



SIXTH  
DRAFT

# BILVAVI

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# CORONA

Q & A from the author of *Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh*

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***\*NEW FROM 04/26/2020***

***\*\* NEW FROM 05/3/2020***

***\*\*\*NEW FROM 05/22/2020***

***\*\*\*\*NEW FROM 06/13/2020***

***\*\*\*\*\*NEW FROM 07/15/2020***

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# WHAT IS HASHEM'S MESSAGE WITH THE CORONAVIRUS?

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## *How Should A Jew View Corona?*

### Q

Recently there has been an epidemic outbreak in China called corona virus which is quickly spreading and which has already killed thousands of people in China. How should a Jew view this? Are we supposed to be happy that “the destruction of the wicked brings joy”, as it says in *Mishlei*, or should we look at it as “Suffering does not come to the world only for the sake of *Klal Yisrael*”, meaning that we need to strengthen ourselves in some area. And if we do need to strengthen ourselves in some area, what should it be?

### A

Since this is not primarily killing sinners, we cannot apply the rule of the destruction of the wicked brings joy. Rather, it is because suffering comes to the world only for the sake of Yisrael. In the past, when an epidemic would spread, the effects were smaller. Diseases only spread to a village or a city or to any of our country. But in our times, the entire world has turned into one small village where something can spread very quickly throughout the entire world.

This is the first major epidemic since the time in the world has become entirely turned into a small village, where everyone is mingled with each other, and therefore this epidemic is unique. It is in the category of *keter d'kelipah* (the manifestation of the highest spiritual point, “*keter*”, on the side of devastation).

It is called corona, which in Hebrew is spelled *kar na*, a combination of the words *kor* and the letters *hei* and *nun*. The word *kor* means cold, which implies distance, as opposed heat which implies connection. The Hebrew letters *hei* and *nun* are both letters that have no companion letters, as opposed to all other letters of the Hebrew alphabet which each have a companion letter, a taught regarding the verse they are a nation which dwell alone, which has the letters *hei* and *nun*.

This corona virus is therefore a deep revelation at the power of connection found in the world today. It is not a connection of warmth, but a cold kind of connection, the coldness that represents the nation of Amalek, like it says in the *pasuk* by Amalek, “they met you along the way”, the words “they met” is *asher korcha*, from the word *kor*, cold. This is because the primary form of connection in the world today is not face to face but back to back. By sending messages and information to people, through various forms of social media, that is the main level of the generation today, where people all share a cold kind of connection with each other.

The root of repairing this epidemic of corona virus is to become connected with people who are good and pure. Each person on their own level should do this. Also included in this is to have warm connection with other people, with people with whom it is appropriate to connect with.

This is also the secret of Moshiach. The word *Moshiach* contains the Hebrew letters *yud* and *ches*, which is an acronym, for *yeish cham*, which means “there is warmth”.

## *Corona – The Kor/Cold Which Came From Cold Relationships of Media Communication*

### Q

What did the Rav mean in the recent response about corona virus that it is coming because of all of the cold connections today that people have to each other, and how is that worse than sin itself? How can it be worse than sinning?

### A

I will now go more into the root of the matter this time, and I will elaborate a bit with *siyata d'shmaya*. Hashem has created His world with an inner layer and an outer layer to everything. The inner layer to everything is always the spiritual light, the *ohr* which is contained in it, and this corresponds to the soul, to the *neshamah*. The outer layer within everything is the container that is within everything, and that corresponds to the body. In other words, there is a soul and there is a body to everything in the creation.

There are two different ways of internal connection. There is a connection that one has to himself, which is called self-love, loving oneself, and this is a “cold” kind of connection. When two beings come together, there is warmth. There is a connection of warmth.

Where there is an internal connection, when one connects to himself, that is called cold connection. When a person is inwardly connected to himself, this is using the power of cold for *kedushah*, which is the holy use of the power of coldness. This is not an egoistic kind of self-love. It is a holy kind of self-love and it comes from using the power of cold for *kedushah*.

However, when this power becomes twisted by the side of evil, it is the power of Amalek, who has the power of evil coldness. This causes people to connect with people in a cold manner.



There is also an evil way to use the power of heat, the power of warmth, which is when a person becomes passionate and heated when he is on his way to committing a sin, such as forbidden relations. When a person only has a superficial connection to himself, this is the evil force of heat.

And when a person has an egoistic self-love to himself, this is the evil use of the power of cold. Being cold is not a sin. But it is the root of all sins because it prevents a person from doing mitzvahs and it causes a person to commit any sin. When a person is cold and he is indifferent to *ruchniyus*, that is the power of Amalek, the power to be cold and indifferent towards the spiritual and just as a person's *middos* are the inner roots behind his *mitzvos* and his Torah learning, so is heat and warmth a root to all of one's connections that one has.

## *Why Would Cold Relationships Make People Deserving Of Death?*

Q

Why would this cause people to be deserving of death? Is it similar to the situation of the second *Bais HaMikdash* when there was rampant *sinas chinam*, baseless hatred? Or when the three cardinal sins were being committed? Or is this something new which has developed in our generation which is all considered like one small village connected together?

A

When a person is connected to coldness itself, it is death. It is a connection to the very concept of death because a living person is warm whereas a dead person is cold. This corona virus, which is being caused by cold relationships between people, is a new issue which has developed in our generation. We will now elaborate on this, with *siyata d'shmaya*.

The three cardinal sins, the sins of murder, illicit relations, and idol worship, are the root of all sins. However these three root sins are essentially getting their power from the sin of *sinas chinam*, baseless hatred. In this generation, the generation of the *ikvesa demeshicha*, the generation directly preceding Moshiach's arrival, the inner root of *sinas chinam* is being revealed. And the very root of *sinas chinam*, the very root of baseless hatred, is the power of *pirud*, disparity, separation. It is a world of disparity that is being revealed in our times. By the period of the second *Bais HaMikdash*, when *sinas chinam* was rampant, it was more of a chance kind of a disparity. It was a kind of a disparity where people were still able to bond with each other, in spite of the disparity. It countered the *Chayah* level of the soul. In the era of the first *Bais HaMikdash*, the presence of three cardinal

sins corresponded to the *nefesh*, *ruach*, and *neshamah* levels of the soul. But in today's generation, the disparity of the world today, is the evil force which counters the *yechidah* level of the soul, the highest level of the soul. The *yechidah* level of the soul corresponds to the holy power of coldness, which is essentially the power of a person to become alone and in solitude with Hashem. In the side of evil, this power is countered by the power of evil coldness, the power of disparity, the power of Amalek.

*Yechidah*, the soul's power to be cold, to become alone and attached to Hashem, is really the holy manifestation of *keter* (lit. crown). On the side of devastation, it is being countered by the epidemic called the corona, which is really the manifestation of *keter* on the side of evil.

We need to understand very well that until the year of 5779, we still had another 221 years left until the end of our world which is will be at the year 6,000. From this year onward, with 5780, the 221 years have now been shortened. The number 221 is equal to the word *erech*, which hints to the middah of Hashem that is called *maarech apei*, when Hashem slows down His anger. And now that the 221 years have been shortened, it has also minimized on some level Hashem's conduct of slowing his anger. Therefore, from this year onward, the entire world is going through changes, especially in *Eretz Yisrael*, and things will not become totally calm until the coming of Moshiach.

According to the non-Jewish calendar, the year is 2020, which is the number 20 twice. The number 20 is equal in *gematria* to the word *keter*. This is the revelation that is taking place now, the *keter d'keter*, the innermost level of the *keter*, which is the word *keter* twice, equal to 20 and 20, which is a hint to the non-Jewish year of 2020.

Therefore, a state of solitude has come into the world, an impaired kind of being alone, where nobody can come within the space of another person. The private space of a person corresponds to the *yechidah* level of the soul, and right now nobody is allowed to interfere with another person's space. It is also causing people to remain secluded in their homes. And as it is known, the *nefesh* level of the soul is in the liver, the *ruach* is in the heart, and the *neshamah* is in the brain, the *chaya* is on the person's clothing and the *yechidah* is in the house. Therefore one is to become secluded in the house due now, to the *yechidah* revelation which is taking place in the world today.

Understand that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* has now erased any connection to *tumah*, to all of the restaurants, to all of the mingling, all of the vacations and all of the entire world of falsity that has been here for the last couple of years.

However, just as when we left Egypt, we remained with the idol that was called *Baal Tzefon*, the root of all idols, so too are we remaining now with the very innermost level of *tumah*, the very core of the *shaar hanun d'tumah* (the 50<sup>th</sup> level of defilement), which is otherwise known as the media, the internet. Now people are secluded in their homes but their entire connection to the world is still being enabled through the media and the internet, which is the *shaar hanun d'tumah*, the

internet. It is the most difficult *kelipah* which has not yet been shattered. The innermost gate of this *shaar hanun d'tumah*, the *keter d'keter* on the side of evil, is dominant now without any restraint.

The way to get rid of this *kelipah* is by shining the light of Moshiach, which is found with us already now. This is the light of the *keter d'keter* on the side of *kedushah*. When the media will disappear, Moshiach will come. But until Moshiach comes, the innermost level of the *shaar hanun d'tumah* dominates in the world and it contains a mixture of *kedushah* and *tumah*, from the highest level of *kedushah* all the way down to the lowest level of *tumah*. That is why in this generation everything has become mixed and confused together in a disturbing way, which our logic cannot comprehend. This will not change until the coming of Moshiach.

## *Is Corona From Hashem Or From The Satan?*

Q

Is all that's going on today from Hashem, or can we say it's coming from the *Sitra Achra* (Other Side)? Hashem has closed all the shuls and *batei midrash*, so how should we view this? What does Hashem want from us?

A

Everything in Creation is all being run with the *hashgachah* (Providence) of Hashem. Sometimes the *hashgachah* can be openly seen as Hashem's Divine *hashgachah*, and sometimes it is "clothed" by the *Sitra Achra* (the Other Side) which conceals Hashem's *hashgachah*. The situation in the world now coronavirus looks totally like the *Sitra Achra*, but that is only the "garment" that clothes Hashem's Divine Providence. Due to the inner spiritual light that is shining strongly now, it can be all be clearly seen as the light of Hashem. One who gets past the *tumah* of the *Erev Rav* (Mixed Multitude) today can see how it is all the light of Hashem.

## *Why Did Hashem Close The Yeshivos & Kollelim?*

Q

Hashem has closed down the yeshivos and the *kollelim*. Does this mean that Hashem is not happy with yeshivos and *kollelim* today? And if that is true, what is Hashem's complaint on them?

## A

There is certainly a part that yeshivos and *kolellim* need to fix, and that is (simply speaking) that they need to return to the way that the yeshivos of the generation before the destruction of European world of Torah were like. On a general level, the world of yeshivos needs to close themselves off completely from all of the *tumah* that envelopes the generation today, and to instead access Hashem's light which is shining strongly in this generation.

## *\*Serving Hashem During Coronavirus*

## Q

Based on the Rav's recent responses about the coronavirus epidemic, I am understanding that we have entered into a new stage which will continue until Mashiach comes. I have several questions.

During this period that we're in, does a person need to align his *avodas Hashem* with the steps that the Rav explains in *sefer Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh* Parts 1 and 2? Or, should a person serve Hashem now based on what the Rav explains in *sefer Da Es Atzmecha* (Getting To Know Your Self)? Or is it better now to focus on one point that is more inclusive, such as the topic of *emunah*, for example by learning about the *segulah* of *Ain Od Milvado* in the *sefer Nefesh HaChaim*?

Does a person during this period need to work specifically on acquiring *emunah*, or can a person continue to do the inner work described in *sefer Da Es Atzmecha*?

When it comes to Torah learning now, does a person need to focus on a certain kind of learning?

Is there anything new that a person needs to incorporate now into his inner *avodas Hashem* during this period? Or is each person supposed to just continue doing his respective inner work?

What is the advice for a person to go through the current period in the right way that is desirable to Hashem?

The Rav has said that the Internet is the "50<sup>th</sup> level of *tumah*." What should a person do if he needs the Internet for work purposes? Especially now that most of work is being done from home and it requires Internet. Is the Rav saying that people need to disconnect from the Internet even if they need it for work now? And if they do need to, what can they do about this?

## A

1) The period which we are in now, if we are *zoche*, will be short. But if *chas v'shalom* we are not *zoche*, it will go on for a long time, for days, or weeks, or months, or even years. Even if the epidemic of coronavirus goes away, the very *mabus* (essence) of the period which we are in now will continue. The coronavirus is only the outer revelation of something deeper behind it. Therefore, the current period which we have entered now is not dependent at all on the presence of the coronavirus.

Therefore, a person needs to continue doing his respective inner work, because the period we are in can go on for a long time and therefore there can be plenty of time for each person to do all of his respective and personal inner work.

2) A person should make sure that every day he has time to work on his *emunah*, to set aside time each day to instill the fundamentals of *emunah* in his heart, to work on acquiring *emunah peshutah* [simple, unquestioning faith that G-d is in control and that everything He does is good]. One should begin to instill *emunah* in himself, from the highest level of *emunah* which is *Ain Od Milvado*, all the way down to the lowest levels of *emunah*, such as believing that everything Hashem does is measure-for-measure, and that there is a concept of reward and punishment, etc.

3) One should become connected to the depth of Torah now on his own level and according to his capabilities.

4) The new inner *avodah* which the current period entails is that there is a need now for everyone to work on having both palpable *emunah*, to know the reality of Hashem in our mind and to also feel the reality of Hashem in our hearts, and to connect as deeply as possible to this belief, on our own level – as well as by having total, unquestioning faith (*peshitus*) in Hashem. This is because in the current time period, the deepest spiritual light is shining: the simple, undifferentiated Infinite Light of Hashem (the *ohr EinSof hapashut, b'tachlis hapeshitus*). This concept is explained about very well by Rebbi Aharon of Strotcheleh, a talmid of the Baal HaTanya, whose sefer is called *Shaar HaYichud V'HaEmunah* and *sefer Shaarei HaAvodah*.

5) One should connect himself to the deepest inner point that is within his level, and to live in utter simplicity with Him, by thinking of Him simply and earnestly and by talking with Him simply and earnestly, to have conversations with Hashem throughout the day, about his personal matters, each person at his own level. One also needs to become connected with the individuality within him, as Chazal teach, “Therefore, man was created individual.”

6) This tool [the internet] has destroyed the generation. It has burned up many *neshamos* of *Klal Yisrael* which have all gone lost because of it. You should run from it as you would from a fire, and even more.

## *Self-Improvement Now*

### Q

The Rav has said that there are two parts for us to improve upon at this time, to connect to people who are good and pure and to attain connection of warmth with other people. Why isn't it enough to just have warm connection with people? Won't this alone fix all of the cold connections that people had with others? Also why do we need to physically befriend people who are pure and good.

### A

On one hand, a person needs to build warm relationships with other people to counter all of the cold relationships that there are in the world. This is the holy use of the power of warmth. But that is not the main part that we need right now. The main thing we need right now is to find our power of holy coldness, which is essentially the *yechidah* level of our soul, and that is the main revelation taking place now. This is achieved by becoming attached and integrated with Hashem, with the belief and the trust that there is no one in control except for Hashem.

We need to review the *segulah* of the *Nefesh HaChaim* (3:12) that when a person believes that no one has any control other than Hashem, he is protected from all harm. This is the true and the only way to pass through this period, where the *kelipah* of the *shaar hanun d'tumah* has become physically manifest throughout the world.

Therefore, a person needs to attach his soul to Hashem with love and with fondness for Hashem, and to feel a sense of *bittul*, nullified to Hashem. Through this a person can live a life of delighting in Hashem and in His Torah. This is the general way of living a life of truth but all the more so, in this generation, and especially in the current period, which we are in now.

It is our hope and our *tefillah* that the *kelipah* known as the *shaar hanun d'tumah*, which is the media, should become shattered, and that Moshiach should become revealed now so that he can illuminate the entire world with the *yichud* that will reveal, the individuality of Hashem, because there is nothing besides for Hashem: *Ein od Milvado, efes Zuluso*, "There is nothing besides for Hashem, there is absolutely no other than Him."

## *Is The World Purer Now?*

Q

Has the world become a purer place now?

A

There are two sides to the coin now. On one hand, Hashem has put an end to the “49 gates of impurity” by closing everything down, all of the eateries, hotels, entertainment outlets, etc. This has made it easy for everyone to cut off from all of this. On the other hand, the *shaar hanun d'tumah* (the 50<sup>th</sup> gate of impurity) has still remained, and it only has gotten stronger, because people are in their houses now and surfing the internet all day, getting all of their *chiyus* (vitality in life) from the internet and from media. On one hand, we are very happy that so much evil has gone away from the world now, but on the other hand, we can be very pained and troubled that the strongest kind of evil, the great *tumah* which is the media and internet, has only gotten stronger. However, in spite of this, there is also the light of Hashem shining strongly now to counter all of this.

## *The Difference Between The Holocaust & Now*

Q

What is the difference between the Holocaust, which we arose afterwards from, with the current situation?

A

The difference between the Holocaust and with what's going on now coronavirus epidemic is not from an external perspective but from an internal perspective. Once we understand the inner perspective behind what's going on now, we will see the difference. The Holocaust was a death of more than 600,000, but death is not a new thing. Death is a result of *tumah* (defilement), and the death that came to the world at that time was the same *tumah* that there always was. The Holocaust happened because the mochin (mind) of the Jewish people “fell” from its original purity, due to the influences of Haskalah (the Enlightenment). But the current situation coronavirus is a new kind of spiritual “fall” due to the *shaar hanun d'tumah* that is in full force now which is beyond logic and reason, and since this is the lowest level to fall to, it is also the final fall.

## *Why Are Youngsters Not As Affected?*

Q

Is there an explanation as to why throughout most of the world, the younger population is not as affected from catching the virus, even though it is mostly the younger population who usually get all kinds of diseases, whereas most of the older population come down with very bad symptoms right away from the virus?

A

Yes. It is because right now there are two different outcomes of the epidemic, there are those who are allowed to be in groups not more than 10, and there are those who have to be quarantined alone, by themselves. The younger population has more of a social life and that is why they can still be in groups of people not more than 10, whereas the older population has less of a social life and they are more drawn towards being alone, and therefore it is they who are being quarantined alone.

## *\*\*\*\*Wearing Masks During Corona – Hashem’s Message*

Q

What message did Hashem send us through everyone having to wear a mask over their face because of corona?

A

There are a few perceptions to it. (1) It is to remind us of the “mask” [that Moshe had to wear] as a result of the sin of the Golden Calf [which brought down the spiritual level of the people and didn’t allow them to see Moshe’s face directly]. (2) The mask covers the nose and the mouth specifically, because the nose and mouth correspond to the level of the six centuries of This World which precede Next World, and it is a hint that the state of “This World” is now becoming “covered” over, revealing the state of the Next World.



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A TIME FOR TESHUVAH –  
INNER SELF-IMPROVEMENT  
DURING CORONAVIRUS

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## *Various Resolutions To Take On*

Q

I read the Rav's response about the root of what is causing the corona virus and what we need to work on now. In addition to various *kaballas* (resolutions) that I made, *bli neder*, my wife and I took upon ourselves to increase giving *tzedakah* to try to house people who are in need of *kiruv*, and all this so that we can increase relationships with others and to create relationships of warmth with others, which I understood from the Rav's words about what we need to improve on right now. I am also trying to *daven* now about the situation. My problem though is that I feel like a fly on the wall when it comes to everything that is going on right now, which is being labeled now as a pandemic. Is the average simple Jew like me really able to do anything in the world right now will my prayers really help? And since this is a message of Hashem to *Klal Yisrael*, as a whole, how can some individual person really make a difference?

I would be happy if the Rav could please guide me through these issues that I mentioned and if the Rav agrees to the *kaballo*s which we have made upon ourselves.

A

Everything contains an external and an internal layer to it. Everything has a body and a soul to it. The act of giving *tzedakah* and hosting guests is all the external part of what we need to do. It is the container, the body. We also need the inner part, which is the soul. This inner part of becoming

more connected with others is to have a true, inner bond with others. However, we need to be careful with who we connect to, and therefore we should only become connected to those who are pure, to do this as much as we can, and at our own levels. In the inner recesses of our soul, we need to connect ourselves to the root of all the *neshamos* of *Klal Yisrael*, to feel a connection to *Klal Yisrael* as a whole and to each Jew individually.

And in the actual sense, we should become connected to those who have good hearts and those who are spiritually pure and good. But that is only one side of the coin, and it counters the corona, which is from the word *kor*, which means cold, and it is by increasing warmth and love in our relationships with others by becoming more connected with others.

But the other side of the coin is that we also need to use the power of *kor*, the power of coldness, for *kedushah*. And that is by becoming secluded with ourselves and to become secluded with the Creator. This is the secret of revealing the highest part of the soul which is called the *yechidah*, which means individual. The corona is really the *kelipah*, the shell, which counters the *yechidah* level of the soul, which is shining strongly now during the current period that we are in. And it is essentially the light of the redemption, may it come speedily.

*Tefillah* (davening/praying), always helps in any situation. Sometimes *davening* can totally erase a decree and sometimes *davening* will not take away a decree but it will lighten the intensity of the decree. But even if *chas v'shalom* there is a decree which cannot be nullified through davening, which is what the people thought at the times of Purim, it is still possible to lessen the intensity of the decree through *davening*.

The main kind of prayer which is needed now by the Jewish people specifically, and also by everyone who inhabits the world in general, is to pray that everybody should return completely to G-d, and that everyone should recognize that G-d is showing everyone that He does not want this false and this superficial kind of connection that people have with each other in the world today. It includes the connections that people have with each other by eating out together in restaurants, through vacations, through night entertainments, through places of social mingling, through using social media to send out information and videos to each other and etcetera. All of this is falsity, it is all *sheker*. And it is all founded on the *shaar hanun d'tumah*, the fiftieth gate of impurity, where *keter* becomes *sheker*, where connection becomes falsity, and even more so it is the innermost level of the *shaar hanun d'tumah* itself. It is *sheker* itself.

By recognizing this truth and by returning in complete *teshuvah* to Hashem, the innermost gate of the 50th gate of holiness will become revealed.

In no circumstance should a person *daven* that the epidemic should stop so that everything will return to the way the world was before everything started. Because if the world continues as it was, before all of this began, it will actually be worse for the world than death, and this is because the

world is filled today with *tumah* in every direction and the heart of any Jew that is pure today is able to feel broken from the very presence of all the depravity and all the *tumah* that is in our world. And *rachmana litzlan*, even as the epidemic is taking place, now that people are secluded in their homes instead of connecting to the *yechidah* level of their soul and becoming alone with their *neshamah* and with their Creator, instead they are *Rachmana litzlan* becoming even more attached to the internet and to social media outlets. This is the very depth of the tragic fall into the innermost level of the *shaar hanun d'tumah*, the fact that people are getting their main *chiyus* from such a source.

At this time the verse of “*mi l'Hashem eilai*”, “Whoever is for Hashem, come towards me”, applies to us more than ever. Each person right now has the awesome choice of either becoming connected to Hashem, to the Torah, and to one's *neshamah* or *chas v'shalom* fall into the depths of the *shaar hanun d'tumah*, the most depraved spiritual level possible. That is what we truly need to *daven* about. For this reason, our *tefillos* at this time need to come from the depths of our *neshamos*, each person on his own level, from the deepest place within yourself that you are in touch with. What we *daven* for the most shows what is bothering us the most, at this innermost level of our being.

## *Summary of Our Avodah Now*

Q

What is our *avodah* now?

A

Again, it is: To erase our emotional connection that we have with the world, to feel separated from it in our soul, as much as we can. And to also cut off from it in the practical sense, by disconnecting ourselves from all that's going on in the world, and to instead connect ourselves only to Hashem and to His Torah, and nothing else! In depth, we need to become connected to the *neshamos* of all the people of Yisrael, and in the actual sense, we should become connected only to those who are as close as possible to *kedushah* (holiness).

*\*Self-Improvement During Corona –  
What Do I Need To Work On Exactly?*

## Q

As soon as this corona epidemic began and I had to stay home all day with the family, and all the *shuls* and *batei midrash* became closed, all of us want to hear words of inspiration and guidance to get through this period properly. I have already heard many different lectures over the phone from many wonderful speakers in *Klal Yisrael*, words which were all powerful and fiery, and each of them spoke about different important points in *avodas Hashem* that we need to improve on now.

What's more, I heard that Maran HaGaon Rav Chaim Kanievsky shlit" a said that now people should work on the traits of humility, letting go of grudges, and learning the laws of proper speech. I also heard in the name of the Rav's teacher, HaGaon Rav Gershon Edelstein shlit" a, that everyone should forgive anyone who insulted or harmed him. So I have become inspired to work on many different good middos to work on and I am seeing that there are several bad middos which we need to uproot.

But I don't know what to focus on. Am I supposed to just work one area that I feel I really need to work on the most? Certainly I want to become a more easygoing person and forgive anyone who hurt me, but I also feel that right now I'm not on that level yet.

And I have learned from the Rav that a person needs to do self-improvement in correspondence with the 4 elements (i.e. a conceited person needs to work on humility, but not on kindness, because that's not his main issue), that every person needs to fix his weakest element and keep his self-improvement focused on the primary area that he personally needs to work on. It seems then that my inner work needs to be only in the areas that I, personally, need to fix.

But Rav Chaim Kavieesky is the *gadol hador*, and he said that we need to work on the areas of humility, letting go, and avoiding evil speech, so does that mean that I would only need to work on these areas alone, since we must all listen to the *gadol hador*?

Also, do those of us who are talmidim of the Rav (that is, those of us who go according to the Rav's approach and who listen to the Rav) need to do also do what HaGaon Rav Edelstein shlit" a said to work on now (that one should forgive anyone who hurt him), since HaGaon Rav Edelstein shlit" a is the *rebbe* (teacher) of the Rav?

## A

There are 2 major areas of improvement which a person needs to mainly focus on during this time. (1) We need to have genuine relationships with other people, relationships of warmth, in contrast to the "cold" [impersonal] relationships that are represented by the corona, which, in Hebrew language, is from the word *kor* (cold). That is the external part of our work now. (2) Each person needs to reveal his true individuality, the "*Yechidah*" level of our souls. This is the inner part of our work now.

When it comes to the external part of our work, each person should find one small area he can improve in, according to his personal nature, by which he can become more deeply connected with others and attain a purer, more genuine relationship with others.

All of the aforementioned ways [which our *Gedolim* said to improve in] are all ways by which a person can actualize this point [of becoming genuinely connected with others].

## *How Can I Stay Joyous While Doing Teshuvah?*

### Q

The Rav explained in a *derasha* about fears (*Rosh Chodesh Avodah Teves – Overcoming Fear*) that one of the reasons why we have fears is because our *neshamah* feels how it is far from Hashem, either due to sins from the past, or because of sins that come from a previous lifetime. Practically speaking, all of us have committed various sins in our past, and now we all need to enter into an inner place in our soul and reveal the “*Yechidah*” level of our soul as the Rav explained recently in the *derasha* about corona. So if we will be encountering our soul, we are apt to feel fearful about this, because our *neshamah* knows that until now we have been done certain things we shouldn’t have done, and therefore our fear now is real, because we will be encountering the Creator in our souls and we know that we aren’t worthy for this encounter. A person knows that he’s doing this out of a sense of dread because he knows that he hasn’t yet fixed himself.

So, the Q is: How can a person do teshuvah in a way that he will enter into the *Yechidah* part of the soul from the understand that he is serving Hashem with joy, and not from fear (as the Torah exhorts, “Since you did not serve Hashem with joy and from goodness of heart”).

### A

The suggested advice for this is that first, you should always see what positive gains you have had in your life so far, recognizing the value of what you have, and then thank Hashem for whatever good you have. Only after that should you reflect on your shortcomings. In this way, the beginning of your connection to Hashem will be coming from what you have, from actualizing your gratitude to Hashem, and amidst that positive state of recognizing what you have and thanking Hashem for what you have, you can now do teshuvah on whatever you are deficient in. This will turn your fears about your sins and personal shortcomings into “holy fear”, which is like the verse “*The fear of Yitzchok my father I had*”. When your fears about your past sins and personal shortcomings are coming to you after you have established a relationship with Hashem, you can then properly

recognize what you need to fix, and from that healthier perspective you can go about fixing whatever you need to fix.

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## WHY ARE TZADDIKIM DYING FROM CORONA?

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## *Corona Tragedies In America – What Is The Message?*

Q

In *chutz l'aretz* many people were already niftar, *Rachmana Litzlan*, from the coronavirus. What should we do as a *zechus* for others?

A

*HaKadosh Baruch Hu* is awakening those who live in *chutz l'aretz* in particular, because of the gross pursuit of materialism there, and because of all the mingling with secular culture that's very prevalent there, which affects them both on an external level as well as on an internal level. And therefore, people need to separate as much as they can from the materialistic lifestyle and way of thinking of secular society in *chutz l'aretz*, and they need to build for themselves only a life of *kedushah*.

Even more so, though, it is upon each person to build for himself his own private world within him, so that he can go totally against the lifestyle of mingling with the gentiles. Understand that well.

One should also awaken those who are ill with coronavirus to gain this perspective, and that's besides for helping them with what they need and davening for their recovery.

In Eretz Yisrael as well, there is also this issue of intermingling with secular society, where those who are observant of Torah and mitzvos have slowly had more and more involvement with the secular world. That is why in the time which we find ourselves in, Hashem has sent an awakening to the Chareidi world by shutting down all community life. The issue of mingling with secular society began in Bnei Brak, when Torah observant Jews began to become more involved with Tel Aviv and the rest of secular society in Israel, and it spread from there. And that is why Hashem came and shut down everything, to awaken them that they need to close themselves off from being connected with the secular and from being mixed with all outside influences. It is better if people would do this willingly, rather than be forced to do it.

If a person is superficial, he will place the blame on the Chareidi world and point an accusing finger at them. But if a person lives inwardly and spiritually, he recognizes all of this as Hashem's calling to the Chareidi communities, that it is time for them to cut themselves off from being involved with secular society in Israel, unlike the last couple of years where so many Chareidim

have gone to learn in secular academies, workplaces that are inappropriate with a Jew's values, and with being involved in working for "kosher" media, which is highly inappropriate for a Jew.

It is upon every person to see now that Hashem is demanding a change. The direction of the last couple of years, where Torah observant Jews have become more and more connected to the secular society and culture of the world, needs to be changed. We need to separate from all of it. Until now, people had the claim that they needed to do so for the purposes of earning a livelihood. What has Hashem done now? He has erased and destroyed the source of livelihood for most people now, so that people can reflect and recognize the falsity of this claim.

The same goes for all of the vacations to hotels for Pesach in *chutz l'aretz*. It has destroyed the generation today, and now all of it has vanished, as if it never existed. And all of the academies have been silenced.

*Chas v'shalom* should a person think that eventually over time things will return to normal again. Instead, each person needs to awaken himself now that Hashem is demanding a disconnection from everything. Each individual on a personal level needs to reflect now on what he had been connected with until now and what Hashem has taken away from him, and realize what Hashem wants from him, and what he needs to cut off from.

But the root of the *tumah* in the world still has not been severed yet, and unfortunately, it has only gotten stronger. It is the accursed media, that *avi avos hatumah* (the "grandfather of impurity"), and it is the source of all of the diseases on this world, and it is especially the root of the coronavirus. The media is at the inner root of this coronavirus epidemic.

Every person needs to disconnect from the media, because it is the final test which we have entered into in this current period, for it seems to people that all their needs are met by being connected to there the Internet. Instead of deciding to disconnect from it, though, people are only becoming further connected with it, and this is because it is written, "*Before becoming broken, there is pride.*"

May Hashem illuminate His complete light and erase all evil, including this current epidemic, and may His light fill all the dimensions of Creation.

## *Why Are People Dying From Coronavirus More In Chutz L'aretz?*

Q

We see now that many people in the world are dying from corona, but in Eretz Yisrael there's not that much going on. Is this in the *zechus* (merit) of *tzaddikim* who are fasting and davening for us, or is it from some other reason?

A

It does not depend on *zechusim* of even one person. It is Hashem's higher mode of conduct which does not depend on our actions at all. Certainly there are other details which it depends on, but the primary mode of Hashem's conduct now with the world does not depend on the deeds that people do or don't do. The *tefillos* (prayers) of people can change things, and doing *teshuvah* can also bring about changes, but it won't change the general way in which Hashem is running the world with right now.

Q

But what is the reason that coronavirus is barely affecting the health of people in Eretz Yisrael unlike in *chutz l'aretz* where many are dying from it?

A

You are only viewing the situation at the moment. The situation is able to become more encompassing and more complex.

## *Corona - Why Are Tzaddikim Dying??*

Q

How can the Rav say that the coronavirus situation is really the revelation of the "light of Hashem" upon the world, if this is a terrible epidemic that is killing even *tzaddikim*? Isn't this a time of *hester panim*??

## A

Everything in the Creation has an internal and external layer to it.

On the internal layer of corona, we can view corona as *koran ohr*, the “horns of light” which were given to Moshe, when Moshe’s face radiated Heavenly light after he received the Torah.

The Bnei Yisrael could not handle the intensity of the light on Moshe’s face, so Hashem placed a *masveh*, a “mask”, to cover the light on Moshe’s face. Ever since then, the light of Hashem can only be accessed by way of being “masked”, it is covered over, and this is the root of all externality. Therefore, on the external surface of reality, the coronavirus situation is like the “mask” on Moshe’s face, which manifests in our physical and external reality as the need for people to place masks on their faces now, so that they shouldn’t infect each other.

On the external layer of the reality now, it can be said that “Since the Destroyer (the Angel of Death) has been given permission to destroy, it does not differentiate between good and evil, between *tzaddikim* and *reshaim*.” The same happened by the plague of darkness in Egypt, which was a darkness for Egypt and for the *reshaim*, but which was a light for the *bnei Yisrael* in their homes. In the same vein, the coronavirus is “darkness” only for the *reshaim*, but it is a “light” for the *tzaddikim*. However even though it is a light for the *tzaddikim*, it is still a danger for *tzaddikim*, because the Angel of Death does not differentiate between *tzaddikim* and *reshaim*.

*\*\*If Corona Came Because of Internet & Smartphones,  
Why Are Holy & Distinguished People Dying From It?*

## Q

Yasher Koach to the Rav for all of the guidance, especially during this coronavirus pandemic which we are experiencing. I have a few questions.

The Rav explained that the primary source for this disease, the corona, came from the “50<sup>th</sup> gate of impurity”, which is synonymous with the Internet and the accursed media. In chutz l’aretz, many wonderful Jews were already niftar from it, Rachmana Litzlan, and amongst them were Roshei Yeshivas and Talmidei Chachomim who learned Torah in purity and holiness, people who seek out Hashem, who didn’t have anything to do with Internet and smartphones.

Although we don’t know the ways of HaKadosh Baruch Hu, now that the Rav has explained that the corona disease comes from the “50<sup>th</sup> gate of defilement”, the question screams out before us

and it is basically saying, “Explain me.” It seems that it is upon us to understand why this has happened, that so many wonderful G-d fearing Jews should die from the coronavirus, and especially because these were people who were people of Torah, people of truth, people who were seekers of Hashem, who learned Torah in such purity and holiness, with no connection to the tumah (depravity) of the world. If the coronavirus came from the tumah of the “50<sup>th</sup> gate of defilement” that is personified through media use and internet, why did the virus harm people who didn’t have a smartphone? Why didn’t it instead harm those who have smartphones and internet in their homes?

## A

The external answer to this is because “Once the Destroyer [the Angel of Death] is given permission to destroy, it does not differentiate between good and evil.”

However, there is also a more fundamental answer as to why this disease is killing even tzaddikim. The word “corona” is from the Hebrew word kerinah, “radiation”. This is because the root of the corona disease is from the radiation [Wi-Fi] that comes from the antennae [of cellphone or Wi-Fi towers] that transport the virus all over the place. That is the inner root to this epidemic. This kerinah-radiation [Wi-Fi] is not only found by those who own internet-capability devices, because it is found in every obscene place in the central zones of cities. Even more so, its rays [Wi-Fi] can come through any wall of any house, entering into any home, even in a home that does not have any internet-capability devices.

That is why our generation is called a “generation entirely deserving of death” [Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 98a]. It is because everyone is absorbed within this spiritually harmful radiation [Wi-Fi], including even one those who don’t use it [internet or Wi-Fi] at all. There is no natural way for us to separate from it at all. It is rather upon us to distance ourselves from it as much as we are able to.

We need to understand that our very existence as we live in this generation is infected by the harmful spiritual effects that this invisible radiation [Wi-Fi] has on us, because we are all living within the invisible field of this tumah that fills every space. Therefore, there is no one who can be saved from it totally, and therefore it is able to harm anyone, whether they are tzaddikim or whether they are not tzaddikim. That is why the souls of tzaddikim are broken and gasping from this tumah.

Sometimes this radiation [of Wi-Fi] harms tzaddikim precisely because the tzaddikim are more sensitive from it [due to their heightened spiritual state]. For example, if a garment is a very white

(pure) color, we can easily notice the slightest stain on it. And the same is true vice versa [the darker a garment is, the less we can see a stain on it].<sup>1</sup>

## *\*Why Are So Many Wonderful People Dying From Corona?*

### Q

In the current situation [the coronavirus], many great and outstanding people of *Klal Yisrael* have passed away. This is something that we have never experienced before. There has been such a large amount of *Gedolim* and prominent Jews who have been niftar from the virus over such a swift period of time. It feels as if pillars of the world are falling. How are we to understand this new situation which is almost impossible to grasp? Thank you to the Rav for all of the words of Torah and guidance for this long period we are in. We look at your words as if they are lights to guide us through these dark times.

### A

A Jew who lives inwardly has the attitude and the sense that every single move which takes place on this world is all being observed and conducted with the specific guidance of Hashem, in His compassion and love for us. The conduct which Hashem is running the world with right now is not in the category of [His regular mode of conduct, which is] *hanhagas hamishpat* (the way of justice), but in the category of *hanhagas hayichud* [the way of oneness]. The Ramchal in *sefer Daas Tevunos*<sup>2</sup> explains about this mode of conduct. It is very recommended to learn now this sefer in-depth, with clarity, and to act upon what is explained in that sefer, at a time such as now when Hashem is running the world with *hanhagas hayichud*.

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<sup>1</sup> Editor's Note: The analogy is that the tzaddikim are pure and therefore at times they can be more easily harmed by the "stain" caused by tumah in our world, whereas people who are not tzaddikim are, at times, not harmed by the "stain" of tumah in this world, since they already stained from their sins and therefore they are less affected by the stain caused by the tumah on this world].

<sup>2</sup> *Daas Tevunos* is available in English from Feldheim publishers as "The Knowing Heart" and more recently adapted as "Knowing G-d's Plan"

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# REMEDY FOR CORONA

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## *The Refuah For Corona Is Ayin: Self-Nullification*

### Q

*Yasher Koach* to the Rav for all of the *sefarim* and *shiurim* which have strengthened me and which has given me clarity in *avodas Hashem*. I want to ask the Rav the following.

It says in *Mishlei (18:14)*, “The spirit of a man can overcome his maladies, but a crushed spirit, who can endure.” The Targum explains that the mood of a person can heal his diseases. The *Yaavetz*, in the commentary of *Migdal Oz Chalon Tzuri (chalon 2)* explains that the mood comes from the elements in one’s blood, and the white moisture found in the liquid of the bloodstream is what affects a person’s mood, and that most diseases come from a dominance of this moisture. He further explains that a person’s lifetime is divided into different stages, and during childhood, the blood is more dominant, whereas bile is more dominant in old age.

Based upon his words, would it make sense that the bacteria of corona is more harmful to older people because older people are weaker in the elements that come from their blood? And if my assumption is correct, perhaps they should eat things that improve their blood, as the Gemara says that meat and wine is good for the blood (*Talmud Bavli Shabbos 129a*)? Or perhaps they could get healed from corona by receiving blood donations from others, and maybe it would be most effective if they would get blood from younger people who have healthier blood than they do?

### A

The root of this disease the corona is very spiritual, in the highest place in the heavens. Its source is in the *kutzo shel yud*, the “tip of the letter *yud*,” which is above the 4 elements of fire, air, water and earth. Therefore, the remedy for it does not come from using any of the 4 elements. This disease, corona, corresponds to the point known as *Keter*, the highest of the Ten *Sefiros*, which is also called *ayin*, the dimension of nothingness. Therefore, the remedy for it lays in the realm of *ayin*, in nothingness, and even more so, in *efes*, absolute nothingness.<sup>3</sup>

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*3 Editor’s Note: The term “ayin” (nothingness) refers usually to bittul, self-nullification. The term efes literally means “zero”, a term that implies absolute nothingness, and a level higher than ayin. The Rav explains about ayin and efes in the shiurim on sefer Nefesh HaChaim shaar II. Although ayin and efes both refer to the concept of bittul, perhaps we can also understand the difference between ayin and efes as follows. The Rav explains in sefer Da Es Nishmasecha that there are different levels of bittul (self-nullification). The ‘standard’ level of bittul is when nullifies his desires to Hashem, when one feels that his existence is nullified by Hashem’s. At this level, one acknowledges that he has an “I”, a self, and it is just that his nullifying that self to Hashem. The higher level of bittul is Ain Od Milvado, which is when one does not feel his*



## *Awakening Heavenly Compassion To Protect Oneself and Others From Coronavirus*

Q

If a person does the inner *avodah* that the Rav is describing, will this awaken Heavenly compassion on him and on the rest of *Klal Yisrael*?

A

It awakens *hashgachah "peratis"*, "individual" Divine Providence, because when you access your true individuality, it is said that "Just as you are to Him, so will He be to you" (see *sefer Nefesh HaChaim* 1:7), meaning that there will be actual Divine Providence in all areas.

## *How Mesirus Nefesh Protects From Death*

Q

Is this way of bonding with Hashem as the Rav has described [in the derasha about corona] accomplished specifically by having *mesirus nefesh* for it [which is a very high level], or is every person able to do it on his own level?

A

During this period, every person can certainly inspire himself to have some level of *mesirus nefesh*. Although a person will still not be able to access the inner spiritual light available during this time when he only has a little bit of *mesirus nefesh*, even though it is not the full level of *mesirus nefesh*, he can still have some small amount of *mesirus nefesh* on his own level, in just one area that he works on, and that is necessary for any person to work on at this time.

In general, whenever danger comes to the world, a spiritual light comes to the world which is known as *his-talkut hanefesh*, "removal of the soul", and this can be manifest in two different ways. If a person is not *zoche* (meritorious), then *chas v'shalom* this concept of "removal of the soul" will translate itself into death for him. But if a person is *zoche*, it becomes the power which is described in the teaching of Chazal known as "Die before you die" (*Mos ad shelo tamus*), meaning that one

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*existence at all, because he is aware that there is only Hashem and nothing else. At this higher level of bittul, there is no sense of one's self at all, because there is only the awareness of Hashem's presence and nothing else.*

uses the very power of “removal of the soul” for holiness, by having *mesirus nefesh* (being willing to give up his will for Hashem and devote himself much more than usual to doing Hashem’s will).

This is the deep root of how a person can be saved from death. Getting saved from death is not by running away from death. Rather, it is by using the very power of death itself, by channeling the power of “death” in a holy direction, which is by using the power of *mesirus nefesh*, giving up one’s desires in order to do the will of Hashem. In that way, a person can be saved from death [by having *mesirus nefesh*].

## *How Do We Have Mesirus Nefesh Now?*

Q

What are the parameters of *mesirus nefesh* (showing self-sacrifice) during this time?

A

There is practical *mesirus nefesh* one needs to do now as well as emotional, inward *mesirus nefesh* that a person needs now.

In the practical sense, a person should take one thing a day that he has a hard time with and overcome it. On the emotional and inward level, a person should cut off deeply from all that’s going on in the world and to feel a sense of separation from the entire world. A person can activate this *mesirus nefesh* by thinking: “How long will all of this go on for? Look how Hashem has changed the world so quickly.”

A person can see that whole world is shaking now, and that alone can get a person to see how much he needs to cut off the world now, because he sees how the entire world is sheker and that Hashem can change it so quickly.

## \*\*\**What Exactly Is The Refuah For Corona?*

Q

The Rav has said that the remedy for coronavirus is to access “ayin” [lit. “nothingness”, to negate one’s sense of self) and on a deeper level, to feel “efes” [lit. “zero”, to feel absolute nothingness of all physical reality]. I want to understand this better. I have understood from the Rav that a person can actually get a refuah for corona by adhering to the above advice. Baruch Hashem this question is not relevant to me or even to anyone related to me, but I am asking this question with regards to the rest of Klal Yisrael, and the Rav’s answer to this will probably be of immeasurable benefit to anyone. After all, who’s not interested in knowing the refuah for corona!! This is what I would like to know:

(1) When the Rav says that the refuah for corona is “ayin” (nothingness), does this mean negating one’s sense of self, or having mesirus nefesh (being self-sacrificing)?, or having emunah (faith in G-d)? And when the Rav says that a deeper method of refuah for corona is to access the power of “efes”, does this mean to think about *Ain Od Milvado* (there is nothing besides for Hashem)? And how can a person sick with corona practically use the above advice?

A

1) “*Efes*” (to feel a sense of absolute nothingness) means to think *Ain Od Milvado* (that there is nothing besides for Hashem).

Q

(2) And, if I’ve understood correctly that “efes” (nothing) means for a person to think about *Ain Od Milvado*, what about a person who thinks a lot about *Ain Od Milvado* but he also has Internet or a smartphone, which is a connection to the “50<sup>th</sup> gate of defilement”, as the Rav equates it with? Can a person still get healed from corona by thinking about *Ain Od Milvado* if has any connection to internet, since he is still using the powerful spiritual illumination of “*Ain Od Milvado*” which, as it is known, can fix any damage? Can we say “There is no place empty from Hashem”, and that “There is nothing else besides for Hashem, even in the emptiest void of the world”, which would mean that even if a person remains connected with internet and media, the “50<sup>th</sup> gate of defilement”, in the end of the day he is still accessing the light of Hashem, by thinking about the concept of *Ain Od Milvado*?

A

2) No [thinking *Ain Od Milvado* won't help a person who possesses any sort of internet connection], because he cannot completely connect to the reality of *Ain Od Milvado* when he is being blocked by a “barrier” [the fact that he has internet or a smartphone]. For him, thinking about *Ain Od Milvado* will just be superficial and external.

Q

(3) The Rav said in one of the responses that if a person truly gets the coronavirus disease, he will immediately die from it, and if he recovers from the coronavirus, it's a sign that the virus didn't really attach itself to him. From what the Rav is saying it seems that there is no *refuah* for coronavirus. But didn't the Rav say that there is indeed a *refuah* for coronavirus, which is by thinking about the concepts of *ayin* and *Ain Od Milvado*?

A

3) [When a person truly gets the coronavirus, meaning that the virus completely attached itself to him], either he simply dies, or he can “die” in the spiritual sense, on a “repaired” level, by undergoing total self-effacement (*bittul*) through contemplating *Ain Od Milvado*, that there is nothing besides for Hashem.

Q

(4) The medical world is busy developing a vaccine for corona, and several countries have said that they are in the final stages of completing the cure for corona. What should be our attitude towards this? Is it a problem if we hope that a natural cure for this disease should be discovered? Or would that just be defeating the entire purpose of why Hashem sent this virus to the world, and we should instead just place our *bitachon* in Hashem and rely on Him that a *yeshuah* (salvation) will only come from Him and not from human beings?

A

4) Any cure discovered for it will only cure the “branches” of this disease – it won't be a cure for this disease at its root.

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QUARANTINED:  
THE TIME FOR REACHING  
HOLY INDIVIDUALITY

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## *Our Avodas Hashem Now During Coronavirus*

### Q

Now that all of the yeshivas and the shuls have been closed because of all those fears about the epidemic of corona virus what shall we focus now in our *avodas Hashem*? What is upon us to do, that Hashem should save us from this?

### A

Every period has an *avodah* which corresponds to that particular period. As with many other troublesome times, people have to do *teshuvah* and cry to Hashem and give *tzedakah*. Besides for this, our current period that we are going through necessitates another *avodah*. The period we are going through now is not simply another period which is part of the chain of events throughout the history of the world. Rather, this period that we are going through now is the final stage of the *galus*. But we don't know for how long this period will last. The period that we are in now is the revelation of the innermost level of the *shaar hanun d'tumah*, the fiftieth gate of impurity, so that there should be an equal counterbalance between good and evil in the world.

We need to view the epidemic of corona virus from an inner perspective as something deeper that is going on and that it is not simply an epidemic. The epidemic itself is nothing but a revelation of something deeper which is behind it. The essence of this period is depicted by the statement in Chazal, "Therefore man was created individual." (*Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 38a*). Throughout most of the world (and most of the world was considered like the entire world), people are becoming secluded into their homes and becoming individuals. This is showing us that each person needs to become an individual.

On the most external level, it means that a person has become secluded, away from everybody else. On the inner level, it means that a person needs to recognize the uniqueness and that there is no other person in the world who is exactly similar to him, in Torah learning or in middos. And the innermost level of this is that a person needs to develop a bond with Hashem and to his Torah learning in which he is like an only child to Hashem, a *ben yachid*. That is the depths of the spiritual illumination which is shining now during this period that we are in. If a person merits to do this *avodah* properly, he will merit to see completely the face of Moshiach.

It is very proper at this time to reflect about these words, to first contemplate these words and understand them intellectually, and then to let these words settle on our heart. And then accordingly, one will know what his inner *avodah* should be during this period. It is our prayer and our hope that this period of the *shaar hanun d'tumah* should be as short as possible and that the

*shaar hanun d'kedushah*, the fiftieth gate of holiness, should prevail over the *shaar hanun d'tumah* so that Moshiach can immediately come.

## *What Should We Do Now?*

Q

What should we do, *l'maaseh* (practically speaking)? To do *hisbodedus* (meditate and personally reflect)?

A

To meditate is just the lower aspect. To “meditate” really means to be cut off emotionally, and also in the actual sense, from all the humdrum and movement of the world today, which is entirely and deeply entrenched in the *shaar hanun* (50<sup>th</sup> gate) within the *shaar hanun d'tumah* (the innermost level of defilement).

## *The Deeper Meaning Behind The Varying Levels Of Quarantine*

Q

In the *derasha* of the Rav (on Corona & Revealing Your Individuality) the Rav explained about the concepts of “ten” and “one” in Creation. At the time when the Rav gave this *derasha*, the Health Ministry in Israel allowed a maximum of ten people to work together. Now the Health Ministry is only allowing two people to work together. What is the inner perspective towards this matter?

A

The Sages state that the world was created in ten utterances, but Hashem could have created it with one utterance. Hashem did this in order to give reward to the *tzaddikim* and to punish the wicked. This means that the external layer of Creation is the concept of ten, while the inner layer of Creation is the concept of one.

In the side of ruination, the quorums of ten people praying together in a minyan have vanished from the world, but ten people were still allowed to work together in an office (where they can be “servants of servants”). Eventually this phenomenon has penetrated to the inner dimension as well where only ten people can be together.

For all those who are infected with the virus, they have been forced to be quarantined alone, similar to the state of a *metzora* (leper) who must be quarantined until his leprosy disappears. But everyone else is allowed to be together in groups of two. This is because, as of now, the evil “oneness” has not become manifest yet on its absolute level. Instead, two people are still able to be together, similar to how Hashem created man and woman together. But in the inner dimension, man is still created to be an individual.

The purpose of the very power of evil in Creation is to individualize each thing in Creation to itself, and this is the evil manifestation of individuality. When that situation will occur, an equal counterbalance will occur between the individuality on the side of evil and the individuality on the side of holiness. The holy oneness represented by Yaakov Avinu, who wrestled with the angel alone, will be pitted against the evil oneness of Bilaam, who sought to destroy the Jewish people when he was alone. That will be the final war, and it will reveal the innermost level of the 50<sup>th</sup> gate of holiness. This will reveal how “*And Hashem will be exalted, alone.*”

That is why our inner *avodah* now at this time is to access the holy power of individuality, to resemble the *Kohen Gadol*, alone in the *Kodesh Kodashim* on Yom Kippur, where there was only the Shechinah, the presence of Hashem, the Torah in the *Aron Kodesh*, and the *Kohen Gadol* himself.

## *Corona - Revealing My Individuality*

### Q

The Rav has recently emphasized in the derasha about corona that our *avodah* now is to reach our individuality. What type of individuality is the Rav referring to? It is my understanding that since we are in a time where everyone needs to make some meaningful change, the “individuality” that each person needs to uncover now must be very all-encompassing.

### A

One needs to begin to live a more spiritual life and to extend it to all areas of life. It is true that this is a time for each person to change his way of living. Each person needs to begin his life all over again, anew, from a pure place.



## *Yeshivos & Individuality*

Q

Also, why is it that all of the yeshivos teach a certain “one-size-fits-all” approach to their students? Why isn’t the concept of individuality taught? Especially since the Rav emphasizes so much about this concept of revealing one’s individuality. Why isn’t the generation taught about this concept of individuality, if it is so important to each individual’s *avodas Hashem* and in doing what Hashem wants?

A

You can see that Reb Yisrael Salanter had many talmidim who each had a very different approach, in their way of thinking and in the areas of *avodah* that they emphasized. The Alter of Kelm, the Alter of Novhardok, the Alter of Slabodka and the other students of Reb Yisrael Salanter all had vastly different approaches. The ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach is only the external layer. At the internal layer, we can find many different unique approaches.

## *Why Isn’t Individuality Taught?*

Q

Also, why is individuality so important? Isn’t the main thing to observe Torah and mitzvos, and of course, to also serve Hashem with love and fear, with intellect and feeling?

A

Chazal teach “Therefore, man was created individual”, and “All of their faces are different from each other, and all of their ways of thinking are different from each other.” Each individual was created to reveal an additional facet of individuality in serving Hashem. This is the secret behind all of the individual parts to Creation, that each person is meant to reveal an additional facet of G-dliness in the world.

## *How Do I Become More Like My Individual Self?*

### Q

The Rav said that now is the time for a person to remove any influences that he picked up from others, such as imitating the way that others, or imitating the culture of going out to eat in restaurants, etc. What about for a person who can't relate to that well, because his schedule consists of Torah learning, davening, going back home and being with the family? I don't understand how it's my *avodah* to stop copying the lifestyles of others. The Rav said that we need to focus on which parts of life are aligned with who we really are, and how we need to remove any parts of our life that were copied from others. Can the Rav give me an example of how I can do this inner work?

### A

You are only ruling out the material connections that people have to the world, but even within our own spiritual side to life there are aspects where we may simply be imitating others and we aren't being our true self. Here are some examples.

Some people give a lot of *tzedakah*, but why is it that they give a lot of *tzedakah*? Certainly giving *tzedakah* is highly praiseworthy, and *tzedakah* heralds the redemption closer, etc. That is all true, but the true reason that many people are giving *tzedakah* is because nowadays it's "in style" to give a lot of *tzedakah*. They are not giving *tzedakah* out of a true desire to give *tzedakah*.

Another example is that there are some people and there are some communities and shuls which have the custom of *Yom Kippur Katan*. If a person says *Yom Kippur Katan*, is this coming from within him, or is it simply because it's in style now to do it? Is he really doing *teshuvah* and he is really considering it to be like Erev Yom Kippur itself?

There was a well-known story with the Chofetz Chaim that there was a decree against Yiddishkeit during his times and he gathered together signatures from different Rabbanim in Klal Yisrael which declared that everyone should make a fast day. When Rav Chaim of Brisk heard about this, he said, "What is all their piety and fasting go to help, if they don't do *teshuvah* and they are not fixing the entire way of life in this generation? What will all their fasting help...?"

If a person makes changes in his life in order to improve, in addition to fasting, and it's because he wants to become connected with the *klal*, he is praiseworthy and good. But if he's just fasting simply because the Rabbonim said to fast, and because that's what everyone else is doing – it's impossible to say that he is doing something bad, but he is far from being himself. One needs to clarify what is really meant for him to do, what his individual tasks of self-improvement are, and then one can know what he, personally, needs to fix.

## *Can Working Be My Individual Role?*

Q

I have not merited to be among those who are sitting and learning Torah in the *beis midrash*, and I am working. Currently, I am still able to go to work. I have reached the conclusion that my individuality is, being that I am a married father of two children and I need to work to earn livelihood, my unique task in life seems to be that I must work to support my family, since I know that this is what Hashem wants from me. I am trying to elevate all areas of my life into doing more and more what Hashem wants from me. That is where I recognize my individuality. Does the Rav agree with this?

A

Yes. A person should look for and clarify what his individual task is on this world, and in what unique way he can contribute to the world. The more that you do this for the sake of Heaven, to that extent will the inner light of your *neshamah* become shined onto you, and you will then recognize your individuality more and more. Gradually, you will clarify, with *siyata d'shmaya*, if you also need to make any external changes in your life.

## *How Does One Reach The Innermost Place In The Soul?*

Q

What are the levels of reaching the innermost place in the soul?

A

The first part is the lowest part of the deepest place in the soul, which is to reveal one's individuality. At this level, a person feels his existence (*Yeish*).

After this stage is a further level, where a person can reach *bittul* (self-nullification) and nullify his sense of *Yeish*/existence.

What exactly does a person nullify? A person needs to nullify anything external to his self which is not who "I" really am. In addition, one also needs to nullify any qualities that were gained from others, because in reality, all qualities gained from others are all coming from the world of imagination since a person only 'gains' qualities from others by imitating them because he compares

himself to them, and this is all from the world medameh, which means “comparing” and which also means “imagination”.

So a person needs to nullify the medameh any qualities gained from others as a result of comparing himself to them, which all came about through using his imagination. Then one can reach his true self. This is his true *Yeish* (existence).

Then, the final stage is for one to nullify even his true self, and to become attached in *d'veykus* to the only true Existence, Who is Hashem.

## *How Does A Person Reach A Deep Bond In The Soul With Hashem?*

Q

How does a person form a deep bond in the soul with Hashem? What does a person need to feel this inner light? What exactly is a person supposed to feel? What sefer can a person learn about this?

A

Refer to *sefer Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh* parts 1 and 2.

## *How To Spend Time Alone*

Q

1) Now that the Rav has explained that we are in a period which is about revealing the “*Yechidah*” level of the soul, which is about a constant and deep bond with Hashem and which is also about having *mesirus nefesh*, my Q is as follows. Throughout this year, I have only been learning and I never did any hisbodedus. I have been ‘pushing off’ creating a simple bond with Hashem. So I understand that I now need to inspire myself to reveal a simple bond with Hashem. On the other hand, until now I had been working on developing my mind. On what areas of *avodah* should I now place priority on, and how can I go about this practically? Should I now be spending time learning the Rav’s sefarim of Bilvavi Parts 8, 9 and 10?

2) Also, now that I have to be secluded at home, does that mean I need to be doing hisbodedus for many days now? What should be the balance?

3) Also, the Rav once wrote to me in a response that a person is generally not supposed to work with the path of *mesirus nefesh*, because it is like jumping levels, and instead a person needs to build himself step by step. Does all that change now, since now is a time for *mesirus nefesh*? Do I now need to abandon the path of gradual self-development and instead put all my energy into having *mesirus nefesh*?

## A

1) No do not immerse yourself entirely in hisbodedus now. The intention is that every day, set aside a few minutes to simply bond with Hashem.

2) A lot of your time should be spent on being immersed in the depth of Torah thoughts. A small part of your time should be devoted to hisbodedus and inner silence (but only for a small amount of time).

3) Don't change your approach. Chazal said, "Whatever is in your power, do". Hashem will do the rest. And Chazal said, "One who says, "I toiled and I found, is believed."

## *How Much Time Is Needed Now For Daily Hisbodedus?*

## Q

How much time should a person set aside now to be "alone" with Hashem?

## A

It should be for at least a few minutes. It is proper to do it for a half hour or an hour a day. Spending more than an hour a day on this or not will depend on the balance that one has between his actions and his Torah learning, each person according to his level and according to his situation. But the main thing is not the amount of time one spends on it. It is mainly about reaching an inner, quiet place in yourself, where you can reach a simple bond with Hashem. Each person can do this on his own level right now, since the time now is appropriate for this.

Now that Hashem has arranged it that a person is found less in the *beis midrash*, it is a sign that it is upon each person now to seclude his soul, inwardly, with His Creator.

## *Does Learning Zohar Help A Person Clarify His Soul Better?*

Q

The Rav mentioned at the end of the *drasha* that a person needs to cut out anything that isn't true to who he is. Does learning *Zohar* help a person know this?

A

It can work as a *segulah* (spiritual charm) but after a person has been illuminated by that *segulah*, he needs to clarify in his soul which things he is meant to actively connect himself to and which things he needs to actively disconnect from.

## *Which Sefarim Of The Rav Should I Learn Now?*

Q

In light of what the Rav has spoken about recently regarding our *avodah* of being alone at home, I want to ask regarding the Rav's sefarim and shiurim: Should a person mainly focus now on learning about the "*Yechidah*" level of the soul, and the rest of the soul will become fixed on its own from this? Or should a person continue to work his way upwards, beginning from the more basic levels of the soul i.e. character improvement?

Also, the Rav has spoken in several different places about the *Yechidah* level of the soul, and how to "begin from above". But the material is scattered between many different series that the Rav has given and there are many different ways of *avodah* that the Rav has taught. Can the Rav please clarify which sefarim discuss the *Yechidah* level of the soul (which describes the path that "begins from above"), and which of the Rav's sefarim describe the path "from below to above"?

Also, what is the difference between all these different approaches, and for which types of people are these different approaches meant for?

A

One should continue his *avodah* as usual, but in addition to this, one should also set aside time every day where he can involve himself in the inner depth that comes from the *Yechidah* level of the soul.

The sefer which explains the *Yechidah* level of the soul, on a practical level, is the *sefer Da Es Havayasecha*. However, this sefer does not explain how to work your way upwards, step after step. Rather, it describes how you can touch upon having direct access to the highest level of the soul. This approach will work for those who have very high aspirations and who are very persistent when it comes to their spiritual growth.

The shiurim of *Da Es Torasecha – Darkei Mesirus nefesh* (Devotion to Torah Learning) are also the appropriate path for those who have very high aspirations and who are very persistent in their spiritual growth, and who are also drawn towards highly intellectual understanding.

The approach of “working your way upwards”, on a practical level, is explained in in *sefer Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh*, Part 1. This sefer was designed in a way of a “general rule, then the details, then the general rule”. The approach of this sefer is for those who are looking for a simplistic and non-intellectual path in serving Hashem. When using the steps delineated in this sefer, one should go step by step.

The approach of “beginning from above” is explained in “Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh” Parts 8 & 9. These sefarim are meant for those who have firmly developed their thinking and who are also capable of subtle depth.

There is also a corresponding path, of working your way upwards (beginning from below) which is explained in “*Da Es Hisbodedusecha*” (the “Inner Silence” series). This approach is suitable for those who are drawn towards calmness and quiet.

## *\*What Level of Yechidah Should A Person Strive To Reach?*

### Q

The Rav explained that when a person learns sefarim that he is drawn to and which he enjoys in particular, he is accessing the “*Yechidah*” level that is within the level of *Nefesh*, within *Nefesh*”. From what I understand, at this level a person is still involved with the ego, because the “*nefesh*” level of the *Yechidah* is to reveal one’s true “I”, his individuality, which the Rav has explained in a response elsewhere, that this is the “*Yechidah*” manifestation of the “*Nefesh*” level of the soul [which is within the experience of the ego]. However, above this level are the *Ruach*, *Neshamah*, *Chayah and Yechidah* levels of the *Yechidah*, which are above the ego. The Rav explained that these levels are attained through feeling the Infinite (Ruach of *Yechidah*), attachment to the Infinite

(Neshamah of Yechidah), self-nullification to the Infinite (Chayah of Yechidah), and total integration with the Infinite (Yechidah of Yechidah).

Is it our *avodah* now to try to reach these higher levels as well? Or is it our *avodah* now to just reach our individuality, which is the “*Nefesh*” level of the *Yechidah*? Was the Rav in the *derasha* describing only the *avodah* of *Yechidah D’Nefesh* (individuality) because that is the level that applies to most people [because it involves the ego, which is the level that most people are at], but certainly each individual should strive to meditate on the higher levels of the soul [which do not involve the ego at all]?

## A

Everyone needs to strive to go to higher levels from the level that one is currently at. At each level a person is at, one needs to find his individuality there, which is the “*Yechidah*” point of that level. This applies to any person.

Those who are deeply seeking out Hashem, who are able to be self-sacrificing, are able to reach higher level, which is the “collective *Yechidah*” [the *Yechidah* point of the soul that is beyond the experience of the ego], and this is in correspondence with their *avodah* to improve step-by-step.



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# LEARNING TORAH AT HOME

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## *\*Learning Torah and Getting Inspiration During Corona*

### Q

My mother was *niftar* recently and ever since then I feel like my life is in danger. I am not sure if this has to do with the coronavirus epidemic that's going on now and perhaps I should be worried about that. I am trying to do *teshuvah* and I am asking Hashem to have mercy on me, but perhaps the Rav has some advice for me which I can do or anything specific I should learn now.

### A

It would be appropriate at this time to study the words of *sefer Nefesh HaChaim* (*Shaar* III, *perek* 12), who says as follows:

“In truth, there is a great matter and a wondrous *segulah* to remove and nullify from oneself any harsh judgments or other accusations against oneself, so that nothing else can have any control over him and have no effect on him at all. This is when a person fixed in his heart that “Hashem is the true G-d, and there is nothing else besides for Him, there is no power besides for Him in the world and any of the worlds at all, and everything is filled with His oneness.” One can nullify in his heart, with total nullification, that he is not concerned at all about any power or accusation [against him] in the world, and one should dedicate and attach his the purity of his thoughts to be subservient only to the Master of everything. Then Hashem will provide for him that all forces should become removed from having any control over him and that nothing in the world can do anything to him.”

It is also proper to learn every day a small section of *Zohar*, even if one doesn't understand properly what one is reading.

[Applicable to men], Besides for this, one should also have fixed times every for learning Gemara *bekiyus* (non-analytical learning) and *b'iyun* (in-depth learning), according to his level.

One should also learn two *halachos* every day and also fulfill them.

## *Learning Which Parts Of Torah Will Reveal The Yechidah Level Of My Soul?*

Q

Practically speaking, how can I connect more to HaKadosh Baruch Hu and reveal the “*Yechidah*” level of the soul at this current time, which the Rav is talking about? What kind of Torah learning do I need to mainly immerse myself in? Should I do hisbodedus the entire day? How much time do I need to spend on it?

A

There is no way to know exactly “how much time” you will need for it, because life is complex for each person and this limits our time. We can only give general rules about the soul. Each person, as mentioned earlier, needs to identify where his deepest “point of connection” is to Hashem, on his own level. That is the point where one can find his “*Yechidah*” level of the soul. To be more precise, this is the “*Yechidah*” level within the “*Nefesh*” of the “*Nefesh*” of the “*Nefesh*” part of the soul (it is called *Yechidah d’Nefesh d’Nefesh d’Nefesh*), without getting into all of the subtleties of this description. On one’s own level, one can find the deepest point possible that he can currently reach, and it is that inner point in oneself which one needs to become more aware of, and to actualize it from its potential state, to expand it further and to progress forward from there.

As for which part of Torah to learn, one should learn the part of Torah that he finds the deepest connection to.

## *How Each Individual Can Connect More To His Personal Torah Learning*

Q

Regarding Torah learning, does a person need to immerse himself more especially at this current time in the areas of Torah that he loves learning about?

A

One needs to immerse himself in the parts of Torah that he feels the biggest connection to, so that he can become immersed in it with the depths of his soul. Since most people find themselves in a complex situation during this time in their lives, most people are not on the level of *Gedolei HaDor* (leaders of the generation), who have the spiritual stamina to be in the house and yet still disconnect emotionally from all of the noise and disturbances surrounding them and who can continue with their regular fixed times of Torah study as usual. There are some rare individuals who can do that, and they are praiseworthy, but here we are speaking about the common case scenario, as opposed to the level that people simply aspire to be on which is not commonly reached.

Therefore, in order for most people to get through this period, they will need to connect to a part of Torah which is closer to their heart. There are two reasons for this. The inner reason is because that is how a person can connect to the Torah on a deeper level. The external reason is because it is more practical to learn something enjoyable over a long period of time, which will help a person withstand the disturbances in the house, because he can easily reconnect to his learning when he is continuously learning what he enjoys.

Practically speaking, a person should pick a Torah topic of particular interest to him, and study it more, clarify it, and immerse himself in it. Alternatively, a person can choose several different inner points to work with, and become more immersed in them. But if any sensible person wants to pass this period correctly and is lacking an enjoyable structure in his schedule, he will find himself amidst the chaos from all of the petty disturbances in his house. Therefore, a person needs to organize a structure of Torah learning for himself. Either a person should choose an expansive Torah topic to study so that he can clarify it better which is usually more common with those who have a more encompassing knowledge in Torah – or, at least, a person should at least pick a Torah topic that he is very connected to, and that is what he should immerse himself in, for the time being.

Although we have a *mitzvah* to know the entire Torah, and an *avreich* has his normal structure of learning from the *kolel*, the fact is that most people will not be able to hold out strong over a long amount of time like this, due to all kinds of complex factors taking place in one's house. Therefore, a person should be wise and choose to learn *sefarim* that he enjoys learning, or a certain Torah topic that he feels particularly drawn towards, and that is what he needs to become more connected with now. In this way, a person will be able to deal better with the various complex situations in his house. Certainly if one has a fixed time every day for learning Daf Yomi or fixed times every day of in-depth Torah learning, one should keep it up as much as he can, but a person needs to be sensible and find areas of Torah learning which are closest to his heart, which he can involve himself in regularly. Although this is normally not the preferred structure of Torah learning for a person, it is the recommended approach for a person to take right now, in order to get by these trying and complex times that we are going through.

## *\*The Balance In My Torah Learning When Stuck At Home*

Q

During these times, I can't think straight because we have no idea when life will return to normal and because I keep hearing bad news about people getting sick, and especially here in *chutz l'aretz* the situation is very bad. It's also hard to be at home all day with the family. Even when I'm learning over the phone with my chavrusa and I'm concentrating on the *Gemara* and I'm even enjoying it, my heart and mind is disoriented, worried, and sad over the whole situation. I find that when I learn *sefarim* that discuss the *Geulah* (Redemption), I feel calmed. Can I learn this now instead of *Gemara*?

Also, the Rav said recently in the *derasha* that a person stuck at home all day now should reach his individuality in Torah learning, such as by learning *sefarim* that he personally enjoys. What then is the balance between learning *sefarim* I enjoy, with learning *Gemara*, *Rashi* and *Tosafos*, which is the main obligation of every individual's Torah study?

A

Set aside a fixed time each day for in-depth *Gemara* study, and don't compromise on it, whether you get a lot out of it or whether you don't. And you can set aside a little bit of each day, even more than you usually do, for learning *sefarim* you enjoy.

How to actually balance your learning schedule is a matter that differs with each person. The inner way to go about this period is to receive vitality both from learning in-depth *Gemara* as well as from learning *sefarim* you enjoy, in a way that is pleasant and calming, as much as you can.

## *Alternatives For Mikveh Before Torah Study During Coronavirus*

Q

If an *avreich* has a set time for learning *pnimiyus* (the inner dimension) of Torah can he continue to learn it even though he can't immerse in a *mikveh*, now that the *mikvas* have been closed? Can washing the hands a certain amount of times suffice for this?

A

During pressing circumstances, such as now when everything is shut down due to coronavirus, a person can be more lenient in this. If possible, a person can take a bath in 40 *se'ah* of collected water.

Even more so, though, one should do like the words of the Rambam, that the point of immersing in the *mikveh* is to immerse in the “waters of *daas*”. Before one learns Torah, one should learn any of the tractates of the order of *Taharos* (the laws of purity), because learning about the laws of *taharos* is like purifying oneself in the waters of *daas*, as Chazal taught, the “*daas*” refers to the laws of *taharos*.

On a higher level than this, when a person learns Torah *lishmah* (not for his own sake), he becomes like a “flowing spring”, as Chazal teach in *Avos*, and then it is like he is being purified by a *maayan*, a “spring” of water, which purifies like a *mikveh*.

One should also fulfill the teaching “Just as a mikveh purifies the impure, so does HaKadosh Baruch Hu purify Yisrael.” One can become totally “immersed” and enveloped by the Infinite Light (*ohr EinSof*) of Hashem which surrounds the person.

## *Becoming More Connected To Torah Learning*

Q

How does a person connect to the Torah?

A

Listen to the *shiurim* of *Da Es Torasecha – Darkei HaLimud* (Getting To Know Your Way In Torah Learning).

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# CORONA & END OF DAYS

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## *What Inner Force Is The Rav Referring To?*

Q

[The Rav explained recently in the *derashah* about corona that a certain “inner force” has come onto the world in the last few years. What is this “inner force” that the Rav is referring to?

A

The spiritual light of the 50<sup>th</sup> gate within the 50<sup>th</sup> gate [both on the sides of good and evil] is referred to by the Kaballists as the *Reisha D'lo Isyada*, “The unknowable beginning.” It is the point known as *Keter*, and the innermost level of this is *Keter D'Keter*.

## *Are We In The End Of Days?*

Q

Are we found now in the End of Days? And how exactly will the “50<sup>th</sup> gate of holiness” prevail?

A

Every person can see now that no one knows what will be. Basically everything now is cloudy and unclear. This corresponds to the revelation of the point of *Reisha d'lo isyada*, to the unknowable beginning, and it is being translated in our world as a reality in which people are not able to know for certain of what is going to happen.

The End of Days is the general name of today's times, and we do not know precisely for how long it will continue. It will be overcome only when the presence of Hashem completely fills each person's heart.



## *Why Did Coronavirus Strike Right Before Pesach?*

Q

Why did the coronavirus happen right before Pesach, which is the most pressure-filled time of the year, with so many things we need to take care of? Before Rosh HaShanah it's also a pressure-filled time, but that's more of an internal kind of pressure, such as thoughts about how to do *teshuvah*, etc. But right before Pesach, the pressure is that people have to do all kinds of errands out of the house. If this would have happened after Pesach, we would have a more settled mind to be able to enter inward into our soul....

A

What did it look like for the Jewish people right before the redemption from Egypt? Did they arrive at the redemption from Egypt from a state of calmness and tranquility? They were coming from being in a state of tough, difficult labor with bricks and mortar and with all of the terrible suffering and oppression that took place in Egypt.

Q

But at the plague of darkness, the Jewish people didn't have to work anymore....

A

That only came after their suffering was so terrible that they davened and cried out to Hashem, after the first Pharaoh died. But before the plague of darkness, the Jewish people first had to go through a period of confusion and disorientation, and from that state of confusion came the next stage, where they enjoyed some tranquility, when Pharaoh died and they cried out to Hashem and their prayers were heard by Hashem. The process began with confusion, with disorientation, and this was followed by tranquility, with the first Pharaoh's death which led to their strong prayers that were heard by Hashem, and then the next step of tranquility started for them, when Egypt was stricken with plagues over the course of 12 months. But it all started with the Jewish people being disoriented. It did not start with calmness and tranquility.

In different terms which mean the same thing, it was dark in the beginning, which was followed by light. It was like the first day of Creation, which began with evening, followed by morning, and this completed the day. That is the way that everything in the Creation happens. "The shell comes before the fruit." The process always starts with confusion, and slowly, those who are *zocheh* will, with the help of Hashem, not die, unlike the four-fifths of the Jewish people who died in the plague

of darkness, and they will enter into the state of “Let there be light”, in which “The night shines like the day” which is said regarding the night of Pesach.

Q

Is right now like when the plague of darkness in Egypt was about to happen?

A

It is not about to happen - everyone is already found in darkness now.

### *\*Is Corona Like The Plague of Darkness When Four-Fifths Died?*

Q

The Rav recently stated in a response that the coronavirus is like the plague of darkness, which was bad for Egypt but good for the *tzaddikim*. Does this mean that those who were *niftar* from coronavirus were like the four-fifths that didn't survive the plague of darkness in Egypt, who didn't merit the *Geulah*?

A

No. By the plague of darkness, only the *reshaim* (those who were deemed wicked) perished from it. Right now, though, were everything is mixed because of the dominance of the *Erev Rav* in the world today, the epidemic can affect either both *tzaddikim* and *reshaim*.

### *How Will The Jewish People Be Affected By Coronavirus?*

Q

Will the Jewish people be hit by all of what's going in the world right now?

A

I do not know about the external ramifications that this period will bring, I am dealing here with the internal aspect. We should be interested now only in the inner ramifications that this has for the Jewish people. From an external perspective, the Jewish people are being hit along with the rest of the world, but from the inner perspective, the Jewish people is not being hit. Wondering about the situation of the world right now and all that's happening now in the world (and all that is going to happen to the world) is exactly the kind of thing that we want to avoid thinking about now, period. There should be no *nafka mina* (difference) to us of what will happen at the end of all this. We are only interested in *netzach nitzachim*, in eternity. Wondering about our physical safety should be a very small Q, compared to the real issues we should be wondering about.

## *What Will Happen After Coronavirus Stops*

Q

What will be when this is all over?

A

The world will not go back to the way it was before, and that is clear. The world will not return to normal again unlike after World War II. Whether this period lasts for a long time or for a short time, it is clear that the world will never return to the way it was before.

## *The World Will Not Return To The Way It Was Before*

Q

What does the Rav mean that the world will not return to the way it was before? Can the Rav be more specific about this? And when exactly did the world enter into the innermost level of the 50<sup>th</sup> level of *tumah*?

A

There will never be calmness and peace in the world again. There will be a lot of extreme changes in the world, from all different directions. Some of these changes will be totally unexpected. Last

year of 5779 was a ‘bridging point’, and now in 5780 we have actually entered into a changed world. Anyone who isn’t so affected by the *tumah* of the world today is able to see it clearly, just as clearly as the sun in mid-day.

## *Handling Changes & Preparing For Redemption*

### Q

The times which we are in now are an awakening to all of us, to reflect, to think about things which we never considered until now or which we didn’t consider enough. The points that people need to focus now, in their avodas Hashem, are considerably different, and this brings several questions with it (and I want to thank the Rav for taking the time answer our questions, especially in this current time we are in):

My main element is “earth”, so how can I deal with the changes that we are all experiencing, so that I don’t become too shaken up in my soul? This is especially because the Rav said that now is a time for change and that we need to be prepared now to make changes, both physically and spiritually, and naturally I don’t do good with changes, because of my “earth” nature [which craves routine and stability]. The Rav also said those in Egypt who couldn’t handle changes were the one who died in the plague of darkness....I feel that my nature makes it’s difficult for me to connect to the avodas Hashem of this period we are in, because I would rather stay with the same old routine.

Also, is now an appropriate time to learn the series *Da Es Geulasecha*, “Reaching Your Inner Redemption”, which explains about reaching one’s individuality?

### A

1) You need to figure out what gives you inner stability in your soul, as opposed to what gives you external, superficial stability alone. When you figure out what gives you inner stability, it will be easier for you to let go of your old routine which you got stability from.

2) Yes, [now is an appropriate time to learn *Da Es Geulasecha*], along with learning about your 4 elements, so that you can become clearer about your personal soul.

## *Accessing The Light of Mashiach*

Q

The *Arizal* that most souls in the generation today are from Erev Rav, and once the Rav said that Mashiach will come and sort out the Erev Rav. Does this mean that now we need to begin this sorting process, and Mashiach will remove us from the harmful influences caused by the Erev Rav?

A

The very power to sort and clarify things is the “light of Mashiach”. It’s not that we’re doing it ourselves and that Mashiach will come finish the job, rather it’s like a person walking with a candle which is able to give light to 100 candles. The light of Mashiach is already shining now, it just doesn’t arrive yet physically because the Redemption didn’t yet come to the physical world, but the light of Mashiach is shining now strongly, and this light is giving us power to sort and clarify things.

## *Why Won't The World Return To Normal?*

Q

The Rav said that the world won’t return again to normal, but if we don’t know anything anyway then maybe we can say that the world will indeed return to normal? So why did the Rav say that the world will for sure never again return to normal?

A

Since we are in the unknown right now, now that we have entered into the period known as “*Reisha d’lo isyada*”, a higher mode of conduct from Heaven, it is therefore not possible for the world to even return to normal again. It has risen to the level of *Reisha d’lo isyada*, and from there it will go to the realm of “*Atik*” and then to the “mouth” of *Adam Kadmon*.<sup>4</sup> It will never again return to the lower realm of until now.

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<sup>4</sup> Editor’s Note: These esoteric concepts are discussed in sefer *Kelach Pischei Chochmah* of the Ramchal

## *What Changed In 5760?*

Q

The Rav explained in the first *derasha* that the world has started to become spiritually ruined since the year 5760. What exactly happened during that year which changed the world?

A

In that year, the power of Amalek began to dominate the world, because in 5760 there were now 240 years left until the end of the world which is at the year 6,000, and the *gematria* of Amalek is 240. Amalek's dominance will get stronger until This World ends.

## *Are We In The War Of Gog And Magog?*

Q

The Rav said in the *derasha* yesterday that the world has reached the state of counterbalance between good and evil. I took from this that we are in the war of Gog and Magog...?

A

We are in the intensity of it.

## *Gog And Magog - Within The Inner Dimension*

Q

Can the war of Gog and Magog within the inner dimension also spread to the outer world and become the actual, physical war of Gog and Magog?

A

Certainly. It cannot “spread” to the outer world – it is already going on!

There have always been wars taking place in the final years of our world. But all of these wars are just the final outcome of something deeper and more internal. All of these wars have been the result of the internal “wars” that have been taking place in the souls of people. The war of Gog and Magog will be revealed outwardly in our world as it will be, and it should make no difference to a person. If a person is busy thinking about it, he is wasting his time because he is not involving himself with priority.

As mentioned earlier the war of Gog and Magog has already been happening in the world.

Q

No one is fighting any wars with anyone...?

A

You want to calculate how Hashem will run the world? A month ago if you would have tried to figure out what will happen, would you have been able to conclude anything? There is no need to think about these things and it should not make a difference to you. There is *ikar* (priority) and *tafel* (secondary) and our job is to deal with the *ikar*. We shall leave what’s *tafel* up to Hashem to do as He wills, and it is not our *avodah* to figure out things.

## *Who Is Gog and Magog Today? Will We Go Into The Desert?*

Q

1) The Rav has said recently that we are currently in the war of Gog and Magog. How is this possible? Who is Gog and Magog today? 2) Also, there are views in Chazal that the Jewish people will be exiled to the desert for 40 years before Mashiach comes. Will this happen soon?

A

1) “Gog and Magog” exists both internally as well as externally.

On the inner level, the “war of Gog and Magog” is when all of one’s inner forces are clashing and “warring” with each other (all of them without exception). It is when each force contradicts another force in the soul and an internal war is created. This is because the light of individuality is right now radiating in each person’s soul, due to the light of the “*Yechidah*” level of the soul which is right now shining strongly in the world. When one’s individuality is being revealed more strongly, even though this is all taking place on an unconscious level, it brings out the differences

between all of the contradicting forces between one and another. Therefore, everything every single force of the soul is at war with one another.

On the outer level the war of Gog and Magog means as follows. There is the root, the secret of oneness, which is the nation of Yisrael. Branching out from this root are two branching nations, Esav and Yishmael. The exile of “Edom” refers to Western society, and the exile of “Yishmael” refers to the Muslim world. However, it is now being revealed that both Edom (Esav) and Yishmael are rooted in Amalek, and to be more precise, they are both rooted in the “Erev Rav”. This allows for the union of Edom and Yishmael, where both Western and Muslim cultures are becoming mixed together. That is why we see today Christian Arabs, and on the other end of the spectrum we find a faction of Muslims such as in Saudi Arabia and other Arabic countries who are joined with America, in the fight against Iran. This is because Islam divides generally into two sects, and part of it is joined with Western society. Even Edom (Esav) is called “Western” society, and west in Hebrew is *maarav*, from the word *taaruvos*, “mixture”, which is a hint to the mixing together of Islam and Western culture. And the Muslims themselves are called Aravim (Arabs), which is also from the word *maarav*, from the word *taaruvos*/mixing.

2) The inner definition of being exiled to the desert for 40 years before Mashiach arrives is that we need to return to the exact way that our ancestors were like when they were exiled in the desert for 40 years. And that is to personify that which Bilaam said, “They are a nation that dwells alone.” That is the way which is becoming revealed now, where each person is now dwelling “alone” at home.

## *How Will We Merit The Geulah In Spite of All The Tumah Today?*

Q

How can we deal with all the *tumah* which is coming from the *shaar hanun d'tumah* today? And how can we go against the rest of the world?

A

There are two parts of how Hashem will redeem the Jewish people by the final *Geulah* (Redemption). One part of it depends on how Hashem wills it to be through His choice. If Hashem redeems us through *middas hadin* (strict justice) then of this it is said, “Which living one can be found righteous by You?” If that is the case, *chas v'shalom*, it will be like the words of the



*sefer Chessed L'Avraham* who states that 7,000 people will remain alive for the Redemption. There is also another way, in which Hashem can bring the Redemption as an “elderly King who is full of compassion”, where Hashem will awaken all souls from within, to recognize Him. And through this, everyone will immediately do teshuvah and return to Hashem, and then everyone will merit the Redemption.

What exactly will happen? None of us can know.

It is the *avodah* of every individual now to use the illumination being shined upon our souls now, to use the spiritual light of the *shaar hanun d'kedushah* (the 50<sup>th</sup> level of holiness). All a person needs to do is to resemble a bit the verse, “*And I have cleaned out the house*”, and then one will feel the inner light which is shining clearly now.

As for your Q about how to go against the rest of the world, Chazal teach on the verse “Avraham HaIvri” that Avraham was on one side of the world while the rest of the world was on the other side. But there is a fundamental difference between what happened with Avraham and with today. Simply speaking, Avraham bequeathed to us the ability, as his descendants, to go against the rest of the world. But the more important aspect of this difference is that Avraham attained all of his levels in a hidden manner, until Hashem showed Himself to him after all of his exertion to recognize the Creator. But we are found at a point where Hashem’s light is already beginning to shine for us, and it is just that there is a point concealing it from us. If one manages to remove that obstacle even slightly, the light of Hashem will immediately shine for him. So it is really not that difficult to go against the rest of the world today.

For there is an equal counterbalance between good (holiness) and evil (impurity), and if there is so much impurity in the world today, there is just as much holiness available which counters it, which we can gain access to. It is the intense light of Hashem which is shining strongly and clearly now.

## *How Will We Merit The Redemption?*

Q

Will the *hisorerus* (awakening) of the Jewish people now bring the *Geulah*?

A

There are two kinds of awakening, an “awakening from below” (when people inspire themselves to do teshuvah and this brings us salvation from Hashem), and there is “awakening from above”

(when there is first a Heavenly arousal and then we are led to be inspired and redeemed from troubles). When we left Egypt and we needed to be saved from the Egyptians who were chasing us, there was first an “awakening from below”. Everyone was trapped by the desert on one side and the sea on the other side, and our only hope was to jump into the sea and rely on a miracle from Hashem. As soon as we went into the sea, which began with Nachshon ben Aminadav, we began the “awakening from below” which merited us to receive salvation from Hashem. The final redemption will reflect the exact state of affairs as the first redemption, which was when we left Egypt. It is an “awakening from below”, from our *mesirus nefesh* (our willingness to dedicate our will for Hashem), and this awakens Hashem’s will to redeem us. This is the simple understanding, that our *mesirus nefesh* awakens Hashem’s will, and this is the normal way of events, in which there is an awakening from below that arouses Hashem’s salvation for us.

However, there is also the “Infinite Light” of Hashem (the *ohr EinSof*) in which Hashem first brings us an “awakening from above” to initiate the process of Redemption, since it is His original will that we be redeemed. Also, we are currently at the end of This World and entering into the Next World. So there are two different viewpoints now. From the perspective of ending This World, we need *mesirus nefesh* to merit redemption. This is “awakening from below.” From the perspective of entering into the Next World, though, we can have “awakening from above” and merit our salvation from Hashem’s will itself.

## *End Of The Media*

Q

What will be happen with the media (mass communication)?

A

This is the last thing which they the media will cut off from. It is from this the media that they live from. From this, they the media will not cut off! Hashem will be the One to cut it all off.

## *The Opportunity Now*

Q

The Rav has said that now there is an opportunity for us to reach eternity. Does this mean that there is an opportunity for us now to become inspired?

A

This is the opportunity to reach eternal life, and it is the depth of our power of *bechirah* (free will), where each person can choose where he wants to become connected to for eternity (*netzach netzachim*).

## *Finding Your “50<sup>th</sup> Gate of Holiness” Within*

Q

The Rav explained in the *derasha* that there are 3 parts to our inner *avodah* now: To connect to oneself, to connect to the Torah, and to Hashem. The Rav emphasized a lot about becoming connected to oneself. Is this the 49<sup>th</sup> level within the 50<sup>th</sup> level of holiness or does a person need to begin by connecting inwardly to himself and then use that inward connection to become further connected to the Torah and to the Creator?

A

This is an approach which emphasized how we can negate the 49 levels, which are only “outside” of a person, things which a person does but which he has no personal connection to. When a person connects inwardly to his very soul, that is the “50<sup>th</sup> gate of holiness”.

Q

Does this mean that a person needs to work with his 4 elements of the soul?

A

It is a very fundamental way. There are other ways as well for a person to reach his soul. The point of the *derasha* was that the Creation now is returning to the original state of man when man was created as an individual. The 4 elements is the very design of Creation, but it is only one of the

ways in which a person can reveal his true self. It is very fundamental, but it is not the only way in which a person can penetrate to his true self. The path that was stressed in the *derasha* was the fundamental concept that Hashem created a person as an individual and that our *avodah* now is to returning to being alone as an individual.

Q

What is the *avodah* of accessing the 49<sup>th</sup> level within the 50<sup>th</sup> level of holiness?

A

It is two-fold. One part is by separating ourselves from the world, by separating ourselves from all of the 49 levels of *tumah* in the world. The other part is to become more in touch with our own soul and reveal it, but at that level we are still not touching our very soul, because it is only at the 49<sup>th</sup> level of holiness within us and only at the 50<sup>th</sup> level of holiness within us do we reach our very soul itself.

Q

How does a person reach the “50<sup>th</sup> level of holiness”?

A

It is accessed when a person can alternate between two different states, the state of thinking and the state of non-intellectual simplicity. At times a person needs to use his mind to think and at other times a person needs to leave his thinking aside and become simply and non-intellectually attached with Hashem. The 50<sup>th</sup> gate of holiness is when a person has this balance of going back and forth between these different states.

Q

What is the point that we are supposed to be reaching?

A

When you arrive at the simple understanding that the Creator exists and that there is none other besides Him. As the Kotzker said, “Ain Od Milvado” means when you know that there is nothing else to know other than the fact that Hashem exists. That is the deepest place in the soul to reach.

In the outer layers of our soul, we can access all kinds of knowledge and information. A person can “know” of Hashem and he can know Torah. But deeper in the soul than this is when one knows about “Ain Od Milvado”, that there is nothing else to know other than this knowledge that that Creator exists.

A person cannot live all the time at this understanding in his soul, because it can be only be accessed for a short amount of time and soon afterwards a person needs to return to routine.

On the outer layer of one's soul, a person gains all kinds of knowledge, and the first thing that a person needs to get to know is the Torah, to gain knowledge in Torah, and from there he can receive all kinds of vast knowledge. But he will also need to access a deeper place in the soul and go to there at times: The place in his soul where he can become aware that there is nothing else to know other than the reality of Hashem's presence. This is the meaning of the concept of "complete d'veykus (attachment) and hiskalelus (integration)" in the Creator.

## *Does This Inner Avodah Need To Be Done Lishmah?*

Q

Can a person try to do the above even if he is doing it *shelo lishmah* (for self-serving motives)?

A

"From *shelo lishmah*, comes *lishmah*." If a person doesn't strive to reach *lishmah*, though, he will remain at the level of "*daas* of the Serpent".

## *Starting From Above Or Below*

Q

There are always two ways of *avodah*, either to "begin from below, to above" or to "begin from above, to below". Can a person do what the Rav is describing by working "from above to below"?

A

He can do it only if he is indeed able to reach above. In order to work from above to below, a person needs to be connected to above, or, he needs to have *mesirus nefesh*, which enables a person to penetrate to the highest levels. If a person is not at that level, he needs to begin from below, according to the level he is at.

## *Can A Person Merit Geulah Even If His Middos Aren't Perfect?*

Q

If a person still hasn't yet perfected his *middos* can he merit the *Geulah*?

A

One needs to become further connected with his most positive *middah*, and correspondingly, a person also needs to try to fix his worst *middah*. Practically speaking, though, a person enters inwardly into his soul mainly by consistently making use of his best *middah*. But that is all true when one uses the path of *middos*. There is also a path to reach the soul and thereby merit the *Geulah* through Torah learning, and there is also a path to reach the soul and thereby merit the *Geulah* through having *temimus* and *peshitus*, earnest and simple connection to Hashem.

## *\*\*\*Why Does The Corona Bacteria Have A Round Shape?*

Q

I saw the microscopic images of the coronavirus bacteria and it is strangely pretty looking, unlike other bacteria which looks hideous. It is has a round shape with many straight lines coming out of it, a very peculiar shape. Is there a deeper and more spiritual meaning to this?

A

The corona is the secret of "*Keser*" (crown), also called the *igul* (circle), from which all *kavin* (lines or channels) spread out from [and the corona is the evil, impure manifestation of the *Keser*]. This represents the Kabbalistic concept of the relationship between *igulim* (circles) and *kavim* (lines), explained in the beginning of *sefer Eitz Chaim*. The corona is the impure manifestation of the *Keser*, and that is why it represents the root of all *tumah* (defilement).

## \*\*\**Why Did Corona Come From A Bat?*

### Q

There was news going around in the world that coronavirus came from a person who ate a bat and developed a virus from it, which spread to everyone else. If this news is true, is there a connection between coronavirus (which is the physical counterpart of the “50<sup>th</sup> Gate of Defilement” that is internet and media) and a bat? What’s unique about a bat that it can cause a global pandemic on the level of the “50<sup>th</sup> gate of defilement”?

### A

The Hebrew word for “bat” is *atalef*, which is equal in *gematria* (numerical value in Hebrew) to the word “*keitz*”, “end” [the final days].

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# PRACTICALLY MANAGING

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## *Stocking Up On Food*

Q

For how long should a person stock up on food now?

A

For a few weeks.

## *Hishtadlus Vs. Bitachon When Stocking Up*

Q

Is there a need to do anything to prepare for this emergency? Or is there no need for this? And for other things? And for how long should we prepare for?

A

There is no one A to this Q. It is the same, age-old Q of how much bitachon (faith in G-d) and hishtadlus (effort) a person needs to have. No one knows what will be.... Everyone should prepare somewhat and do hishtadlus buying what he needs to buy for the house, but as for how much to buy, this all depends on how much bitachon one has if one has less bitachon, he needs to do more hishtadlus and buy more, because he is not on the level of having so much bitachon, whereas the more bitachon one has, the less he needs to buy. But there is no one A to this Q for everyone. Everyone needs to prepare by buying some food for the house, but how much a person needs to buy is a matter that depends on how much of a level of bitachon one personally has.

## *What's Going To Be??*

Q

What's going to be? Are we not supposed to think at all of what's going to be in the world??

A

The very thought of “What’s going to be??” is really coming from a desire to stay on this world and to stay attached to this world, from a refusal to accept Hashem’s new world. It should make no difference to us what’s going to be. Hashem will run this world as He sees fit. You can wonder about what to do for a small amount of time as part of your *hishtadlus*, but to wonder about what is going to be with the world is coming from a desire for permanence for This World. This same desire to stay attached to the current situation was the same problem that the four-fifths of the Jewish people who died out in Egypt in the plague of darkness had.

### *How Long Will This Period Last?*

Q

How long will this process take...?

A

How long did the Holocaust take? Six years and no one then knew how long it will take. We cannot know how long this period will last for. This is not an issue of how much time it is going to take.

### *How Will People Have Parnassah Now?*

Q

The Rav explained that now is the time to enjoy becoming closer to Hashem when we are being secluded in our homes. What about people who work for a living, and people who don’t have the lifestyle of learning Torah all day? How will they support their families?

A

The Q of “How we will support our families??” is the same Q asked by those who wonder, “What will we eat during the seventh year when it is *shemittah*?” The world now is resembling a

state of the future when it will be a “day that is entirely Shabbos”. It is like a situation of *shemittah* for the world right now, where we don’t work. Hashem promises in the Torah that those who don’t work during *shemittah* will receive His blessing for the following three years.

The fact that people are worried and concerned of how they will support their families, realistically speaking, is because of the external layer of the reality today, which is that there is an epidemic taking place in the world and this results in certain deficiencies, and therefore most people are left without *parnassah* now. But at the inner dimension of what’s taking place today, the absence of work today is actually because there is a revelation in the world now of “Shabbos, the source of all blessing”, where abstaining for work actually is the very source of all *shefa* (Heavenly blessing). One’s *shefa* will not come from the superficial kind of thinking in which people are thinking of different ways to manage financially. Rather, it will only come from Hashem’s inner light, which is the light of *Shabbos Kodesh*, the source of all blessing.

The more that a person identifies with this concept and becomes more connected in his soul to it – and, in simpler language, when one strengthens his *bitachon* (reliance) on Hashem, knowing that He alone is the sole provider for everyone, and that He is the source of everything, then one’s *shefa* will be coming from the *shefa* of “the day that is entirely Shabbos”. That is the root of the inner light that is radiating at this time.

## *Dealing With Family Now*

Q

How can we deal good with everyone in the family who are stuck now for a long time in the house?

A

One needs to reveal *ahavas Yisrael* towards them, to reveal a genuine relationship with them, and to understand that all other relationships are from the world of falsity.

## *Keeping A Calm And Happy Atmosphere In The Home*

Q

I see many people, including my own family, who are full of tension and sadness because of the situation going on now of the coronavirus epidemic. I feel that I can create a calm and happy atmosphere in the house, and I think I have the bitachon to empower me do that. But according to the Rav's guidance on the current situation I am not sure what the mood in the house is supposed to be like...

A

Generally a person needs to create a calm and happy atmosphere in the home. From that calm atmosphere you are able to uplift the souls of your family and inculcate them with emunah in Hashem and that He watches over everyone and that everything He does is good. And you can also inspire them to love Hashem, which will lead each of them to improving themselves in whatever they personally need to improve in.

## *Avodah Of Spending All Day In The Home With The Children*

Q

Practically speaking, during this time people are found at home all day with the children. How are we supposed to balance this together with all of the inner *avodah* that we need to be doing with ourselves?

A

Just as when it comes to anything else that you need to be involved with on this world, you can do it without fully involving your soul in it, leaving some space for your own inner self even as you're in the midst of a lot of commotion. When you need to be involved with your children, you don't need to become totally absorbed in them. Part of your self can be remain "outside" of them even as you're taking of them, so that you are only partially involved with them, and not fully. Chazal taught, "Torah is good together with *derech erez* (the mundane), for exerting oneself in both of them helps one forget about sinning", and the *Nefesh HaChaim* explains that even as a

person is involved with *derech erez* managing his mundane affairs, one should involve his thoughts in Torah study. That means that even when a person needs to take care of his various worldly responsibilities of life, he does not need to be fully involved in the worldliness of it. Instead, he can move back and forth from it. When a person needs to be spending time with his children, he should immerse his soul totally with his children. If he does, he is found totally in the mundane. A person should be involved with his children for some time, but even during the time he is involved with them, his thoughts need to go back and forth between being immersed in the spiritual i.e. thoughts of Torah, or thoughts pertaining to self-improvement and serving Hashem, or thoughts of *emunah* with being involved in the physical side to life.

## *Social Distancing*

Q

What is the way to view our social distancing now from others?

A

The fact that Hashem has caused everyone to become distanced from others is not only for the purpose of being healthy, it is to show us that we need our inner health, which is to emotionally disconnect from the world. We can all see with our eyes that it was too difficult for anyone to disconnect from interacting with the world today, and now Hashem has come and separated the world from everything. By closing down all venues of entertainment in the world, all of the restaurants and hotels and all places of entertainment, He has quickly silenced the 49 gates of *tumah* in the world. But the only thing that remains which Hashem didn't take away yet is the *shaar hanun d'tumah*, the 50<sup>th</sup> gate of defilement. A person today now has the choice to either separate from everything in the world and to become alone, like when Yaakov was alone, like the “nation that dwells alone”, and feel totally reliant on Hashem, which is the true life – or, a person chooses to connect to the media and to internet, which is the *shaar hanun d'tumah!*

## *Do We Need To Be Afraid Of Getting The Virus?*

Q

Do we need to be afraid of catching the coronavirus from the environment outside? Or should we not be afraid of anything?

A

There is a verse, “*They feared sin, in Zion.*” The only thing a person needs to be afraid of is sin.

Now there is also a Q of how to actually behave, of how much to be careful and how much you don’t need to be careful with. There is a very delicate point here, and that is because there is the way which the community has to behave in, and there is the way which the individual needs to behave in.

When it comes to how the community needs to behave, certainly everyone needs to adhere to the guidelines, because if everyone is careless, then *chas v’shalom* the virus can spread all over with disastrous results. But there is also the way which the individual needs to act in, and this changes depending on one’s personal spiritual level. There is no clear-cut definition on how each person needs to act. Certainly a person needs to keep away from anything that’s clearly dangerous. But regarding certain things which are unlikely to cause danger to anyone, it depends. If a person is on a high level, he doesn’t have to be as careful he can have *bitachon*, and if a person is not on a high level, he needs to be more careful.

In short, there is the way which the general public needs to act with, the guidelines which a *klal* (collective whole or community) needs to adhere to, and that is one way, and there is also the way that each individual needs to take, by acting according to his personal level. One is not allowed to deliberately place himself in dangerous situations and rely on a miracle, because the Gemara says that it is forbidden to rely on a miracle. But if it’s something that is unlikely to cause a danger, it depends on what level the person is on, if he will need to be careful from it or not.

## *\*\*How Can I Cope Emotionally During Corona?*

### Q

During these times we have no idea of what's going to happen. I know that I should be happy that the world has become a purer place now, because Hashem has shut down all the places of empty pursuits, and that Hashem is preparing the world for its purpose. But I find myself bothered with thoughts about "What's going to be?? What will be with my wife? My children? My financial situation? Will I always have food?" There are all kinds of small issues that I am busy with, and they are issues which are bothering everyone right now. I know that it's all Hashem's will that this is happening right now and that He has a plan and purpose to it all, but I can't help worrying about these issues, in spite of the fact that there's a larger picture going on here. I would be happy to know from the Rav on how I should approach the situation now, to be able to deal with it intelligently and emotionally, and to have a healthy, balanced perspective towards the whole situation now - so that I can go free from what's bothering me, and to gain a more enlightened perspective about it, if that's possible.

### A

The light which you need to work with now, at this time, is the light of *mesirus nefesh* (self-sacrifice). This doesn't only mean that you need to be prepared to actually sacrifice your life if you must. It means that you need to use the "light" [the spiritual power] of *mesirus nefesh*. This light is hidden in the depths of every Jew's soul, and it becomes revealed during a time when a Jew faces a decree of genocide or when he is being forced to commit any of the three cardinal sins, *chas v'shalom*. It is a power can be accessed by any Jew even if he is on the lowliest level possible.

In order to awaken and reveal this power, it is recommended that you learn the *Rambam's Hilchos Mesirus Nefesh*. The light of *mesirus nefesh* is contained in the learning these *halachos*. It is like the advice of Reb Yisrael Salanter, that when a person wants to improve himself, he should learn that part of the Torah which corresponds to it.

Besides for this, you should reflect on the very idea of *mesirus nefesh*, until it settles well in your mind, and then you can awaken your heart to connect to the level of Avraham, who was willing to give up his life in sanctification of Hashem's Name.

## *Should Children Be Pressured To Follow The Social Distancing Guidelines?*

Q

In these trying times we are in, there are people who are high-risk to coronavirus. What should such a person do if he has big children in the house who are not being careful with social distancing? He can't dictate to them what they should do, and it's possible that they are endangering his life. We are trying to follow all the guidelines that were set and we are trying to be careful, but what should we do, practically speaking, about family members who aren't being careful? Do we need to put pressure on them, or should we have *emunah* and not be concerned about this?

A

It is a very high level to have *emunah* and not be concerned that your children will endanger you, because they have *bechirah* (free will), and therefore it's very difficult to have *emunah* that others can't harm you when they are being careless through their *bechirah*. A person is able to have *emunah* and not believe in nature, meaning that he has *emunah* that only Hashem is in control of nature. A person is also able to use *emunah* to negate the power of *bechirah*, since he believes that everything is from Hashem and that no one else's *bechirah* can harm him unless Hashem decreed it to happen, and this is a higher level of *emunah* than when a person believes that Hashem controls nature, and it is less practical for people, who live in the material world which they identify very strongly with.

Practically speaking, you need wisdom of life to go about this. Either you can designate a room in the house for the high-risk person to stay in, or you can rent out a place for your older child to stay in so that you can have the high-risk family member stay in your house. Sometimes you may need to send your children out of the house. Every situation needs to be dealt with wisely and with great sensitivity, and you need to weigh out what the best possible option is, and there a lot of complicated factors involved.

In many homes, the situation right now is causing an endless amount of complex factors for everyone, in terms of activities, emotional needs, supporting the family, having *emunah*, and endless other factors taking place. Some of it is *avodas Hashem*, some of it is just about knowing how to act practically and wisely. Every situation needs to be weighed out carefully, along with *davening* to Hashem, of how to lead the home effectively.



A very big part of the suffering that people are going through now is that they are disoriented, and their minds are so clouded that they can't do proper decision-making, and this creates additional suffering within the atmosphere of the house, and it becomes a vicious, endless cycle of suffering for everyone. People need a settled mind and some calmness. The situation we are going through now is not going to be easy for anyone, but within all of it we can still settle our minds and weigh out our thoughts properly and make proper decisions. We can do this by writing down all the different possible options we have, and organizing the list, and then asking advice from another person for a new idea we didn't think about. Then we can choose the most practical idea for our homes, but it will never be easy. We just need to look for the most viable solution in comparison to all other options that aren't as viable. Every situation in every home is different.

*\*\*Should I Listen To The Health Ministry,  
My Rav, or My Rebbe?*

Q

I am very confused. The Ministry of Health is advising to do certain things, and my Rav who is my Posek said that I should follow what they said. But the Rebbe of my Chassidus is advising otherwise. What am I supposed to do? I am so confused!

A

You need to do what your Rav paskens for you to do halachically. Along with this, strengthen your emunah, and repeat this and fix this in your heart, that all of the precautions and safety measures are just practical steps to take because that is the will of Hashem to do, but the true Protector is only the Creator, and no one else but Him. All of your actions cannot subtract or add any gains to your situation, because it is ultimately all up to Hashem, and no one or nothing else.

*When Will Coronavirus End?*

Q

The Rav said regarding the coronavirus that we will see better day. Does this mean that it will go away, or that it will continue?

A

I do not know.

Q

What I meant to ask was: What did the Rav mean that there will be better days than this?

A

The entire Creation consists of various forms of movement. People will see one part of the movement of something and they will conclude that the entire reality of something is what how they are seeing it, and they don't understand that everything which we see is shaky and subject to change. Even more so, since we are found in the *ikvesa d'meshicha*, at its very end, any reality is subject to change at any given moment, because everything is shaky now. This is the concept known as *Reisha D'Lo Isyada*, "The unknowable beginning", where there is uncertainty at every moment because everything is moving and intersecting and becoming mixed together every moment. As a byproduct of this, there is nothing stable anymore. And since the reality we are in now is part of the *Reisha D'Lo Isyada*, we really cannot know what will happen. It is not by chance that we can't know what is going to happen. It is intrinsically built-in to the design of Creation, that we cannot know with certainty about anything that's going to happen, that the reality is "The heart is not revealed to the mouth", meaning that until we are able to speak with our mouths with certainty about what will happen, it remains at the level of the "heart", it is all a secret, so we are not able to know precisely about the process which will happen.

The Rambam says this more clearly: "Until the redemption comes, we do not know how it will happen." This is not only referring to the uncertainty surrounding the actual moment when Mashiach will arrive. It also applies to the moments preceding Mashiach's arrival, which is the *ikvesa d'meshicha* (the footsteps of Mashiach). Before the actual "feet" of Mashiach arrive, we cannot be clear about what is going to happen.

We need to walk now with *temimus* (earnestness), with simple belief and trust in Hashem. We need to live every day with HaKadosh Baruch Hu present in our lives. We arise with Him. We walk with Him. We sleep with Him. We live with Him. We move with Him, step after step. It is like when Moshe approached the *arafel* (the thick, dark clouds) where Hashem was. In the darkness of *arafel*, a person can only see a few steps in front of him, and he cannot see the distance, only what's directly in front of him. That is the kind of life that is "*Baruch Hashem Yom Yom*", "Blessed is Hashem, day by day."

Understandably, there are things a person needs to be concerned about regarding the longer period of time that we may be facing, but one has to go about it sensibly and with careful planning.

But for the most part, we do not know anything about what our situation is going to be like, and it doesn't matter what the experts say, even if they're the biggest experts. Any opinion given by one who imagines himself to be an expert on what's going to happen, is not worth anything, as it's clear to any sensible person. The reality is that we cannot see in the distant horizon. We can barely see what's directly on the horizon for us.

What will be the next step? That is all in the hands of Hashem, and one has to trust that Hashem will guide him, and it is with Him that we walk. Hashem said "*Follow Me into the desert*" for 40 years, and now we are going with Him as well. And it will be exactly like it was in the desert: "*By the mouth of Hashem they traveled, and by the mouth of Hashem they camped.*" Did Moshe Rabbeinu know what was going to happen? No, he was relying on Hashem to take care of him and everyone else, travelling and encamping only by Hashem's command. That is the way a true life looks like. The only question is if a person is prepared to enter into such a life. This is the test which a person is going through at this time. There is nothing clear to us right now except for that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is guiding us on a path that is for our own good, to illuminate our souls, and to shine the light of the complete redemption, speedily, in our days.

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# DAVENING ABOUT "THE SITUATION"

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## *Davening About The Situation For Now*

Q

The Rav said that if the world returns to the way it was before then it will be a curse for the world. So why should we *daven*?

A

We should *daven* that the *shaar hanun d'kedushah* should overcome the *shaar hanun d'tumah*. On the external level, we should *daven* that this will cause the epidemic to go away. On the internal level, we should *daven* that *kedushah* should prevail over *tumah*. It is not simply like *davening* for any illness to go away.

## *What To Daven For Now*

Q

What exactly should we *daven* for now?

A

We should *daven* that the light of the Redemption should shine, illuminate and purify all souls. From this it should spread also to the physical body of all people, so that should be a complete *refuah shelaimah* (a full recovery) for everyone. One should not only daven that there should be a *refuah shelaimah* alone, because then a person only wants recovery for people and he is fine if Hashem lets all the *tumah* remain in the world. Instead, we should daven that Hashem will send all sick people a *refuah shelaimah* by removing all the *tumah* from the world.

*\*\*\*Keeping Social Distancing  
When Davening With A Minyan*

Q

The situation of staying at home all day now [due to being quarantined because of the corona situation] has created some confusion for us. In America it seems that people don't know if the danger has passed. Also, because people are finding it too hard to stay at home all day and *daven* at home, the Rabbonim here have worked together with the government to allow for *minyanim* in backyards, with exactly 10 people and by keeping to all of the social distancing rules. If the government sees that we are listening to the rules than they can work further with the Rabbonim to ease the guidelines more, and the police will make their rounds to see if everyone is keeping all the rules. The Rabbonim here say that there is no obligation to join a *minyan* now, and that it's optional now, due to the stress that people feel when they have to *daven* at home every day.

(1) Should I *daven* with the *minyan* outside in the backyards, or should I remain *davening* at home? (2) Also, though I miss very much davening with a minyan, I gained a new appreciation for *davening* when I was forced to *daven* at home every day and I was even *davening* better at home than with a *minyan* ! If I *daven* in a small *minyan* of 10 people in the backyard, I won't have the same good *davening* as I was having until now. So are we supposed to do everything we can to return to the way things were before [*davening* with a *minyan*, etc.] or should we wait completely "until the wrath passes" before returning to normal?

A

There is no need to push to get everything back to the way it was before, because during this current time, the spiritual light of the secret of one's "holy individuality" is shining strongly now.

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# CORONAVIRUS & THE NATIONS

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## *Why Was Italy Hit Hard?*

Q

We can see that Italy has been hit very hard by the virus. Is this because Italy the country identified by our Sages as Amalek is the root of the ruination of our generation?

A

The Gemara says that on the day Shlomo married the daughter of Pharoah the angel of Gavriel stuck a piece of land in the water which became the country of “Italy, a country of Greece.” The first country of Amalek (Greece) and the last country of Amalek (Greece) are both rooted in the same place.

## *Is This Epidemic Unprecedented?*

Q

What did the Rav mean that there was never anything like the current epidemic the world is facing now? Wasn't there an epidemic earlier than 100 years ago which wiped out a third of the world's population?

A

Already in the times of Enosh, a third of the world was destroyed. By the Flood, the entire world was basically destroyed. Right now, the forces of *tumah* (impurity) have penetrated to every place in the world, because that is the nature of the 50<sup>th</sup> gate within the 50<sup>th</sup> gate of *tumah*.

## *What Is Hashem Showing Gentiles With Coronavirus?*

Q

The Rav said in the derasha about the *avodas Hashem* now during coronavirus that Hashem has brought something to the world which has caused us to all go into our houses, so that we can reveal “the light of Hashem” in the privacy of our own house. What message then is Hashem sending the



goyim (gentiles), who are also being secluded in their houses? What “light of Hashem” can the goyim reveal, if they do not recognize Hashem?

## A

That is a very good Q. If the spiritual light being revealed upon the world now would be at its total, absolute level, then everyone would enter inward into their souls, and it would be the revelation of “The King has brought me into His chambers.” Those souls of the gentiles who are in the category of *chassidei umos haolam* (the righteous among the nations), whom the Gemara says about are destined to become the servants of the Jewish people in the future (that is, for Jews who were careful with the mitzvah of *tzitzis*, as the Gemara states), are those fortunate souls of gentiles who will merit to enter inward. Only those gentiles who merit entering inward into their souls and attaining a deep connection to the G-d of the Jewish people will be the *chassidei umos haolam* who will remain alive in the time of the future.

But when we are not *zoche* (meritorious), and instead we are forced to enter inward due to some external reason, it is like what the Gemara says that there are places of prayer for Jews and for gentiles, meaning that for every concept of holiness that exists, there is a corresponding concept in the side of impurity. In that case, when there is some external reason that forces everyone to come inside their homes, such as when there is an epidemic spreading through a city (*Talmud Bavli Bava Metzia 60a*), then the gentiles as well are being forced to enter inward. That creates confusion, because it means that the Jewish people are entering into the inner dimension together with the *Erev Rav* (the gentile souls of the Mixed Multitude), and this causes most souls to have a spiritual downfall, because it causes people to find nothing but the depths of the “50<sup>th</sup> level of defilement” when they are forced into seclusion in their homes, and thereby, the Jews become mixed with the impurity of the *goyim* (i.e. being immersed in *tumah*) all day at home, which translates nowadays into surfing the Internet all day at home, the epitome of the non-Jewish way of living.

That is the depth of the terrible spiritual downfall which affects both Jews and non-Jews together, when they are being forced into seclusion in their homes, and this is the meaning of how the impurity of the *Erev Rav* is its power of *taaruvos*, “mixture” the mixing together of all the worst influences on the purity of the soul, and it is the root of all evil.

## *\*\*\*Why Did Corona Originate In China Specifically?*

### Q

Was there a connection between the coronavirus disease and China, where the virus originated? On one hand, from a spiritual standpoint, China is known for its wickedness. This is a nation where people kill baby girls (Rachmana Litzlan), a nation who are known for murder, cruelty, stealing, and denial of G-d. In particular, they are missing the natural parental compassion towards their children, because they kill their own children, and that makes them particularly evil, to the point that even the other nations of the world are disgusted from them. So is China particularly connected to the “50<sup>th</sup> Gate of Defilement”, which, as the Rav explained, is the spiritual source of the coronavirus?

Avraham fathered children from Keturah and then sent them away to the East, and I have heard (I couldn't remember the source) that the Eastern nations descend from these children of Keturah who were sent eastbound, and China is the central Eastern nation. Avraham gave “gifts” to the children of Keturah when he sent them away, and Rashi explains that this refers to the knowledge of impurity and sorcery. This would explain why the Chinese are particularly connected with tumah (spiritual defilement) and why they are the embodiment of the “50<sup>th</sup> gate of defilement”. However, why would the “50<sup>th</sup> gate of defilement” (represented by its physical counterpart, the coronavirus) be manifest in China specifically, as opposed to other nations? Why didn't the coronavirus instead originate in the countries of “Amalek”, such as Italy and Germany?

Also, since coronavirus is the revelation of the “50<sup>th</sup> gate of impurity” that is the media and the internet, as the Rav explained, why didn't coronavirus originate instead in the country where digital and internet technology was developed – which would be America?

## A

Avraham came from the eastern part of the world and shined the world with righteousness [by teaching about belief in the one G-d]. Everything began and ended with him, and at the end of his life when he merited the blessing that G-d would become the “shield of Avraham”, an equal force on the side of impurity was created. Avraham sent away his children that he bore from Keturah, and separated them from his family in his lifetime, and that is where the mixture of nations started from. Since Avraham was a father who separated his children from him, those estranged children would mimic that very way of behavior towards their own children, for generations to come [*Ed.: thus the Chinese, who descend from Avraham’s children from Keturah, have been known for centuries to be cruel to their children*].

Amalek intermarried with the descendants of Yishmael and Esav, mixing into Avraham’s descendants. This was a fundamental kind of mixture that affected and ruined whatever separation Avraham made. Whatever Avraham separated, Amalek mixed together [by marrying into the nations of Yishmael and Esav].

The overindulgence in coarse physicality, and the unending pursuit of materialism, has its source in America. The *tumah* (spiritual defilement) of idol worship comes mainly from the East. The technology [for media and internet] was developed in America, but the *tumah* (defilement) of technology is more connected with the East.

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ADDITIONS 05/22/2020

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## \*\*\**What Exactly Is The Refuah For Corona?*

Q

The Rav has said that the remedy for coronavirus is to access “ayin” [lit. “nothingness”, to negate one’s sense of self) and on a deeper level, to feel “efes” [lit. “zero”, to feel absolute nothingness of all physical reality]. I want to understand this better. I have understood from the Rav that a person can actually get a refuah for corona by adhering to the above advice. Baruch Hashem this question is not relevant to me or even to anyone related to me, but I am asking this question with regards to the rest of Klal Yisrael, and the Rav’s answer to this will probably be of immeasurable benefit to anyone. After all, who’s not interested in knowing the refuah for corona!! This is what I would like to know:

(1) When the Rav says that the refuah for corona is “ayin” (nothingness), does this mean negating one’s sense of self, or having mesirus nefesh (being self-sacrificing)?, or having emunah (faith in G-d)? And when the Rav says that a deeper method of refuah for corona is to access the power of “efes”, does this mean to think about *Ain Od Milvado* (there is nothing besides for Hashem)? And how can a person sick with corona practically use the above advice?

A

1) “*Efes*” (to feel a sense of absolute nothingness) means to think *Ain Od Milvado* (that there is nothing besides for Hashem).

Q

(2) And, if I’ve understood correctly that “efes” (nothing) means for a person to think about *Ain Od Milvado*, what about a person who thinks a lot about *Ain Od Milvado* but he also has Internet or a smartphone, which is a connection to the “50<sup>th</sup> gate of defilement”, as the Rav equates it with? Can a person still get healed from corona by thinking about *Ain Od Milvado* if has any connection to internet, since he is still using the powerful spiritual illumination of “*Ain Od Milvado*” which, as it is known, can fix any damage? Can we say “There is no place empty from Hashem”, and that “There is nothing else besides for Hashem, even in the emptiest void of the world”, which would mean that even if a person remains connected with internet and media, the “50<sup>th</sup> gate of defilement”, in the end of the day he is still accessing the light of Hashem, by thinking about the concept of *Ain Od Milvado*?

A

2) No [thinking *Ain Od Milvado* won't help a person who possesses any sort of internet connection], because he cannot completely connect to the reality of *Ain Od Milvado* when he is being blocked by a “barrier” [the fact that he has internet or a smartphone]. For him, thinking about *Ain Od Milvado* will just be superficial and external.

Q

(3) The Rav said in one of the responses that if a person truly gets the coronavirus disease, he will immediately die from it, and if he recovers from the coronavirus, it's a sign that the virus didn't really attach itself to him. From what the Rav is saying it seems that there is no refuah for coronavirus. But didn't the Rav say that there is indeed a refuah for coronavirus, which is by thinking about the concepts of ayin and Ain Od Milvado?

A

3) [When a person truly gets the coronavirus, meaning that the virus completely attached itself to him], either he simply dies, or he can “die” in the spiritual sense, on a “repaired” level, by undergoing total self-effacement (*bittul*) through contemplating *Ain Od Milvado*, that there is nothing besides for Hashem.

Q

(4) The medical world is busy developing a vaccine for corona, and several countries have said that they are in the final stages of completing the cure for corona. What should be our attitude towards this? Is it a problem if we hope that a natural cure for this disease should be discovered? Or would that just be defeating the entire purpose of why Hashem sent this virus to the world, and we should instead just place our bitachon in Hashem and rely on Him that a yeshuah (salvation) will only come from Him and not from human beings?

A

4) Any cure discovered for it will only cure the “branches” of this disease – it won't be a cure for this disease at its root.

## \*\*\**Keeping Social Distancing When Davening With A Minyan*

### Q

The situation of staying at home all day now [due to being quarantined because of the corona situation] has created some confusion for us. In America it seems that people don't know if the danger has passed. Also, because people are finding it too hard to stay at home all day and *daven* at home, the Rabbonim here have worked together with the government to allow for *minyanim* in backyards, with exactly 10 people and by keeping to all of the social distancing rules. If the government sees that we are listening to the rules than they can work further with the Rabbonim to ease the guidelines more, and the police will make their rounds to see if everyone is keeping all the rules. The Rabbonim here say that there is no obligation to join a *minyan* now, and that it's optional now, due to the stress that people feel when they have to *daven* at home every day.

(1) Should I *daven* with the *minyan* outside in the backyards, or should I remain *davening* at home? (2) Also, though I miss very much davening with a minyan, I gained a new appreciation for *davening* when I was forced to *daven* at home every day and I was even *davening* better at home than with a *minyan* ! If I *daven* in a small *minyan* of 10 people in the backyard, I won't have the same good *davening* as I was having until now. So are we supposed to do everything we can to return to the way things were before [*davening* with a *minyan*, etc.] or should we wait completely "until the wrath passes" before returning to normal?

### A

There is no need to push to get everything back to the way it was before, because during this current time, the spiritual light of the secret of one's "holy individuality" is shining strongly now.

## \*\*\**Why Did Corona Originate In China Specifically?*

### Q

Was there a connection between the coronavirus disease and China, where the virus originated? On one hand, from a spiritual standpoint, China is known for its wickedness. This is a nation where people kill baby girls (Rachmana Litzlan), a nation who are known for murder, cruelty, stealing, and denial of G-d. In particular, they are missing the natural parental compassion towards

their children, because they kill their own children, and that makes them particularly evil, to the point that even the other nations of the world are disgusted from them. So is China particularly connected to the “50<sup>th</sup> Gate of Defilement”, which, as the Rav explained, is the spiritual source of the coronavirus?

Avraham fathered children from Keturah and then sent them away to the East, and I have heard (I couldn't remember the source) that the Eastern nations descend from these children of Keturah who were sent eastbound, and China is the central Eastern nation. Avraham gave “gifts” to the children of Keturah when he sent them away, and Rashi explains that this refers to the knowledge of impurity and sorcery. This would explain why the Chinese are particularly connected with *tumah* (spiritual defilement) and why they are the embodiment of the “50<sup>th</sup> gate of defilement”. However, why would the “50<sup>th</sup> gate of defilement” (represented by its physical counterpart, the coronavirus) be manifest in China specifically, as opposed to other nations? Why didn't the coronavirus instead originate in the countries of “Amalek”, such as Italy and Germany?

Also, since coronavirus is the revelation of the “50<sup>th</sup> gate of impurity” that is the media and the internet, as the Rav explained, why didn't coronavirus originate instead in the country where digital and internet technology was developed – which would be America?

## A

Avraham came from the eastern part of the world and shined the world with righteousness [by teaching about belief in the one G-d]. Everything began and ended with him, and at the end of his life when he merited the blessing that G-d would become the “shield of Avraham”, an equal force on the side of impurity was created. Avraham sent away his children that he bore from Keturah, and separated them from his family in his lifetime, and that is where the mixture of nations started from. Since Avraham was a father who separated his children from him, those estranged children would mimic that very way of behavior towards their own children, for generations to come [*Ed.: thus the Chinese, who descend from Avraham's children from Keturah, have been known for centuries to be cruel to their children*].

Amalek intermarried with the descendants of Yishmael and Esav, mixing into Avraham's descendants. This was a fundamental kind of mixture that affected and ruined whatever separation Avraham made. Whatever Avraham separated, Amalek mixed together [by marrying into the nations of Yishmael and Esav].

The overindulgence in coarse physicality, and the unending pursuit of materialism, has its source in America. The *tumah* (spiritual defilement) of idol worship comes mainly from the East. The technology [for media and internet] was developed in America, but the *tumah* (defilement) of technology is more connected with the East.



### \*\*\**Why Does The Corona Bacteria Have A Round Shape?*

Q

I saw the microscopic images of the coronavirus bacteria and it is strangely pretty looking, unlike other bacteria which looks hideous. It has a round shape with many straight lines coming out of it, a very peculiar shape. Is there a deeper and more spiritual meaning to this?

A

The corona is the secret of “*Keser*” (crown), also called the *igul* (circle), from which all *kavin* (lines or channels) spread out from [and the corona is the evil, impure manifestation of the *Keser*]. This represents the Kabbalistic concept of the relationship between *igulim* (circles) and *kavim* (lines), explained in the beginning of *sefer Eitz Chaim*. The corona is the impure manifestation of the *Keser*, and that is why it represents the root of all *tumah* (defilement).

### \*\*\**Why Did Corona Come From A Bat?*

Q

There was news going around in the world that coronavirus came from a person who ate a bat and developed a virus from it, which spread to everyone else. If this news is true, is there a connection between coronavirus (which is the physical counterpart of the “50<sup>th</sup> Gate of Defilement” that is internet and media) and a bat? What’s unique about a bat that it can cause a global pandemic on the level of the “50<sup>th</sup> gate of defilement”?

A

The Hebrew word for “bat” is *atalef*, which is equal in *gematria* (numerical value in Hebrew) to the word “*keitz*”, “end” [the final days].

*Additions added 07/15/2020*

\*\*\*\*\**Wearing Masks During Corona – Hashem’s Message*

Q

What message did Hashem send us through everyone having to wear a mask over their face because of corona?

A

There are a few perceptions to it. (1) It is to remind us of the “mask” [that Moshe had to wear] as a result of the sin of the Golden Calf [which brought down the spiritual level of the people and didn’t them to see Moshe’s face directly]. (2) The mask covers the nose and the mouth specifically, because the nose and mouth correspond to the level of the six centuries of This World which precede Next World, and it is a hint that the state of “This World” is now becoming “covered” over, revealing the state of the Next World.

\*\*\*\*\**Minyan, Health & Limited Internet Use*

Q

1) What is the inner way to view the recent allowance of the government to *daven* in a *minyan* with 10 people and the easing of other restrictions?

A

Compare it to the night of Pesach, which is a revelation of spiritual light that comes and then disappears the next day, which is followed by counting *Sefirah* for 50 days (where we need to regain and solidly acquire the spiritual revelation that we gained on Pesach night). When the corona situation was causing everyone to be in solitude, it was an outcome of a spiritual light that came down to the world which made everyone access their holy individuality. Now that this spiritual light has gone away, it is in our *avodah* to regain this holy spiritual power of individuality.

Q

2) When the corona restrictions allowed up to 2 people to be together and when *minyanim* were only allowed through porches, according to the Rav if a person davens in such a *minyan* does he still have the benefits of holy “individuality”? Or is it better according to the Rav to daven alone without a *minyan*? Many times it’s hard to *daven* with *kavanah* when davening alone because a person isn’t getting *hisorerus* (inspiration) from a *minyan*. Also, it’s very obvious that when neighbors *daven* together for all 3 *tefillos* each day, Shacharis, Minchah and Maariv, especially when they *daven* together through all of the *tefillos* of Shabbos and Yom Tov, they feel a deeper connection to each other, a holy connection. Is it possible that this is why Hashem brought this whole epidemic, so that people would become genuinely connected with each other?

A

That is the external spiritual gain of it. The more inner level of it is for one to build his own spiritual dimension within.

Q

3) I have heard that all of the recent easing of government restrictions is actually a financial strategy of the government, so that the virus spread through the communities and cause people to die, which will mean a lot less people for the government to financially support. If that is true, then it seems that if we want to protect our lives, we should be stricter than the guidelines that they are now allowing. What does the Rav think about this?

A

In order to decide on this issue, a person needs to clarify all the details. In the meantime, there are a lot of unknowns. Therefore we need to have *bitachon* in Hashem and do our *hishtadlus* (effort), each person on his own level, and therefore the answer to this question will not be the same for every person, because each person is at a different level of how much *bitachon* he has.

Q

4) A media question [with regards to the Rav’s words that the coronavirus came because of Internet use and that people should disconnect totally from the Internet]: Is disconnecting from media and Internet supposed to be a total disconnection? Or can a person still use Internet for ordering basic necessities, downloading *shiurim*, and sending pictures of the kids to the grandparents, along with a sense of inner revulsion and disgust towards Internet? If one disconnects from internet for once or twice a week, is that enough to go free from the “50<sup>th</sup> gate” of the “50<sup>th</sup> Gate” of Impurity [as the Rav describes the internet with], or is a

person still within the “50<sup>th</sup> Gate of Impurity” of the Internet as long as he doesn’t have an absolute disconnection from it?

A

It is not possible to totally disconnect from Internet use, because the entire world is entrenched in this *tumah*, which comes through the walls of every house, and which envelopes everyone within it. Therefore, one’s *avodah* is to distance himself from Internet as much as possible.

Q

5) The Rav explained in the *derasha* about corona that the closing of all central Chareidi places was a hint from Hashem to the G-d fearing community that we need to disconnect from all the influences of secular society. However there were even neighborhoods and developments which were closed down in spite of the fact that these places are very separate and cut off from secular society. What is the reason for why these places also got shut down, if they were anyways “alone” from the rest of the world?

A

Because their separating from society was not done entirely *l’sheim shomayim* (for the sake of Heaven).

### \*\*\*\*\**Suggested Reading & Learning When Stuck At Home*

Q

1) I decided after hearing the Rav’s *derasha* [about corona] that now is the time to learn more about *avodas Hashem* (serving the Creator), because I’m not getting any younger and time’s running out for me. I would like to deepen my understanding of Judaism and avoid the influences from the secular culture. Can the Rav give me a “recommending reading list” of sefarim to learn, which will give me a full picture of what the world of *avodas Hashem* looks like? 2) Also, because I’m at home all day with the kids [because of the corona situation] I have very little time to learn Torah, and I have a lot of disturbances. Can the Rav recommend any specific kind of Torah learning that I can do even when I’m in the midst of disturbances?

A

1) Refer to *sefer Michtav M'Eliyahu Vol.1*, and *sefer Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh, Part 1*.

2) Learn Gemara, and review what you learn orally, so that you keep can be learning [mentally] even when you're not in front of a Gemara. Alternatively, spend time on a question on what you're learning that interests you, and continue to think about the question after you're finished learning, when you're not in front of a sefer. May you grow and succeed!

## \*\*\*\*\**Corona & Glamorous Wigs – Keser D'Kelipah*

Q

I heard the Rav say that one of the reasons that corona came was because Hashem sent this so that all public places would become closed down and everyone can connect to their inner essence while being alone at home. I have heard also that there were some who said that corona, which is the "*Keser d'kelipah*", came because of those who wear glamorous, attractive wigs [*sheitels*], because the head covering is like a "crown", the *Keser*, and this was the wrong kind of head covering, hence it is *Keser D'Kelipah*, and this was the cause for the coronavirus, the "*Keser*" on the side of evil. The Rav said that corona is the *Keser d'kelipah*, so does the Rav also agree that corona came because of these glamorous looking wigs?

A

That is *emes l'amitah* (totally true).

## \*\*\*\*\**5G & Its Connection To Corona*

Q

Recently there has been a new kind of technology called 5G, developed for the newest cellphones, which is being beamed all over the world, and it is especially reaching the Chareidi communities. The Rav has said that the *Sitra Achra* (the Other Side, the very source of evil) is in the hands of HaKadosh Baruch Hu, so the question becomes: What is the reason that the *Sitra Achra* has allowed this 5G technology to be spread throughout the country and the world? What is Hashem hinting to us through this? What exactly does Hashem want us to improve ourselves in, so that we can return to Him and do *teshuvah*?

There is also an entire theory now that the coronavirus was spread because of this new 5G technology. Because of this, people are knocking down cellphone towers because they suspect that 5G radiation is causing the coronavirus, and they think that this will remove the coronavirus from the world. Many theorists do not agree with any of these claims, and they are saying that the entire notion of coronavirus coming from 5G is all a conspiracy theory and it is extreme thinking.

## A

The inner root behind all of this is as you have said. It doesn't make a difference to us how it becomes externally manifest. It is like what the Sage Rebbi said about when he suffered: "It came through some action, and it will go away through some other action." It is merely a tool in Hashem's hands, which is relative to each situation.

The will of the Creator is that the spiritual light of the power of holy "oneness" should equally counter the evil power of "oneness" of the *Sitra Achra* which is revealed in all of the tools of technology.

## \*\*\*\*\**Is Mashiach Coming This Year?*

## Q

I have heard from reliable sources in the name of the Brisker Rav that Mashiach is coming in 5780 [this year], and how it makes a lot of sense, because of the world went through this year, the coronavirus pandemic which has greatly humbled the world (and it is said in the sefarim that Hashem will greatly humble the nations of the world as preparation for Mashiach) and which is such an unprecedented situation in general, and which has caused the entire Torah world and all *bnei Torah* great pain by being forced to learn at home and be deprived of learning Torah in yeshiva. I want to know the Rav's view on this matter, and if the *Geulah* (Redemption) is indeed imminent, how can we prepare for the *Geulah* calmly and with clarity of mind, in a way that Hashem wants from us?

## A

We are currently found in the period where the Redemption will come "in its preordained time". The time for the Redemption is not limited to a specific moment. It is a continuous process of time, just as the Redemption from Egypt did not happen in one day, but was a drawn out process that took seven days. Therefore, there is no way to calculate the exact time of the end, because we

are currently in the midst of it. We cannot know the exact time for the end of when the time for the Redemption will arrive. Any attempt to figure it out will not achieve anything purposeful. This is because the Redemption will be a wondrous miracle from Above which we have no comprehension about, and it is not for us to attempt to figure it out. We cannot know it. Therefore, we have to just go with *temimus* (earnest faith in Hashem), without trying to make any calculations.

## \*\*\*\*\**Cure For Corona – From The Perspective of Kaballah*

### Q

The Rav has said that the remedy for coronavirus is to access “*ayin*” [lit. “nothingness”, to negate one’s sense of self) and on a deeper level, to feel “*efes*” [lit. “zero”, to feel absolute nothingness of all physical reality]. I want to understand this better. I have understood from the Rav that a person can actually get a *refuah* for corona by adhering to the above advice. Baruch Hashem this question is not relevant to me or even to anyone related to me, but I am asking this question with regards to the rest of Klal Yisrael, and the Rav’s answer to this will probably be of immeasurable benefit to anyone. After all, who’s not interested in knowing the *refuah* for corona!! This is what I would like to know:

(1) When the Rav says that the *refuah* for corona is “*ayin*” (nothingness), does this mean negating one’s sense of self, or having *mesirus nefesh* (being self-sacrificing? Or by having *emunah* (faith in G-d)? And when the Rav says that a deeper method of *refuah* for corona is to access the power of “*efes*”, does this mean to think about *Ain Od Milvado* (there is nothing besides for Hashem)? And how can a person sick with corona practically use the above advice?

### A

1) [In the terms of Kaballah], *Keser* is *ayin* (feeling a sense of nothingness), and this divides into two spiritual dimensions (*Partzufin*) of *Atik* and *Arikh*. The lower aspect of *Keser* corresponds to *Arikh*, or *ayin* (nothingness, no sense of self), and the higher aspect of *Keser* corresponds to *Atik*, or *efes* (absolute nothingness).

A temporary remedy [for corona] is through accessing *ayin* (feeling a sense of nothingness, by having *mesirus nefesh*, self-effacement).

But in order to get the complete remedy [for corona] which will totally uproot the disease from the person, is only through accessing the level of *efes* (contemplating “*Ain Od Milvado, efes Zulaso*, lit. “There is nothing besides for Him, there is zero except for Him.”)

## \*\*\*\*\**What To Do For A Choleh Still Critical From Corona*

### Q

I know a very wonderful person who is in his 40's, a true *Talmid Chochom* and *tzaddik*, who was one of the first people to get coronavirus a little after Purim, and *Baruch Hashem* he is still amongst the living, but he's still hospitalized. It's now more than 3 months later and he just tested positive for corona! He had severe breathing problems due to the virus and he had to be hooked onto a respirator for all of this time. He was in critical condition throughout the last 3 months, with a lot of high fever and even a recent heart attack, which he recovered from right away *Baruch Hashem*. He opened his eyes and said a few words every here and there, but his situation is critical. There are still a lot of unknowns about his situation, mainly about what his heart will be like.

People have undertaken all kinds of *kaballos* on his behalf, like learning non-stop, finishing the whole *Tehillim*, making an extra learning *seder*, and continuously saying *Tehillim*. It should be noted that the *choleh* is a very prominent, G-d fearing rabbi who is very beloved by his students. What can be done as a *zechus* for him?

### A

Repeat and internalize your heart the wonderful *segulah* written in the sefer *Nefesh HaChaim*: Shaar III. [To quote: “*In truth, there is a great matter and a wondrous segulah (spiritual remedy) to remove and nullify from oneself any harsh judgments or other accusations against oneself, so that nothing else can have any control over him and have no effect on him at all. This is when a person fixed in his heart that “Hashem is the true G-d, and there is nothing else besides for Him, there is no power besides for Him in the world and any of the worlds at all, and everything is filled with His oneness.” One can nullify in his heart, with total nullification, that he is not concerned at all about any power or accusation [against him] in the world, and one should dedicate and attach his the purity of his thoughts to be subservient only to the Master of everything. Then Hashem will provide for him that all forces should become removed from having any control over him and that nothing in the world can do anything to him.*”]



## \*\*\*\*\**Bringing A Yeshuah For A Choleh*

### Q

1) The Rav recently said in a response that by contemplating “*Ain Od Milvado*”, a *choleh* can be cured [from any disease, even from corona or any of its aftereffects]. Did this mean that the *choleh* himself needs to contemplate *Ain Od Milvado*, or does it mean that by others contemplating *Ain Od Milvado* this can send a *yeshuah* for the *choleh*?

2) And if it means that by me thinking about *Ain Od Milvado* I can cause a *yeshuah* for the *choleh*, why is thinking about *Ain Od Milvado* any different than all other *zechusim* one can do on a *choleh*'s behalf?

### A

1) Either way [either the *choleh* can contemplate *Ain Od Milvado* and merit a *yeshuah* from his situation, or others can contemplate *Ain Od Milvado* on his behalf and arouse a *yeshuah* for him].

2) It is because by contemplating *Ain Od Milvado*, we are connecting the illness with *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, and not to the person who is sick. Through contemplating *Ain Od Milvado*, the soul of the ill person becomes connected to the level of *Ain Od Milvado*, and through this the *choleh* is able to receive a spiritual illumination from the level of *Ain Od Milvado*.

## \*\*\*\*\**Did Covid-19 Come Because of Talking In Shuls?*

### Q

I saw hanging in a shul bulletin board the following story: A certain rav was niftar from corona during the week of *Parshas Kedoshim*. The next day he came to his son in a dream. He said to him, “This corona epidemic came to the world because of the sin of people talking in shul during davening. I was given permission to come to you in a dream only in my merit of not talking in middle of davening. As a hint to this, the disease is called COVID-19, from the word kavod (respect), and if you look at the 19<sup>th</sup> verse in this week’s parsha (*Kedoshim*), the verse says, “*And My temple you shall fear*” [the mitzvah to revere the Beis HaMikdash and to respect a shul].

## A

The Gemara says “A judge does not see except what his eyes see”, and based on this rule, each person sees the situation according to his perspective on This World and on the Next World as well. The revelation that this person’s *neshamah* experienced was on the level of his own *neshamah*. This is a fundamental rule when it comes to all revelations that are given to the soul. The above revelation was a “branch” of the different reasons that brought about the epidemic, but the “root” reason that brought it about is for the reason that we explained [the release of the 50<sup>th</sup> Gate of Impurity onto the world via the abuse of modern technology and media use].

\*\*\*\*\**To Wear A Mask Or Not To Wear A Mask?*

## Q

Currently, there is a requirement to wear masks when we walk outside, according to the doctors and experts. I am trying to understand how to balance out the idea of taking care of health and keeping to boundaries versus having *emunah* and *bitachon*.

I see that there are some Torah observant people who go without masks even when the law requires it. I am talking even about intelligent people, not people who don’t think about what they are about to do. Are the accepted health guidelines like the “messengers of Hashem”? And, isn’t it forbidden to act careless when it is dangerous to do so? And even if we have Torah learning and mitzvos, don’t we need to be concerned that maybe our sins make us undeserving of special protection from Hashem, just as Yaakov Avinu was afraid that maybe he sinned and that he was unworthy of Hashem’s protection? Or do we need to just believe in Hashem’s Divine Providence over us? (I recently came across a Zohar that says that if a person learns Torah, he has nothing to fear, and he cannot be harmed by anything.)

So, I want to know: Does a person need to be on a certain *madreigah* in order to justify not wearing a mask in public? Does a person need to have a very high level of *bitachon* or be very connected to Hashem for this? Is such a person allowed to do differently than everyone else around him (and there’s no problem of being *poresh min hatzibur*, separating from the community)? Is the situation no longer dangerous and the approach now should be totally different? Or does wearing a mask not help at all, and therefore this whole question should not even be an issue?

## A

Practically speaking, the health experts disagree if people should wear the masks, and even when wearing a mask, they disagree as to how much it should be worn. So if a person does not wear a mask, he is able to rely on the opinions of some of the experts who allowed certain countries to go without masks.

On an external level, one should wear a mask in public so that he shouldn't do differently than everyone else in the community, and also because he shouldn't pain others if they will be disturbed that he doesn't wear a mask. This is especially the case where a person is amidst an entire section that is quarantined. Every place is different and every country is different, and one should act wisely.

It is true that wearing a mask or not depends on a person's *madreigah*, especially when it comes to the issue of causing danger [to oneself or to others]. The Ramban says that a person needs to be more careful not to cause damage others than with being careful not to cause damage to himself. One needs to be more careful when it comes to something may cause damage to others, and for this, one would need to be on an even higher level of *bitachon* [that he won't cause damage to others] than the one who has *bitachon* that nothing will happen to him [in order to refrain from wearing a mask in public].

As it seems, wearing a mask is both helpful and detrimental. If a person is careful when it comes to hygiene and he makes sure to keep changing the mask for a new one, then wearing a mask is very helpful, especially in a quarantined section.

\*\*\*\*\**Second Wave of Corona In Eretz Yisrael*

## Q

I have thought a lot about what the Rav has said recently regarding the coronavirus and how it is all a physical manifestation of the depth of the "50<sup>th</sup> Gate of Defilement" which the world is in. The closing of yeshivos has caused untold destruction. Many *bochurim* who were in yeshiva before are simply roaming the streets now. This pandemic has done more spiritual destruction than physical destruction, by wreaking havoc on people's souls more than their bodies, on a level that was unprecedented here in Eretz Yisrael. Many *bochurim*, due to our sins, will not even be returning to yeshiva after this is all over, as expert educators have testified and from what I've heard.

Throughout this entire period, all of the emphasis of our leaders has been primarily on our physical safety and on our financial situation, way beyond proportion, and it seems to give the impression that our physical safety is more important than our spiritual situation. Young *yeshiva bochurim* definitely got that message, and they have forgotten any aspirations in having *mesirus nefesh* in Torah, they have forgotten that which they have been taught that it is only learning Torah which protects from danger. When the yeshivos partially opened, with either halfway or a third or a quarter of the amount of people allowed, only a few yeshivos had the *mesirus nefesh* to open up their yeshivos fully. Who knows what tomorrow will bring, and what is the coming Elul going to look like?? This leads me to ask the following questions to the Rav, and perhaps the Rav can light up the darkness for us during this troubling time.

1) Does the Rav agree with these feelings I've written? What is the reason for all the silence of all the leaders of our generation about the damage that has been done to our spiritual situation now? Why is all of their concern all about physical safety and our financial situation?

## A

1) When we consider the external, physical side of the situation right now, it is reminiscent of the period between World War I and World War II. At that time, *Klal Yisrael* had the guidance of the two world leaders of Torah Jewry: Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzensky and the Chofetz Chaim zt"l. Even with such leadership, though, it is well-known that the situation for *Klal Yisrael* at that point was very complex, and loaded with problems.

If we compare the physical situation of today with the physical situation then, we can see the similarity but we can also see the differences. However, when we consider the internal aspects that are taking place behind today's situation, it is totally different than in previous times. It is much more complex today, and from many angles. Even before this pandemic came, the Torah world and all of Jewry were like dying people, from a spiritual standpoint (and there is a rule in the Gemara that most people who are in the throes of death end up dying). Only someone who was truly *moser nefesh* in his *Yiddishkeit*, in our times, was not part of this category.

The only way to fix the situation until now would have been by taking apart the entire situation of today, collectively and in detail, down to the last detail of all the issues in our generation today, and then to see what could be done about, along with *siyata d'shmaya*, step after step, working on one issue at a time. But this did not happen, and for many years already the situation for Jewry and the Torah world has remained with so many unsolved issues. The current situation [i.e. *bochurim* roaming the streets or simply not returning to yeshiva] is merely a continuation of all the many unresolved issues that have been dredging on for many years already. Prior to the situation of today,

anyone who wished to dedicate themselves to the cause of *Klal Yisrael* did whatever they could to help the situation, each according to their own capabilities.

Q

2) How can we educate our children now that they shouldn't become callous to *ruchniyus* and so that they shouldn't consider their body more important than our spiritual strivings?

A

Speak about Torah truth to them, simply and from purity of heart, and try to act upon your beliefs – on your own level, and according to the level of your family.

Q

3) Should we encourage the Roshei Yeshivos who were *moser nefesh* to open up their yeshivos as usual and without fear of the government, since enough time has passed to prove their move successful and that Torah learning has indeed protected the yeshivos from physical harm?

A

Each situation needs to be weighed separately, about what the parameters of the *halachah* are. After knowing what the *halachic* parameters are, one can then act with *chassidus* (piety) and consider all the factors and see what the appropriate should be, as the *Mesillas Yeshtarim* teaches with regards to *mishkal hachassidus*. The *halachic* authorities discuss when and where we apply the rule of “Torah protects and saves” from danger. If one does decide to act on the level of *chassidus*, it needs to come from the heart, and it should not be a purely intellectual decision alone. And, even when deciding to open a yeshiva, it must be done within the proper framework of *kedushah* (holiness) and it should not be done with comprises that make *tumah* (media and internet use) available to the yeshiva students, and if this condition is not met, it is clear that the yeshiva will not be protected by their Torah learning. Also, in most cases, the reopening of a *yeshiva* doesn't depend on the any view – it depends on the actual spiritual level of the students. Our entire focus when it comes to this pandemic should not be about the government or the health ministry – instead, our focus needs to be on HaKadosh Baruch and on doing His will, on what He wants from us.

Q

4) Are the COVID-19 government restrictions in Israel really a *gezeiras shmad* (decree of spiritual genocide) on the Torah world, and the government is using the pandemic as an excuse to stop all of our Torah learning and all of our davening in *shuls*?

A

Some of the restrictions make sense, but there are other restrictions which are a matter of speculation, if they make sense or not. Some of the restrictions come from a lack of understanding, and there are also some restrictions which are not being sensitive to the Torah world, due to lack of value for Torah and *ruchniyus* (the spiritual). There are also some restrictions which are being used by the government as a way to have control over religious Jews. It will take wisdom to know what the intention of each detail of the restrictions is, and it will not suffice just to look at the general picture of the situation.

Q

5) Do we need to listen to the health ministry's rules for physical safety, such as the wearing masks? Or should we not rely on the health ministry's rules at all (as the Rav said right at the beginning of the pandemic)?

A

First, we must clarify what the *halachah* is. If many experts [doctors] say that certain behaviors must be adapted or avoided, we should be careful with those behaviors on a *halachic* level, and keep to the guidelines that are protecting our health. We need to be careful in each situation according to the level of severity involved.

Q

6) We can see that the virus is no longer so dangerous. From all the thousands of people that have gotten the virus, very little of them were in danger. Therefore, if there is a small chance that someone already had the virus, is he endangering other people by not keeping all the safety measures? Would he need to take a blood test and quarantine? Would he need to be concerned if anyone in his family gets a fever or sore throat, etc.?

A

As long as one has a strong reason to suspect that he has the virus, he should get tested. Even those who weren't in danger from the virus were still affected by the virus, on a financial level, on an emotional level, and on a spiritual level, and there were other repercussions as well. Therefore, a person is indeed damaging others if he has the virus and he goes out into public places.

## Q

7) According to the government's laws, one needs to quarantine if he was near someone who was ill with the virus, but this is a self-imposed quarantine which only he would know about. If he does not feel any symptoms, would such a person still need to quarantine himself and not *daven* or learn in a *beis midrash* and keep away from anything that requires him to be near people, etc.?

## A

We would need to clarify how much of a risk of danger there is, and accordingly we can then know how we should act *halachically*.