's soul.

CONNECTING TO THE BAAL SHEM TOV'S PATH

QUESTION The Rav explained in a response that the Baal Shem Tov's path in avodas Hashem was an approach of the element of "water", the element that is used for attaching oneself to Hashem due to the pleasure and bliss of being pulled after a love for Hashem as well as a love for all Jews. Being that the Baal Shem Tov founded Chassidus, it follows then that the entire Chassidus is an approach based on the element of water. Will this mean that Chassidus is only for someone whose primary element is water? This is hard to understand, because we know that ultimately all of Klal Yisrael will need to gain from the Baal Shem Tov's path which is the "light of Mashiach", and we know that Mashiach told the Baal Shem Tov that he will only come when the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov are disseminated throughout the rest of the world.

ANSWER [Although the Baal Shem Tov's path was based on the element of water which was the Baal Shem Tov's primary soul element], the Baal Shem Tov's path was based on a higher root than the standard element of water. It was an element of water [manifested as love, attachment, pleasure and connection to Hashem and to the Jewish people] which came from a spiritual source, called ayin.

The main avodah of a person is to connect to the sphere of ayin [the completely spiritual element, usually identified as emunah] which is above the 4 elements, and from that one can increase the strength of his primary element. Through that, one becomes connected to the root of the spiritual illumination of a particular approach in avodas Hashem. By extension, each person can connect to it based on his particular soul root and particular mission in life.

In particular, in order for a person to connect himself to the Baal Shem Tov's path, one should connect to his personal element of water. However, although one can connect himself to any path of avodas Hashem, this still does not mean that the path is a reflection of his primary soul element.

MASHIACH IN OUR AVODAS HASHEM

QUESTION Lately I have lost my inspiration when it comes to davening. I don't think that my davening has any power. I have been learning sefarim where I felt connected to the teachings of certain tzaddikim of the past, but now I feel that I have just become conceited and brazen by thinking that I have any connection to these tzaddikim and these teachings.

It seems that in earlier generations, people became holier by connecting to tzaddikim and their teachings. Does this also need to be done in our times, in order to have true aliyah (*spiritual growth*)?

ANSWER Our Sages teach that there two beginning points to start from: Keser and Chochmah. When one starts with Keser, it is by beginning from a simple bond with HaKadosh Baruch Hu without using any intermediaries. This is also known as the "illumination of Mashiach ben Dovid". The other beginning point is Chochmah. When one begins with Chochmah, he connects to HaKadosh Baruch Hu through the wisdom of tzaddikim.

This is the "illumination of Mashiach ben Yosef". Every person needs both of these aspects in his avodas Hashem – but in the final generations, the main way of connecting to Hashem is through the illumination of Mashiach ben Dovid [by starting from Keser, which is to form a simple, earnest bond with Hashem].



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