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WEEKLY PARSHA
ARCHIVE Q&A

BS"D #330

בלבבי
משכן
אבנה

BILVAVI

BESHALACH 5784

What is a song? Every song takes opposite musical notes and sounds and harmonizes them together.

In a marriage, there is the voice of the husband and the wife, the *chosson* and the *kallah*, and they are opposites, and when they are not worthy, the sounds do not harmonize and there is instead the sound of war in their home. But if the husband and wife are worthy, their different voices come together and harmonize into the sound of a melody, a *Niggun*.

Why is a person pulled after a *Niggun*? Any person knows what it's like to be pulled after a sweet melody. What is the secret to this? Simply it's because a sweet song allows us to leave behind the painful reality of life which is filled with struggles, challenges, oppositions – everyone has their own personal “wars” they are fighting. Sometimes you can walk by a house and you hear sounds of war coming from the house. But when we hear a sweet sounding melody, our soul immediately feels a yearning for all problems to become transformed into a melody, *Niggun*, a song, a *Shirah*.

The Torah is called a *Shirah*, a song: “And write for you this song”, All of *Shas* is filled with questions and contradictions that the *Gemara* asks, but when we reach the inner level all of these contradictions are turned into song. The “war of Torah” becomes turned into the Song that is the Torah. It is there that all our souls yearn for. We want all of the wars to become turned into a song.

When a person is at the level of Song, he can feel how there are no wars in the worlds, everything is joy, everything is calm and serene. A song is where we feel that there are no wars in the world. When a person sings a song and connects to the song, he leaves the world

of wars and difficulties and opposition and it all becomes turned into one big song.

The root of all the songs in the Torah is the song of *Moshe Rabbeinu*, *Az Yashir*, which was sung at a time of war when they were leaving Egypt, when they had been opposed and challenged by Egypt and now that they had won, it all became turned into a song. Not only did it become a song from now on but even the sounds of their pain from Egypt had now turned into sounds of song. *Chazal* said that Moshe's song was about the future. That is when all the sounds of pain that we have heard throughout all of history, all of the cries of agony and cries of war, will all join together to become turned into a reality of Song. It will be the joyous sounds of the *Chosson* and His *Kallah* [*Hashem* and the Jewish people]. The sound of the *Chosson* and *Kallah* are the sound of those joining together, everything in Creation becoming turned into one sound. This will be the sound of the *Shirah*, the Song.

The highest level of *Shirah* that we have ever known of was in the *Beis HaMikdash* when the *Leviim* would sing their *Shirah*. But when *Mashiach* comes in our times, all the sounds of the world, all of the agonizing sounds of pain that each of us has groaned, all of these cries and groans will become transformed into the *Shirah*.

This is called the *Geulah*, in which the entire world becomes transformed into the Song.

AT THE KUMZITZ WITH THE RAV IN WOODMERE SIVAN 5783

WHAT IS A GOOD NIGGUN TO LISTEN TO?

Question:

What is considered a good niggun to listen to?

Answer:

Any niggun that was composed by a tzaddik from generations ago. Even if it is sung by someone from today, as long as it was composed by a tzaddik, it's better to listen to. Even better than this is to listen to a tzaddik singing a song; it's hard to find such a tape, but it is available.

The older the music is, the closer to holiness it is. In more recent times, the niggunim of Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro zt"l are considered to be the best songs to listen to. Rav Wolbe zt"l said that these songs are extremely holy. There is no music on it, however, just words. You can hear them on Kol HaLashon. You can also buy the songs of Rav Baruch Ber Levovitz zt"l in the sefarim stores which are from many years ago. These are very holy niggunim.

HOW TO REACH AYIN

QUESTION:

In "Getting To Know Your Soul" the Rav explains that a person can identify his main element by accessing the spiritual element of "ayin" (*nothingness*) in the soul, which reached through inner silence in the soul. Since this is a book that is geared towards most people (*as opposed to the Rav's other sefarim which describe how to reach "ayin", such as in "Bilvavi" Part 7 and sefer Da Es Nishmatecha*), I want to know: What is the simplest way which is attainable for most people, to reach the place of "ayin" in the soul? I was thinking that the way to reach it is through listening to a niggun that calms the soul, or by smelling something pleasant or by tasting something pleasant, as the Rav describes in the "Inner Silence" series. But I was wondering if these ways will

be enough to reach “ayin”, being that “ayin” is a very deep point in the soul.

ANSWER:

The deeper of an inner silence that one reaches in the soul, to that extent, will one touch upon the point of “ayin” in the soul. That is why listening to a calming niggun or smelling something pleasant can possibly help a person reach inner silence in the soul.

However, usually, if a person hasn't yet given a balance to his worst character trait and he hasn't yet calmed his desires, he will not be able to reach a deep and subtle inner silence, and thus he won't be able to penetrate into the place of “ayin” in the soul.

CALMING THE SOUL

QUESTION :

In the series on Hisbodedus, the Rav recommends several ways to calm the soul, mainly through smelling an item of a mitzvah such as besamim, and deep breathing, and hearing a deep niggun from a pure source. Is this advice only an avodah to begin Hisbodedus, or may it be practiced outside of Hisbodedus as well, such as when a person simply wants to calm his soul from any anxiety or pain that comes from the external aspects of life? Or is this dangerous, since it may cause a person to run away into a fantasy? Especially music, because I find that when I listen to music, I feel as if I am running away from reality and entering into fantasy.

ANSWER :

These methods can be used [outside of hisbodedus], but make sure that you stay balanced between reality and fantasy.

QUESTION :

I have seen that it is brought in the name of the Raava”d that a person can appease his evil inclination and physical desires through three different ways

of calming the body – either through listening to a pleasant tune, or through immersing the body in hot water, or through smelling something deeply that is pleasantly scented. Through this, the body is calmed. Does this calm only the animal level of the soul, or does it need to be practiced together with a more spiritual kind of avodah ? Also, in relation to the above question, is this advice of the Raava”d meant to be practiced every day as well, so that one should deliberately accustom himself to these practices, in order that he will be saved from desires for the forbidden? Or is the advice of the Raava”d only meant to be employed when a person feels that his physical desires are overpowering him?

ANSWER :

It is a beginning for spiritual avodah. Every time a person feels that his soul is in pain or weighing upon him, and the like, he may employ such methods. However one must be careful not to become pulled after the body when it is more than necessary.

QUESTION :

According to one the above methods of the Raava”d, that bathing the body in hot water is helpful to the soul (*I assume that this means that it calms the animal level of the soul*), can this also be done before hisbodedus, as a beginning stage for hisbodedus, which is to calm the senses? Similarly, is immersing in a hot mikveh a way to calm the soul and prepare properly for hisbodedus?

ANSWER:

Yes.

WHAT DOES THE RAV DO TO CALM DOWN?

QUESTION:

Does the Rav ever make use of any external methods in order to attain

calmness and be in a more meditative state? Does the Rav ever listen to music or songs in order to become calm, and if yes, what type of music or songs does the Rav listen to? Does the Rav eat certain kinds of food or drink hot coffee in order to get calm?

ANSWER:

This is a difficult question to answer. You are asking about methods to serve Hashem “from below to above”, by calming down and awakening the soul. However, I mainly do not make use of these methods, because I prefer to go “from above to below.”

I use music in order to calm my mind and body, such as by listening to the old, classical songs of Chabad. I also take hot coffee and the like in order to calm down the basic emotional needs of the soul, and to relax the body in general. Any of the other external methods which I also make use of are mentioned at length in *Da Es Nishmatecha (Torah Way To Enlightenment)* and also in the *Hisbodedus (Inner Silence)* series. These methods are not my actual way of serving Hashem, they are just external advice that I use every so often when I feel the need for it – mainly to attain calmness.

“CHAREIDI” JEWISH MUSIC

Question:

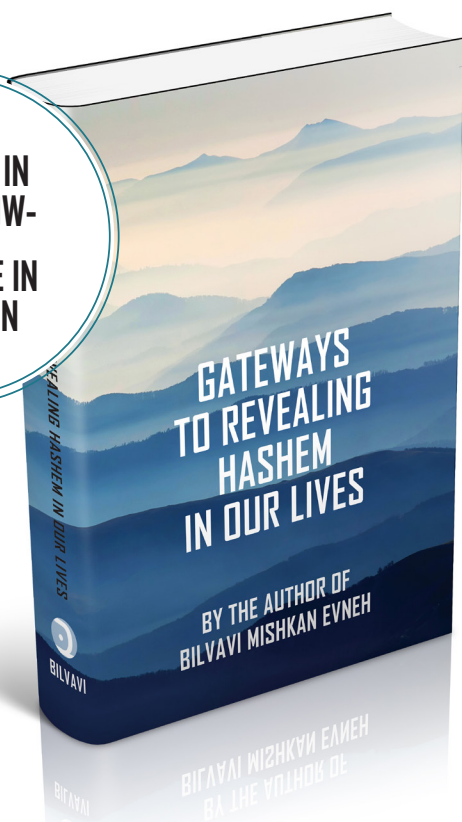
Is most of the “Chareidi” Jewish music today destructive to the inner world of the soul, and should I cease my desires to listen and such music and songs, or should I take it easy when it comes to this because it will just feel pressurized on my soul if I give it up?

Answer:

Try to connect to songs which are more subtle and refined, precisely from the range available in this generation. It should be done pleasantly, and not in a pressurized manner.

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This *sefer* is a collection of three gateways to revealing Hashem in our lives:

Gateway to Yourself
Gateway to Others
Gateway to Hashem's Glory

A section of Q&A has been added on the topics of relationships, *avodas* Hashem, finding guidance and the media.

It is our hope that all those who read this book will be able to use it as a tool to get through the “end of days” period we are in, and to truly grow and come closer to Hashem as we prepare for the times of Moshiach, when awareness of His Presence will fill the world.

575 PAGES