



## UNDERSTANDING THE WAYS OF HASHEM

### THE CONCEPT OF GILGUL IN A PASUK

וידבר ה' אל משה במדבר סיני באהל מועד באחד לחדש השני בשנה השנית לצאתם מארץ מצרים לאמרה. שאו את ראש כל עדת בני ישראל למשפחתם לבית אבותם במספר שמות כל זכר לגלגלתם

“On the first day of the second month, in the second year following the exodus from the land of Egypt, Hashem spoke to Moshe in the wilderness of Sinai, in the Tent of Meeting, saying: take a census of B’nei Yisroel according to their ancestral houses, listing the names, every male, head by head.” (Bamidbar 1:2)

In this week’s *parshah* it says כל זכר לגלגלתם. Literally it means “all the males by their skulls,” by their heads. So the Rema miPano, who authored a *sefer* called *Asarah Ma’amaros*, writes that Moshe Rabeinu would look at every single Jew when they came before him to present themselves. Moshe Rabeinu was able to see with *ruach hakodesh* how many times this individual would be required to come back in the world through *gilgul*. That’s what the *remez* of לגלגלתם means. Moshe Rabeinu was able to look at every single Jew with *ruach hakodesh* and see how many generations will each and every Jew be able to produce.<sup>1</sup>

The Chasam Sofer in *Yoreh Deah* (294:9) actually talks about this at length after quoting this Rema miPano.<sup>2</sup> Now this is something! The concept of *gilgul* is alluded to in this *passuk*. It’s alluded in this *passuk* of כל זכר לגלגלתם. It’s not a system that was created only later on. It was a system that was created from the beginning of time, designed to help people fulfill their mission. Every Jew has a *tafkid* in this world, and until you fulfill your *tafkid*, you have to come back into this world. Of course, if somebody fulfills his *tafkid*, he is exempt from coming back again and again and again. If someone doesn’t fulfill his *tafkid*, he has to come back and be *mesaken* and correct what he didn’t accomplish in a previous lifetime.

### YESSURIM AS A PURIFICATION MECHANISM

Now, as Peleh Yoetz (R’ Eliezer Papo, 1785-1828) says, this is a very important bit of information to enable us to understand the judgments of Hashem.<sup>3</sup> As the Torah says, הַצֶּרֶף תָּמִים פְּעָלוֹ, “The Rock, whose deeds are perfect” (Devarim 32:4). Everything Hashem does is just. There is no *makom* to complain against the *middos* of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, like is the custom of many fools among our nation. When *yesurim*, difficult *yesurim* come upon them, they open up their big mouths *klapei Hashem* and they say, “Ribono Shel Olam, what did I do that wrong to deserve such retribution?! Is my sin worse than the entire world? Why would You do this to somebody who is *frum*, one of Your servants?!” If you understood this – that Hashem metes out to everybody what they deserve, and through the *gilgulim* people come, and go through all kinds of purification processes, and everything is meted out in very exact ways – the person who knows that will say, מה רבו מעשיך ה' - “How great are Your deeds, Hashem!” (Tehillim 104:24). How great is Your love for us that You ensure that none of us should get lost!

We have to understand that the *tafkid* for which we came to this world, that our *neshamah* has to fulfill, will have to be fulfilled by hook or by crook, no matter what. And then when you have a situation like Coronavirus, where *chashuvim*, *tzaddikim* died and you begin to wonder, “What did they do so wrong? Why them?” And the answer is - this is one of the ways to understand it - that there is a system of *gilgulim*. The world is run by Hakadosh Baruch Hu and He knows who needs what. If somebody was *pogem* his *neshamah* and he didn’t do a certain *mitzvah*, he’s going to have to come back in a *gilgul* so that the *mitzvah* should be presented to him again and he should perform it, or he’s going to have a *nisayon* of that *aveirah* that he did in a previous *gilgul* and he should now keep away from.

This is a very important concept, because there are many people that know themselves and they know their weaknesses. They think that because they were born with this weakness that they seemed to have before they even acquired any *da’as*, how can they be held responsible? We had an urge to do these *aveiros* before we were even responsible for *aveiros*. The Vilna Gaon (Sefer Yonah 4:3) explains that many times Hakadosh Baruch Hu has to enable a person to know the purpose that he came to this world for.

So if you see a person who has certain types of behaviors, today we put a name to it. We say he’s lazy. We say he’s obsessive. We say

<sup>1</sup> כתב הרמ"ע מפאנו בעשרה מאמרות (מאמר אם כל חי ה"א סי' ג'), ח"ל: ועליהם נאמר לגלגלתם שהיה משרע"ה צופה ברוה"ק מנין הטיפין שבראש כל א' וכו' שכל מי שהיה עתיד להוליד ס' רבוא היה נמנה ראש משפחה וכו' ויותר מזה היה ג' כ' צופה ומביש בכל אחד ואחד מהם, והוא רז נגלה במלה הנזכרת למי שישית עליה לב ע"ב. ופי' המפרש שהי' מביט בכל א' כמה פעמים שיוצטרך להתגלגל וזה לשון לגלגלתם, וכו'.  
<sup>2</sup> ומוסיף הח"ס שם, ח"ל: ולפ"ז ה"ה במחצית השקל דכתיב בקע לגלגלת בפ' פקודי ואינם נימנים אלא מבין ג' או מבין עשרים ועיין מג"א סי' תרצ"ד ס"ק ג' נמי נימא כנ"ל שלא נתן אלא מי שהי' בראשו ספין להוליד ס' רבוא וזה א"א להתקבל אמנ' במן עומר לגלגלת י"ל כפשוטו אם הי' לו ילד בשני גלגלת נפל לו ב' עומרי' דמבואר פ' ה"ה דאפי' לתינוק בן יומו נפל עומרו [ע"ש ע"ה ע"א גבי בן ט' לראשון וכו' ויש לדחות]  
<sup>3</sup> וגם מתוך אמונת הגלגול ידע האדם כי משפטי ה' אמת, הצור תמים פעלו כי כל דרכיו משפט (דברים לב ד) ולא יתרעם על מדותיו יתברך כמנהג כמה בעורים בעם שכאשר באים עליהם יסורים קשים פוערים פיהם כלפי מעלה ואומרים, רבנו של עולם מה פשעי ומה חטאתי, האם חטאי ופשעי גברו על כל העולם, למה תעשה כה לעבדיך. ולו חכמו ישיבילו כי הצור תמים פעלו וכל דרכיו משפט אל אמונה ואין עול צדיק וישר הוא (שם), ונתן לאיש כדרכיו וכפרי מעלליו ולו נתכנו עלילות. ואם בגלגול זה דן וישר פעלו, אלו היסורים הם לו על הגלגולים שעברו. כידוע מאמר המקבלים שגלו, שיסורי איוב בהיותו תם וישר וירא אלקים וסר מרע נתחייב בהם על הגלגול שעבה, שהיה תרם אבי אברהם אבינו עליו השלום. וגם בזה יש לשבד לדעת על יסורים קשים שסובלים ילדים קטנים עתיקי משדים גמולי מחלב ומיתת קטנים שעל חטאות נעורים שולח הקדוש ברוך הוא כי תלד אשתו נשמה שחיבת מיתה לתקן את אשר עותו, ואגב ימצאו אביו ואמו כדי ואלתם בעצמם שיצטערו במיתתו. וגם על ידי הגלגולים מתגלגלים עניני הווייתו ומיתות וכל המקרים הכל הוא מפלאות תמים דעים במדה במשקל ובמשורה, כאשר הראה בספרי המקבלים המספרים עניני הגלגולים בעיני יראה ולבבו יבין ויאמר מה רבו מעשיך ה' ומה נפלאות אהבתו לנו אשר חשב מחשבות לבלתי ידח ממנו נדח. יהי שם ה' מברך ומורומם על כל ברכה ותהלה (פלא יועץ מ"ח)

he's impulsive. We say he's obsessive compulsive. But what it really is, is Hakadosh Baruch Hu letting him know that he's missing this *mitzvah* and by avoiding this negative behavior he's fulfilling his mission in this world.<sup>4</sup>

## A SPIRITUAL CAUSE FOR OCD

Many times I've received phone calls from people who told me they had Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD). One of the ways this condition manifests itself is, for example, when you wash your hands *al netilas yadayim*, or when you come out of the bathroom, you wash many, many times. You're never convinced that your hands get clean. I remember the first time many years ago when somebody called me and asked, "What's the reason for this?" I said, "All conditions that a person has, are sent to a person to let him know what his purpose in this world is. You know perhaps in a previous lifetime you were lenient in *netilas yadayim*." Chazal talk about *netilas yadayim* as a very important thing. Many people get mixed up and they do *netilas yadayim* like they do *mayim achronim*. They pour a little finger water, wipe their hands together and they say, "I am good to go." A person has to understand that you need to wash properly. There are a lot of *halachos* for washing hands.

If you would have seen my *rebbe* (HaRav Meir Halevi Soloveichik) wash his hands, you would think he was doing an *avodah* in the *Beis Hamikdash*. He was *medakdek* in so many details, so many *halachos*, because he didn't want to *chas veshalom* transgress any of them. When he came to a *chasunah* of his own child, he made sure to bring a cup for washing. I asked him, "Why is Rebbi bringing this *kos*? It's not an outdoor wedding." He said, "I need it for *netilas yadayim*." I said, "Rebbi, with all due respect. This is your *simchah*. This is a very big hall. It's a very famous hall. I'm sure they have enough *kosos* over there that you can go to the *mikveh* in them. You're afraid you're not going to have a *kos*?" He looked me in the eye and he said, "Do you know how stringent the *halachos* of a *kos* are? Do you know how many of those *kosos* are problematic? They're chipped. They're bent. They're not the ideal *kosos* to use, so I bring one from my house and I know for sure it is okay." I was thinking to myself, "The Rebbi is intense. That is serious."

Then at the other end of the spectrum, there are people who pour a little finger water and they're good to go. They think they did Hashem a favor by washing their hands. And they're *mezalzel* in the *mitzvah*.

I told this man, "What I suggest you do, is be *mekabel* upon yourself to learn *hilchos netilas yadayim* and to start undertaking to be *medakdek* in your washing of the hands." And you want to know something? He called me back a couple of months later and he told me that his problem is going away. I said, "Did you see therapists during this while?" He said, "No. I saw a therapist before I came to you. It didn't work. I even tried some medication but it didn't agree with me. I was desperate so I called you." He said, "Do you think this condition is for that?" "It's very possible. Why not?"

## VARIOUS EXAMPLES OF GILGULIM

If you would look in the *sefarim* and see what things people came back for, it would blow your mind to understand the *din* of *shamayim*. So when a person has an opportunity to be *mesaken* himself, he should pay attention.

In the *Sha'ar Hagilgulim* from Rav Chaim Vital, he talks about a person who is *ba'el ha'niida*. They're not careful with the *halachos* of *niddah*. They come back in a *goyah*, in a gentile woman's body. How many gentile women are running around out there with Jewish *neshamos*? And many of them will attest to this, that they have a certain affinity to Jews. You wonder, where does a non-Jewish woman get an affinity to Jews? A psychologist once brought me a book. He was somebody who worked in this field. The book was full of information on women from the Midwest of America who had never seen a Jew, never had any connection to a Jew, and when they went into therapy and hypnosis, they knew all about Judaism. It's mind boggling. Now they came back in these *neshamos*.

A person can be *mesgalgel* into a rock or into a dog. I've had many people tell me, "Rabbi, my dog is definitely Jewish." And it's funny. They say Rabbi, "Do you believe me?" I say, "I really shouldn't believe you because you don't know what you're talking about, but actually I do believe you because it could be your dog is Jewish." There was one guy who was not *frum*, but he would go to Shabbos meals in people's homes and he would tell his dog on Erev Shabbos, whatever the guy's name was, "Ruff Ruff. It's Shabbos today. Tonight we go to Shabbos." And the dog would start jumping up and down. It would be *mamash* like *techiyas hameisim*. It was unbelievable.

Many people are *mesgalgel* in all types of animals. People are *mesgalgel* in bees. A person can *mesgalgel* in a bee. Here's a person who called me up recently and said that for two years in a row right before Pesach he got stung by a bee. What does that mean? I said, "I'm not sure. I have to think about it." It could very well be that in that bee was a *neshamah* of somebody that this person had unfinished business with from a previous lifetime and now that bee came to give her a sting. It's unbelievable, how a person who doesn't talk properly, that person comes back as a bird. But all of this applies if a person doesn't do *teshuvah*. If a person does *teshuvah* there's *אין דבר* in cats. There's a long list for different *aveiros*. Therefore, I suggest if you want to minimize your returns, so you should do *teshuvah* for your *aveiros*.

## SHE TOOK HER HUSBAND AWAY FROM EISEK HATORAH

Now, I want to share with you an amazing story. It really shook me and left an indelible impression. Rav Shalom Schwadron (1912-1997) writes this story. "I heard this story from the great *tzaddik*, *mori verabi* Rav Eliyahu Dushnitzer (1877-1949)."

<sup>4</sup> כי טוב מותי מחיי. כמ"ש "ושבח אני את המתים שכבר מתו מן החיים אשר הם חיים כו". ולכאורה "שכבר מתו" וכן "אשר הם חיים" ייתור דברים, אלא שרצה לומר שטובים הם המתים שכבר מתו ולא נצטרכו לבוא בגלגול מאותן שהם חיים עדנה שבאו בגלגול, ובוזה מיושב דאמרו נמנו וגמרו טוב לאדם שלא נברא כו' עד יפשפש במעשיו [עירובין ג]. דקשה היאך אפשר לומר שטוב יותר אם כן למה נברא. ועוד "ועכשיו שנברא" קשה להולמו, ועוד, מאי "יפשפש" כו', הוה ליה למימר יעבור את ה' ויעשה טוב, אלא נראה דנחלקו בשבוע אל הגלגול השני, שאלו אומרים טוב לו שנברא, כי בכל פעם הוא עושה מצות כמו שכתבו קצת מפרשים. ואלו אומרים טוב לו יותר אם היה מתקן גלגול ראשון ולא יצטרך בגלגול שני. וכן נמנו וגמרו כו' הוה "ושבח אני את המתים כו'". וקאמרי "ועכשיו שנברא" על כרחך לתקן מעשיו שמקודם ולא בשביל מצות לעשות, כי טוב לו כו' כנ"ל, ועל כן יראה עיקר לתקן במה שפשע מקדם כמ"ש אבן במאי זהיר טפי כו'. והיאך ידע מה שקלקל מקדם, יש על זה שני סימנים, א' במה שנכשל בה בגלגול זה הרבה פעמים. ועל זה אמרו "יפשפש במעשיו" באיזה נכשל, ב' באיזה בעירה נפשו חשקה לו מאד לפי שהורגלה מקודם ונעשה טבע, ולכן יש בני אדם שחושקין בעבירה אחת יותר וזה בעבירה אחרת. ועל זה אמרו "יפשפש במעשיו", שימשמש מעשיו "הגר" על א"ס' יונה שם)

(Rav Eliyahu Dushnitzer was one of the handful of top *talmidim* of the Chafetz Chaim and Rav Simcha Zissel Ziv - the Alter of Kelm). Rav Eliyahu said about this story to Rav Shalom: "You can repeat it, and it's worthwhile to repeat it. You could preface it by saying that I told you this story exactly the way I heard it *mipi hagaon*, the great *gadol* Harav Elazar Moshe miPinsk." Rav Dushnitzer was an amazing *talmid chacham* and he said to Rav Shalom, "You know me," his *rebbe* told him. "I don't lie, *chas veshalom*. I also don't exaggerate and I didn't add one iota to this story. I'm just repeating to you word for word like I heard from Rav Elazar Moshe." So this is the story:

There was a man in the city of Kelm. He was a businessman, but he was a serious *ben Torah*. His name was Rav Nota. He had an only child, a daughter, who he married off to a young *bachur* who was an outstanding *ben yeshivah* and a *talmid chacham*. The father gave them a very generous dowry of thousands of rubles, and he told them they could also live in his home on his *cheshbon* for a number of years and then afterwards, when he's finished, he'll have the money to make a business.

The *chosson* sat and learned Torah for a number of years. When his time was up, they moved out of his house. The daughter turned to her husband and said, "How are we going to support ourselves now?" So the husband said, "I appreciate your question but there's no way that I can stop learning and throw myself into work and take the whole Torah and put it in the ocean." So the wife came up with a brilliant idea. "Let's take the money that my father gave us, we'll open up a business. I will stand there all day, except for two hours by day that you'll be there, and the rest of the time you could continue and learn your Torah like until now." The guy was *maskim* and he did this.

Now in the first three months they actually did it like this, but after three months, two hours became four hours and eventually four hours became eight hours until he was completely immersed in the business and he had no time anymore to even open a *gemara*.

One day, on Motzei Shabbos after midnight, a heavy snow was coming down. The lady went out to spill out a barrel of unclean water and upon her return it seemed that she was choking and she was not able to speak. Her husband ran immediately to the doctor and called him to his house. The doctor came and he didn't know what to do. The next day he went with her from doctor to doctor and eventually they traveled to the city of Vienna, which was a big city, and no one was able to help her.

They began to talk in the city where she came from, that maybe this is a *dibuk* that entered her body. They went to the city of Stutzin in Poland. (That's where Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz came from. He was known as Rav Chaim Stutziner.) In that city there was a *mekubal*, a real kabbalist whose name was Rav Menachem Mendel, *zt"l*. People would travel to him with such issues. When they came back to him, he asked the *dibuk* a question and they actually heard a voice responding to him. Now when the *dibuk* responds, the stomach goes in and out, but the lips of the person do not move. Everybody present there was shocked, and they said, "Aha! It's *taka a dibuk*." But Rav Mendel said, "I'm not sure yet." He said, "Tell me who is accompanying you?" He said, "Five angels of destruction." He asked him what their names are. The *dibuk* answered this, this, this, this and this. Rav Mendel said, "Ah, this is *taka a real dibuk*."

He began to ask the *dibuk* questions. "Who are you?" He answered that he lived tens of years ago in the city of Brisk where he was a *bachur*. He was a Brisker *bachur* and then he traveled to South Africa. He got into the wrong crowd over there and he was *over on kol haTorah kulah*. One time he was traveling on a wagon and the wagon overturned and he was killed. He's now wandering in the world, by being *mesgalgel*. Rav Mendel asked him, "Why didn't you do *teshuvah* before you died?" He said, "Because of the *pachad* and I was discombobulated when I was thrown off the wagon, I forgot to do *teshuvah*." Then he asked him, "What do you want from this lady? Why did you come into this lady and you caused her such tremendous *yesurim*?" He began to laugh in a loud voice, and he said, "The mother of this young lady and the mother of her husband who are already in the world of truth beseeched Hakadosh Baruch Hu in *shamayim* that I should enter this young lady's body and I should cause her all these *yesurim*, because if not for this, there would be no hope for her in this world and in the next world because she took her husband away from *eisek haTorah*, Torah involvement."

When they heard this, Rav Mendel said to the husband that he should immediately promise he's going to go back to learning, and he promised to do that on the spot. Rav Nota, the girl's father, promised he would learn *mishnayos* for that *bachur*, the *dibuk*, and he also said he would donate a number of candles to be lit for him in the *beis hakenesses*. Then Rav Mendel gathered a *minyan* of ten to say *Tehillim*. Rav Mendel stood behind those ten people, and they put this lady on a chair in the middle of the room. Suddenly she rolled off the chair and she fell on the ground heavily, and a terrible loud voice came out from her saying, "*Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem echad*." It was heard in the entire city of Stutchin. Then the fingernail of one of her hands on her pinky popped, the glass in the window popped, and everything went quiet.

That's what Rav Eliyahu Hakohen Dushnitzer related to Rav Elyah Lopian, and he said [to Rav Shalom Shwardon] again, "You could relate this story in my name."

### WANDERING SOULS

Many people think that if they die and they didn't complete what they had to complete so they come back right away into another birth, or they get born into an animal. It doesn't work like that. Sometimes a person has to wander around the world for tens of years suffering, being accompanied by destroying angels and eventually maybe they go into some kind of an animal or they come back as a human being. Obviously, if they come back as a human being they have an opportunity to do *mitzvos*. But if Hashem sees they're the type of person who won't do the *mitzvos*, Hashem puts them in an animal because then He knows they'll be safe. If He puts them in a dog or in a cat then they're going to be safe.

### BEING FOCUSED ON RATZON HASHEM

Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants us to stay focused on our *tafkid*. People think they can do what they want. I just heard a *rav* speak about

one of the terrible, terrible things that came out of the Coronavirus.<sup>5</sup> There arose in Klal Yisrael *mosrim* and there were people who went and were snooping. They couldn't *fargin* if anybody was *davening*. It was like the Spanish Inquisition. And as soon as they found out, they were taking pictures. At first they said it was *goyim* who were doing it. Then they said it was not *frum* Jews. But sadly many *frum* Jews whose heads were twisted and they thought they were being *osek leshem shamayim* became *mosrim*. They didn't have a *psak* from any *adam gadol* to be a *moser*. Because one of their friends who has a few whiskers told them it's a big *mitzvah* or some doctor told them it's a big *mitzvah* to tell people about Yidden davening, it doesn't mean it's the worst *aveirah* to daven during the time of the Coronavirus restrictions.

If you look in *Shulchan Aruch Choshen Mishpat* (388:10) what it says about *mosrim*, it's one of the only sins that someone could take a life without going to a court.<sup>6</sup> You don't need a *beis din* of *chaf gimmel*. You have to look in the *Shulchan Aruch*. I don't suggest anybody do that before you ask an *adam gadol*, but if you look in *Shulchan Aruch* you'll see it's not a simple thing. Everybody thinks it's a *hefker velt* but they don't even realize, there's a famous Chasam Sofer in (Drashos, Parshas Eikev) that mentions that during *mageifos*, one of the big *yetzer haras*, the Satan, comes out and he gets people to close down *shuls* and *batei midrashos*. That's part of the *mageifah*, he says. The Satan wants to undermine our *avodah*, to pull the rug out from Klal Yisrael.<sup>7</sup>

Now, I don't care that the doctors said it was dangerous. I saw some guy sign a letter that Covid was dangerous. I said, "What kind of doctor is he?" I was told he was a podiatrist. I said, "A podiatrist?! Are you joking around?!" He's closing down the *shuls* here. That's who's running the world. You have to understand this is very not *pashut*, very not *pashut*, and they're fighting it now.

Now, *baruch Hashem*, the *roshei yeshivah* and others in Lakewood decided enough is enough. It's time to *daven*. And they allowed *minyanim* to start all over the place. Tens, if not hundreds of *minyanim*. I was speaking to somebody and I said, "So why don't you open up too?" He said, "Oh no. It's too dangerous." I said, "Dangerous? Lakewood is the test. They're *davening* for weeks now. Are they dying like flies like these prophets of doom promised is going to happen?" So you know what the *rav* answered me? "Lakewood China." I said, "Excuse me? You realize what you're saying is ridiculous?" But they don't want to hear the truth, so they say "funny" comments. Lakewood China.

### RABBI AKIVA EIGER'S PSAK DURING THE CHOLERA

I told somebody, "There is no one in this world today who is as great as Rabbi Akiva Eiger." The biggest *gadol* in the world today doesn't come to the ankles of Rabbi Akiva Eiger. And Rabbi Akiva Eiger (1761-1837) had the same problem. He lived in the 1830s, during the Second Cholera Pandemic (1826-1837). That pandemic made Coronavirus look like a silly cold. Nothing in comparison. That was a killer pandemic, not because Dr. Fauci said so, or some podiatrist said so. It was the facts. In some large European towns more than 50% of the people that got infected died. That's more than one in two people! Millions upon millions of people died around the world, including Asia and Europe. But nowhere near the death numbers or the mortality rate of Covid. And there were people in those days who insisted you have to close down the *shuls*. It was much more contagious because a person could die very fast. They didn't have ventilators in those days. They didn't have fancy machinery and PPEs and all the other *narishkeit*. They didn't have that.

They tried to close down the *minyanim* and Rabbi Akiva Eiger wrote a letter stating absolutely not to do so. He said, "Absolutely not." He said that fifteen people could *daven* in a *shul* and they shouldn't sit next to each other and they should skip one place.<sup>8</sup> He said, "We need the *shuls* to help us stop the epidemic. You want to stop the epidemic? Be *marbeh betzedakah*." Afterwards he wrote a letter that in his city almost no one was affected by this cholera because they listened.<sup>9</sup> "On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur," he said, "there are two doctors in the *shul*." In every *shul* there are two doctors. He wrote, "If you have the slightest feeling of not being well, run to the doctors." If you wait one extra second, it's *pikuach nefashos* for others. But if you don't have anything, you sit and you *daven* like a *mentsch*.

He wasn't concerned about *pikuach nefesh*. Rabbi Akiva Eiger didn't know better scientific information, but he knew about davening. *Afra lepumaya* of these *shotim* who forced *rabbanim* to sign proclamations against davening. Everybody was quoting a certain *posek*. I had somebody call the *posek*. You know what the *posek* said? "I don't have any idea about this virus. I don't know anything about it.

<sup>5</sup> This shiur was given on May 19, 2020

<sup>6</sup> מותר להרוג המוסר בכל מקום אפי' בזמן הזה ומותר להורגו קודם שימסור אלא כשאמר הריני מוסר פלוני בגופו או בממונו אפי' ממון קל התיר עצמו למיתה ומתירין בו ואומרים לו אל תמסור אם הענו פניו ואמר לא כי אלא אמסורנו מצוה להורגו וכל הקודם להרוג זכה: הגה ואין פנאי להתרות בו א"צ התראה (הגמג' פ"ח דחובל) ו"א דאין להרוג המוסר א"כ א"י אפשר להינצל ממנו בא' מאיבריו אבל אם אפשר להציל באחד מאיבריו כגון לחתוך לשונו או לסמות עינו אסור להורגו דהרי לא גרע משאר רודף (תשו' מ"י הג"ל ומרדכי הג"ל בשם תשו' מהר"מ)

<sup>7</sup> ח"ל שם, וכו': ברוך תהי' מכל העמים לא יהי' ברך עקר ועקרה ובבהמתך. ודרשו חז"ל [בכורות מ"ד:]: עקר מתלמידים. וצ"ע מה לשון עקרה תינח עקר אבל עקרה מאי. אבל בעו"ה הניסיון יתרח קושי' זו, בהקדים הדרב מקרי זכר המשפיע והתלמידים נקבות המקבלים. והנה זה יותר מארבעים שנה תל"ת שלא נבטלה ישיבה מעל שולחני אפי' יום אחד, והשתא הכא רבו עונותיו וגבר עלי חולי וחולמה ונתבטלה תורה הרבה מהרבעת תורה והתלמידים עמדו ויחלו כמטר לי ולא יכולתי להשפיעם כרצונם והריני עקר בעו"ה, ועתה אחר כל זאת בחסדי ה"ת חזרתי לימו עלומי ויכולתי רעים גדול בעולם **מחשש מגפה** וחרב ומלחמה, והתלמידים נרדפים ממקומם מתפזרים אנה ואנה ולא מצאו מנוח בכל המקומות והשרים יועצים לטובה שנשלח ע"פ ריבוי התלמידים כי ישראל כקוצים בעיני העמים וכל הדרכים מסוגרים מיוצא ובא ואנה ילכו עניי צאן הדחופים האלו, הרי מתחלה ה' הבטול ע"י הרב שהי' עקר ועתה מטעם התלמידים היינו עקרה בעו"ה, והיינו עקר עקרה. **ובזה יונג** ש"ס פרק חלק [סנהדרין צ"ח ע"א] אין בן דוד בא עד שיבוקש דג לחולה ולא ימצא. פירוש כי ידוע (ברכות ס"א ע"ב) כשאמר פפוס לרבי עקיבא מאי טעמא עוסק בתורה נגד גזירת המלכות, והשיב לו אמשול לך משל לשועל שעמד על שפת הנהר ואמר לדגים מאי טעמא אתם רצים תנה והנה, אמרו לו מפני שאנו מתיראים מפני הצידים, אמר להם צאו אלי הבישה ונחלמה עמכם, אמרו לו אין אתה פקח אלא טיפש שבחיות, השתא במים שהו מקום חיותנו אנו יראים מפני הצידים, ועל ביבשה שהו מקום מיתותינו על אחת כמה וכמה. אמנם כוונת השועל היה להטעותם להוציאם ממקום חיותם. ואמר רבי עקיבא ה' נמה בשעה שאנו עוסקים בתורה כי היא חיינו ואורך ימינו אנו מתיראים, אם נשמע לקול השועל שלא לעסוק בתורה על אחת כמה וכמה - **הנה כן הדבר הזה ממש, כל זמן משען השישיות בעולם, אנפי' שהצידים יודעים תמיד ואין רגע בלא פגע, מ"מ זכות התורה מגין, אבל עתה הלביש את עצמו כשועל ליעץ לטוב לבטל כל השישיות בכל המדינה, ואם יבוא ח"ו יוגש הרעה והגמפה או דברים שאנו יראים מי יגן ביבשה בלי תורה.** והנה עצת השועל הזה המתכנן להטיב הוא יותר רע ומר מהצידים הרעים כשאנו במים. וכבר כתבתי לעיל דאין בן דוד בא עד ש' אפס עצור ועזוב' [דברים ל"ב:]: על כן אמרו אין בן דוד בא עד שיבוקש דג לחולה, היינו תלמידים שהשים במי התורה יבקשו לרפאות כל חלי ולא ימצאו בעו"ה, ואו היא דיוטא התחתונה, ואו רגילה נצפה לבן דוד בב"א - ועל כן עקר בברכתך של ישראל, לא יהיה ברך עקר מצד הרב ולא עקרה מצד התלמידים, ושלא תאמר שהבטיח כן להגן מן האומות שלא ישלטו עלינו, על כן הקדים ברוך תהיה מכל העמים ולא תצטרך להגנה, ומ"מ לא יהיה ברך עקר ועקרה [דרוש א - תקצ"א, א"א] על כן **מכתבו הניענו, בעיני תפלה בבית הכנסת, לדעתיה זה אמת שהקב"ה במקום צר אינו נכון אבל אפשר להתפלל כחות כחות ובכל פעם במתי מעט, ערך ט"ו אנשים, ויתחילו כאור הבקר ואחרי' כת אחרת, ויהי' מיוחד לאנשים אלו באיזהו זמן יבואו להתפלל שם, וכן במנחה, וכו' (אגרות רבי עקיבא איגר)**

<sup>9</sup> ואחר כל זאת נודה לה' אלקינו על חסד גדול שהפליא ע"ד תפלה על התלמידים בני הישיבה הי' עליהם יחיו **שלא פגע בשום אחד מהם שום חולי ומכאוב ולא שום ענין מענין החולי ההוא, ועל זה לא לבד שבני הישיבה יתנו תודה לאלקינו אך כל בני הקהלה כי בזכותם וצדקתם הי' זאת לנו כאשר אבאר בעו"ה.** [והוא כי ידוע ומפורסם לרבים רב טוב בני קהלתנו בהחזקת ישיבה זה קרוב לכ"ו שנה אשר זכני ה' לי שב פה והם מחזיקים למאות תלמידים מי יפאר גודל פאר אנשי קהלתנו על זה, ומ' לאו כל הזמנים ולא כל המקומות ולא כל העתים שיום לפעמים יש ויש אנשים אשר עיניהם צרה ופוערים פיהם כי קשה עליהם עול סבלם ובכל זאת לא פגע ולא נגע בהם שום אדם מעולם, אבל ע"פ דבר שפתיים אך למחסור ויהי' ח"ו למחסור ויהי' ח"ו עין בריה צרה בחברתה בלא"ה ומכ"ש בבכורי דלים הללו, ואלו ח"ו נחלה א' מהם אנפי' שבחדיי היו גומלים עמכם חסד כדרכם מ"מ יש ויש שהיו פותחים פיהם ומדברים מה לנו לסבול עול אחרים אומללים האלו ישובו איש לביטו והי' ח"ו דבורים כאלה לעורר דין על הקהלה, והקב"ה חפץ בהצדקם ע"כ יהיב עינא פקחיא לכל ישלוט שום חולי ורפינון באלו - והוה רמוז בפסוק שאנו בו, כרם אב על בניס ריחם ה' על יראיו היינו בחורים לומדי תורה שזכרנו והטעם כי הוא ידע יצרנו שרגלינו לפצות פה ולדבר דברים שלא כהוגן זכור כי עפר אנחנו ואין מעצור לאיש עפר מן האדמה, ע"כ חס הקב"ה על יראיו ולא פגע בהם החולי כלל ויתלמדם ויהי' אתם, וכו'; דרוש הוראה אחר המגפה חולת אילרא - תקצ"ב, ס"ב א-ב].

I'm just following what the doctor told me. Call the doctor. Don't call me." He was the *posek*. You know what that is? We live with that *bizayon*. You may as well have called the *rav* half an hour before Shabbos and tell him "It's *pikuach nefesh*. We have to close down Klal Yisrael." So he'll say, "Under the circumstances and the pressure. Okay, close it down."

### WE ARE EACH RESPONSIBLE FOR EVERY ACTION

And that's what a person has to understand. Every *ma'aseh* that a person does, he's going to be responsible for. I called a number of *rabbanim* in Cleveland and said, "If you're really so concerned about people's health, I want to inform you that there are huge supermarkets that I went to see, to witness. And guess what? They are full of people!" (Before the fifty people rule, there was no limit. The supermarkets were full of Jews). "Why aren't you standing over there and telling them there's a concern?" "Oh." I said, "Please answer me. How come a doctor is not standing there and warning people not to go in? You know why? Because he doesn't care about the supermarkets. His wife has to go shopping. He's not going to have his fresh vegetables." But *shuls*? I told this *rav*, "Do you think there's any possibility that maybe the doctors don't appreciate enough the meaning of *כי הם חיינו*?" He said, "Oh no! No. Not at all. These doctors know that." So how come they're not by any other business? Of course when I screamed loud enough, eventually they started on the other businesses too. And then monkey see, monkey do. If one city does it, others have to do it. Everybody's going to copy. But the first thing that we shut down was *shuls*, *batei kenesios* and *talmud Torahs*.

Hashem should protect us and watch over us and put this thing behind us quickly and let us get restarted with not having more *korbanos* from people who won't walk into *shuls* again, and people who won't walk into *batei medrashos* again, because I'm sure there's going to be a *velt* of *korbanos* who are not going to walk into a *shul* for who knows how long, and I'm sure there's going to be a *velt* of *bachurim* who are not the strongest of *bachurim* spiritually who will never go to *yeshivah* again. They'll just say, "What do I need *yeshivah* for?" It's ridiculous.

Somebody called me today and said, "Did you hear the last statistic? 82% of Americans don't want to go back to work! You know what they want? Monthly stimulus checks." I'm thinking to myself, "The world has gone nuts. This is what happens when you take them out of work!" They want to stay home, have a vacation like they never had before, and the government should support them. *Hashem yeshmereinu!*

### THE BOTTOM LINE

The concept of *gilgulim* is alluded to in the word *גלגלתם* in this week's *parsha*, when Moshe Rabbeinu was able to discern the number of person's *gilgulim* during the census of Klal Yisroel. The challenge with the concept of *gilgulim* is to understand that Hashem created this from the beginning of time to actually help people reach their life's mission and to achieve needed purification - despite the long and difficult *yessurim* that the *neshama* may undergo to fulfill its ultimate purpose. With this important background, we have to realize that all of our actions and decisions - especially those that affect others - carry tremendous responsibilities and consequences. And to make sure that we are following the *ratzon* Hashem - to fulfill our own *tafkid* in *this* lifetime - we need to make sure that we have a competent *Rav* with *Da'as Torah* at our side, to ask about and clarify regarding life's important decisions.