

CHIDON N

STUDY

GUIDE

5784

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General Introduction:

This ספר is a compilation of מאמרים said by the פריערדיקער רבי between the years 1940-1945 / תש"א - תש"ה. These מאמרים were taught to a relatively uneducated audience, and the concepts are explained in especially clear and simple language. The מאמרים generally start off with a question based on a source in נגלה, move into explaining broader concepts in חסידות, and eventually come back and use those concepts to answer the question it started with.

However, the goal of each מאמר isn't merely to resolve these questions. The question is just a "hook"; an introduction to explaining fundamental ideas in חסידות.

Each מאמר is NOT an independent unit. Ideas and themes are often developed over multiple מאמרים.

Sometimes, the questions asked at the beginning of a מאמר are not answered right away and it will only get resolved in the next מאמר or even later.

How to use this study guide:

This study guide is designed to be used while learning from the original Hebrew or Yiddish text.

For each מאמר, we have included:

Summaries: These explain the general theme and flow of the מאמר.

Key Terms: This is a list of Hebrew phrases or concepts which are explained in the מאמר. These are terms you will need to be familiar with, since they will often be referenced in Hebrew on the tests.

Guiding Questions: These questions can be used while you are learning, or to test yourself right after you learn the מאמר. They are designed to make sure that you understand the מאמר. These are NOT questions that will be on the test. The answers to all of the questions are in the text of the מאמר.

Contact us:

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Test #1:

מאמרים תש"א

"אין הקדוש ברוך הוא בא בטרוניא"

Summary:

The מאמר describes the difficulties a Jew faces in גלות.

The מאמר explains that since Hashem has placed us in this situation, we must also have the tools to deal with it. Although we are in the harshest stage of גלות, we also have a greater capacity for מסירת נפש, which enables us to overcome the obstacles to doing תורה and מצוות.

Key terms:

מסירת נפש
נפש הטבעית
נפש השכלית
נפש אלקית

Guiding Questions:

1. What is one פסוק that proves that Hashem only gives us what we can handle?
2. The מדרש says that "לא נתנו מצוות אלא לצרף בהן את הבריות". Give two examples of מצוות, and how they refine a person.
3. Which נפש is this פסוק referring to: "ועל דמות הכסא דמות כמראה אדם"?

4. In this מאמר, how is the phrase מסירת נפש defined?
5. What is the נמשל for the משל of the poor man [brought in ד אות]?
6. What is the way to gain true wisdom?
7. What is the reason for the fact that it is easier to stick our heel in hot water than our head?
8. What does that represent about us in גלות?

"אני ישנה וליבי ער"

Summary:

As explained in the last מאמר, the heel is easier to dip in hot water than the head, because the heel is more sensitive and בטול to the will of the נפש.

In order to explain how this works and why this is the case, this מאמר gives a lengthy description of how different כחות הנפש work, and the unique way that רצון operates within a person.

This is all a משל for the idea that our generation, although it is on the spiritual level of a heel, has the greatest capacity for ביטול and מסירת נפש.

Key Terms:

כחות פנימיים
כחות מקיפים
שכל
מידות
רצון

Guiding Questions:

1. How can the אידן be described as both "ביישנים" – "bashful ones", and "עזין שבאומות" – "the most strong-willed among the nations"?

2. Give examples of כחות פנימיים and כחות מקיפים. What is the difference between these two types of כוחות?
3. How does the מאמר prove that רצון is found in the foot?
4. Why does the Friediker Rebbe quote the "חכם לכשירצה" מאמר חז"ל?
5. What is the difference between the ways that שכל and רצון interact with the body?
6. What do the names ישראל and יעקב represent?
7. In what way is גלות comparable to dreaming?
8. How does the מאמר explain the phrase "אני ישנה ולבי ער"?

"ועתה שמע אלקינו אל תפילת עבדך"

Summary:

This מאמר starts with telling the story of דניאל in the lion's den, and quotes the תפילה he said there. The פריערדיקער רבי asks questions on the words of the תפילה, a גמרא which comments on that תפילה, and a related פסוק from תהילים.

The last two אותיות of the מאמר begin explaining the concept of השתלשלות.¹

Key Terms:

השתלשלות

Guiding Questions:

¹ The פריערדיקער רבי spends the next few מאמרים explaining foundational ideas in חסידות. These ideas will eventually help us understand the answers to these questions. The questions only get answered later, in the מאמרים entitled "אזון הלא" and "הטה אלקי אזנך ושמע".

1. Why did דריווש המלך forbid davening?
2. What questions does the מאמר ask on the phrase "ועתה שמע אלקינו אל תפילת עבדך...למען אדני"?
3. What questions does the מאמר ask on the גמרא discussing that פסוק?
4. Why is it problematic that דניאל talks about Hashem looking at the Jews with one eye [in the פסוק of "פקח עינך וראה"??]
5. Why does the מאמר quote the משל of the רמב"ם?
6. What does the word השתלשלות mean?
7. What is the השתלשלות of different types of חכמה?
8. Why does learning a lower level of חכמה aid in understanding a higher level of חכמה?

"הנה עין ה' אל יראיו"

Summary:

This מאמר starts off by asking a question based on the phrase "הנה עין הוי' אל יראיו". It then continues the discussion from last מאמר, using the משל of the relationship between שכל and מידות to explain the concept of השתלשלות.

The מאמר concludes by starting to answer the question posed at the beginning of the מאמר.²

Key Terms:

² The answer is incomplete. The questions from this מאמר are more fully resolved in the מאמר entitled "הטה אלקי אונך" ושמע.

השתלשלות/ למעלה מן ההשתלשלות
 עילה ועלול
 השפעה
 מהות

Guiding Questions:

1. What are the two conflicting מדרשים about the פסוק of "הנה עין ה אל יראיו"?
2. Which concept does the phrase "והחכמה מאין תמצא" prove?
3. In the משל of שכל and מידות, which is the עילה and which is the עלול? Why?
4. What are the two types of "השפעה - transmission" from the brain? Give examples of each type.
5. What does the word מהות mean?
6. How are שכל and מידות different?
7. How is the relationship between שכל and מידות similar to the השתלשלות in our world?
8. How do we resolve the question we posed at the beginning of the מאמר?

Test #2:

מאמרים תש"ב

"בינו בוערים בעם וכסילים מתי תשכילו"

Summary:

The theme of this מאמר is the unique way that a Jew who learns תורה understands and relates to Hashem.

The Jew realizes that the world is created יש מאין, while the non-Jew mistakenly believes that the world is created through a chain of cause and effect - עילה ועלול. The מאמר explains the differences between these two perspectives.

Key Terms:

שם אלקים
שם הויה
השתלשלות עילה ועלול
בריאה יש מאין
כח הפועל/נפעל

Guiding Questions:

1. What lesson can we learn from the phrase "בינו בוערים בעם"?
2. What is the mistake hinted to by the phrase "רם על כל גויים ה"?
3. How does the מאמר explain the phrase "לא הביט און ביעקב"?
4. Which פסוק proves that Hashem creates the world through יש מאין?
5. Give two examples for the following idea: The עלול is found within the עילה, before it is revealed.

6. Give two examples for the following idea: The עלול develops into a totally new entity once it is revealed.
7. What are two differences between בריאה יש מאין and process of שכל developing into מידות?
8. What are the two contradictory aspects of בריאה יש מאין?

"הנוטע און הלא ישמע אם יוצר עין הלא יביט"

Summary:

This מאמר discusses the significance of דוד המלך describing Hashem as being able to see and hear.

The way our bodies function is a משל for Hashem. By understanding our own כוחות of sight and hearing, we can appreciate what דוד המלך meant.

Key Terms:

שם המושאל
שם התואר

Guiding Questions:

1. What do we learn from the phrase "חכמה מאין תמצא"? [In this מאמר]
2. How does the מאמר explain the phrase "במקום שאתה מוצא גדולתו של הקדוש ברוך" "הוא שם אתה מוצא ענוותנותו"?
3. Why does the פסוק say "מבשרי אחזה אלקה" instead of "אראה אלוקה"?
4. Are sight and hearing כוחות פנימיים or כוחות מקיפים?

¹ This מאמר answers some of the question posed in the מאמר entitled "ועתה שמע אלוקינו אל תפילת עבדך", from the last section

5. In what sense is the כח of hearing גשמי?
6. How are the powers of sight and hearing similar to דעת?
7. Why does דוד המלך use the משל of sight and hearing when talking about Hashem?
8. What is one difference between our sight and hearing and Hashem's?

"סוף דבר הכל נשמע"

Summary:

This מאמר explains two central ideas:

- A. The entire purpose of creation is for אידך to do תורה and מצוות.
- B. The entire world is a small glimmer of Hashem's being.

Thinking about these two ideas leads a person to do תשובה.

Key Terms:

מלכות
הארה

Guiding Questions:

1. How does the מאמר explain the phrase "אנכי עשיתי ארץ ואדם עליה בראתי"?
2. Who and what does the word אדם refer to?
3. What does the משל of the king teach us about the way Hashem creates the world?
4. What is the difference between thought and speech?

5. Why is מלכות compared to speech?
6. What is the purpose of learning about the idea that Hashem created the entire world through a mere הארה - a "glimmer of His essence"?
7. How does the מאמר explain the פסוק of "בשבילי נברא העולם"?
8. How does the מאמר explain the פסוק of "אחור וקדם צרתני"?

"מה רבו מעשיך השם"

Summary:

This מאמר contrasts two ways of connecting to Hashem: Contemplating the greatness of the world in order to produce יראת ה', and learning תורה. Learning תורה leads to a deeper connection with Hashem. However, in order to learn תורה, a person needs to first have יראת ה' and do מצוות.

Key Terms:

חומר
צורה
חיצונית
פנימיות

Guiding Questions:

1. What are the two explanations the מאמר gives for the phrase "מה רבו מעשיך ה"?
2. What does it mean to have the צורה dominate the חומר?
3. Why does the מאמר quote the story of גרא בן שמעי?
4. Why is the name אלקים connected with fearing Hashem?

5. What is the difference between פנימיות and חיצוניות?
6. What is the difference between connecting to Hashem through יראה and through learning תורה?
7. Which משל does the מאמר use to explain why we need to do מצוות in addition to learning תורה?
8. What is the first step in עבודה?

"אמר רבה בר רב הונא כל אדם שיש בו תורה"

Summary:

The מאמר begins by explaining why it is important to have יראת ה' before learning תורה.

It then introduces a higher level of יראה which can only be achieved after learning תורה.

These two types of יראה are called יראה תתאה and יראה עילאה. They are each produced by different types of contemplation.

Key Terms:

יראה תתאה
יראה עילאה
יש
אין

Guiding Questions:

1. How does the כח of רצון differ from other כוחות?
2. What happens when a person doesn't have יראת ה' before learning תורה?

3. What is the apparent contradiction between רבה בר רב הונא and רבי ינאי?
4. How does the מאמר explain the phrase "אם אין יראה אין חכמה, אם אין חכמה אין יראה"?
5. Which thought process leads to יראה תתאה?
6. Which thought process leads to יראה עילאה?
7. What are two different ways the terms אין and יש can be defined?
8. How does the מאמר explain the phrase "וצונו לעשות כל החקים הזה לירא את ה'"אלקינו"?

"הטה אלוקי אונך ושמע פקח עינך וראה"

Summary:

This מאמר analyzes the תפילה of דניאל.²

The מאמר explains what דניאל was really davening for, why he used the specific words he did for his תפילה, and why, as the גמרא says, his תפילה was only answered in the merit of אברהם אבינו.

Key Terms:

עתיקא קדישא
שם אדני-י

Guiding Questions:

1. According to the מאמר, what was דניאל asking for when he said "והאר פניך על מקדשך השמם למען אדני-י"?
2. What are three levels on which Hashem can relate to the Jewish people?

² This מאמר answers the rest of the questions asked in the מאמרים entitled "ועתה אלקינו שמע אל תפילת עבדך" and "הנה עין ה' אל יראיו".

3. How does the מדרש explain the phrase "וִיִּקְרָא בְשֵׁם ה' א-ל-ל עוֹלָם"?
4. Why did אברהם need to tap into the power of קדישא specifically?
5. What is the difference between saying "למען אדני-י" and "למענך"? Why did דניאל use the wording of "למען אדני"?
6. How was the תפילה of דניאל different than משה's?
7. Why was the תפילה specifically answered in the merit of אברהם?
8. Why did דניאל use the word "ועתה"?

"כה אמר השם אלקים הנה אני פותח את קברותיכם"

Summary:

The theme of this מאמר is the power and accessibility of תשובה. The מאמר explains that אדם's three sons, הבל, קין, and שת, represent the three levels of רשע, צדיק, and בעל תשובה. The מאמר describes the characteristics of each level, and stresses that even the רשע has the potential to do תשובה.

Key Terms:

חסד
רחמים

Guiding Questions:

1. Which נביא said the פסוק quoted at the beginning of the מאמר? What was his message?
2. What is the reason for the names קין and שת?

3. What concept is hinted to in the phrase “זכור רחמיך וחסדיך כי מעולם המה”?
4. What is the difference between חסד and רחמים?
5. Why was הבל a shepherd?
6. What was קין’s mission in life? How is that hinted to in the פסוק about his name?
7. Why is שם associated with אלקים?

“הוי כי גדול היום ההוא”

Summary:

This מאמר discusses two types of hardships we face in גלות:

Physical challenges. These are meant to encourage us to do תשובה, which transforms darkness into light.

Spiritual challenges. This refers to the battle between the יצר הרע and the יצר טוב.

The מאמר describes various “weapons” each יצר uses, and how to ensure that the יצר טוב wins the battle.

Key Terms:

קבלת עול

Guiding Questions:

1. What is the opinion of רבי יהושע about when and why משיח will arrive?
2. How does רבי אליעזר explain the phrase “ועת צרה היא ליעקב וממנה ישע”?
3. How does the בעל שם טוב explain that פסוק?
4. What are two ways that light can conquer darkness?

5. What are the "long-range" weapons of the **יצר הרע**?
6. What are the "short-range" weapons of the **יצר טוב**?
7. What do **יעקב** and **עשו** each represent?
8. How does the **מאמר** explain the phrase "ולאום מלאום יאמץ"?

"קרוב השם לכל קוראיו לכל אשר יקראהו באמת"

Summary:

The theme of this **מאמר** is the importance of **תשובה**, especially in our generation, right before **משיח**.

It describes various spiritual challenges, as well as different methods of doing **תשובה**. Our generation needs a unique type of **תשובה** – one connected to **תורה**, which is **אמת**.

Guiding Questions:

1. When does the phrase "קרוב ה לכל קוראיו" apply?
2. What are the four ways of nullifying a bad decree?
3. Which **פסוק** teaches us that changing your name nullifies a bad decree?
4. What lesson do we learn from the phrase "וירא ה' את מעשיהם כי שבו מדרכי הרעה"?
5. What do we learn from the story of **מונבז המלך**?
6. Why do we say **קפיטל ק"ז** on Friday [during **מנחה**]?
7. What does drowning represent in our **עבודה**?

8. What does it mean to be "lost in the desert" spiritually?

"יפה שעה אחת בתשובה ומעשים טובים"

Summary:

This מאמר discusses the value of doing תורה and מצוות in this physical world. It first describes the difference between the physical and the spiritual. Even though this world is more physical and גן עדן is spiritual, doing מצוות in this world is a preparation for עולם הבא.³

Key Terms:

ידיעת המציאות
ידיעת מהות המציאות

Guiding Questions:

1. What is the difference between something spiritual and something physical?
2. What is the מאמר's question on the phrase "יפה שעה אחת"?
3. What seems problematic about the idea that תשובה and גן עדן were created before the world?
4. What does the word "קודם" mean in the phrase "שבעה דברים נבראו קודם שנברא העולם"?
5. What is our נשמה and גוף a משל for?
6. What is the difference between the understanding a person has of his נפש, and the understand he has of his כוחות?

³ There are a few questions in this מאמר which are only answered in the next one, the מאמר entitled "ואתה עורי נקפו זאת".

7. How is this world a preparation for the world to come?

“ואחר עורי נקפו זאת”

Summary:

This מאמר continues the theme of the last and explains how serving Hashem in this world can be greater than the spiritual experience of גן עדן.

The מאמר first discusses how בריאה יש מאין works, and why it necessitates the Creator being hidden from creation. It compares the way Hashem is hidden from the world to the way the נפש is hidden from the person.

Then, the מאמר explains that although Hashem is more hidden in this world, that is only true now, during גלות. When משיח comes, we'll be able to see how Hashem is most present in the physical.

Key Terms:

טבע

Guiding Questions:

1. What did איוב mean when he said “ועתה עורי נקפו זאת, מבשרי אחזה אלוק”?
2. How is בריאה יש מאין different from the way a craftsman makes a vessel?
3. What are the two opposing aspects of בריאה יש אין?
4. What is the difference between עילה ועלול and בריאה יש מאין?
5. Why is this world called עולם?
6. How does the מדרש explain the phrase “וכל העם רואים את הקולות”? What does the מאמר explain based on that מדרש?
7. Why is it easier to understand our נפש than to understand Hashem?

8. How is it that one hour of doing תורה and מצוות in this world is greater than גן עדן? Isn't גן עדן the reward for what we do in this world?

“אני לדודי ודודי לי”

Summary:

The theme of this מאמר is the importance of doing תשובה in אלול, particularly the type of תשובה which comes from our own efforts. It also discusses the severity of עבירות related to speech and emphasizes the tremendous power of words.

Guiding Questions:

1. How does רש"י explain the phrase “אני לדודי ודודי לי”?
2. What is the difference between the פסוקים of “אני לדודי ודודי לי” and “דודי לי ואני לו”?
3. Which פסוק is אלול a ראשי תיבות for? Why?
4. How does the בעל שם טוב explain the phrase “בקש שלום ורדפהו”?
5. What do we learn from the fact that the תורה says “ומן הבהמה אשר איננה טהורה”?
6. Why does the מאמר bring up the משל of a father and son [in אות ב']?
7. What are two explanations for the phrase “אל תפתח פה לשטן”?
8. What is the proper way to do תשובה for sins related to speech?

Test #3:

מאמרים תש"ג

"והיה ביום ההוא יתקע בשופר גדול"

Summary:

This מאמר discusses the idea that before משיח comes, all Jews will be awakened to do תשובה. Using נבואות from ישעיהו and זכריה, it emphasizes that even the most estranged Jew will be aroused to embrace תורה and מצוות.

Guiding Questions:

1. What will be one challenge in gathering far-off Jews when משיח comes?
2. How will that problem be solved?
3. Why is the name אדני AND the name הויה used in the phrase "ואדני הויה בשופר גדול יתקע והלך בסערות תימן"?
4. What are the two categories of people who sin?
5. Which category does the nation of אשור represent?
6. Which types of people is the פסוק of "ואדני הויה בשופר יתקע" directed to?
7. What is the message Hashem is sending with the "שופר גדול"?

“טוב לי תורת פיך”

Summary:

The theme of this מאמר is the superiority of doing תורה and מצוות in the physical world over the life of the נשמה in גן עדן.

To explain this, the מאמר describes the function of the ספירה of מלכות, and the concepts of עתיק and אריך.

מלכות is the ספירה which sustains our physical world. Although it is the lowest of the ספירות, it is also the most powerful.

Key Terms:

עתיק
אריך
מלכות
כתר

Guiding Questions:

1. How does the מאמר explain the phrase “טוב לי תורת פיך”?
2. How does the מאמר explain the word “אחד” in the phrase “ימים יוצרו ולו אחד מהם”?
3. Find one of the פסוקים that hint to the idea that the ספירה of מלכות sustains creation.
4. Which concept does the משל of the שולחן ערוך/קיצור שולחן ערוך explain?
5. Why is the מלכות of a higher world able to become the כתר of the lower world?
6. Which משל does the מאמר use to explain that idea?
7. How is it that the תורה and מצוות done in this world are more valuable than anything else?

"בדבר ה' שמים נעשו"

Summary:

This מאמר continues the theme of the importance of our עבודה in this physical world. It explains why Hashem's creation is termed דיבור, as well as the power attached to our own speech.

The מאמר emphasizes that the time to do מצוות and תשובה for עבירות is while we are still in this world.

Key Terms:

כף הקלע
חיבוט הקבר

Guiding Questions:

1. How does the מגיד explain the phrase "חסד ה' מלאה הארץ"?
2. How is דיבור similar to מידות? In what way are they different?
3. Why is Hashem's creation of the world called דיבור?
4. Why is it important to study תורה out loud?
5. What lesson does the מאמר learn from the פסוק of "הון ועושר בביתו וצדקתו עומדת לעד"?
6. According to the זוהר, what do the פסוקים describing שרה's death symbolize?
7. Why does the נשמה say that it is "חולת אהבה" - "love-sick"?
8. Why is this world called כנען ארץ?

"והריקותי לכם ברכה"

Summary:

This מאמר stresses the importance of צדקה. It brings various פסוקים, stories and מאמרי חז"ל teaching us that giving צדקה is rewarded with wealth.

Guiding Questions:

1. When are we given the ברכה of "עד בלי די" ברכה?
2. Which פסוק proves that מעשר gave יצחק?
3. Which פסוק proves that מעשר gave יעקב?
4. How does רבי יוחנן explain the phrase "עשר תעשר"?
5. What question did ריש לקיש's son ask on that explanation?
6. Which פסוק did רבי יוחנן quote to answer him?
7. What explanation does the מאמר bring for the phrase "איש את קדושיו לו יהיה"?

"מעין גנים באר מים חיים"

Summary:

This מאמר compares עבודת ה' to digging a well. It derives lessons from the story of אברהם עבודה and יצחק's עבודה, and contrasts אברהם עבודה with יצחק's עבודה.

Guiding Questions:

1. Why is תורה compared to a well?

2. How is water different from other liquids?
3. What is the function of the level of רוח?
4. Which קליפה do the פלישתים represent?
5. What lesson in עבודה can we learn from the story of אברהם?
6. What are the two ways of serving Hashem?
7. Which method is represented by a well?
8. What does it mean to learn תורה "in a way of תפילה"?

"בדרך אפקיד רוחי"

Summary:

The theme of this מאמר is the importance of making a חשבון הנפש at the end of the day.

It emphasizes how lucky we are that Hashem takes care of our נשמה and restores it each night, and how קריאת שמע is a time for us to ensure that we fulfilled our mission throughout the day.

Guiding Questions:

1. What is the difference between the collateral we entrust with Hashem and a regular collateral?
2. What is the reason it says "פדית אותי ה' א-ל אמת"?
3. Why does the פסוק use the name הויה specifically?
4. Why do we say קריאת שמע right before going to sleep?

5. How does the מאמר explain the phrase “וּיִכַסּוּ מִיָּמִים צָרִיחִים אֶחָד מֵהֵם לֹא נוֹתֵר”?
6. Why does the מאמר bring up the story of דואג האדמי?

“וקיבל היהודים”

Summary:

This מאמר describes the low spiritual state the Jewish people were in at the time of פורים. It then discusses the עבודה they needed to remedy the situation - קבלת עול. It uses the משל of digging a well to describe the various stages necessary in עבודה, and why קבלת עול is the most essential step.

Guiding Questions:

1. What are two explanations for the word החלו?
2. What “illness” were the Jewish people sick with during the time of פורים?
3. What kind of person is described by the phrase “נמשל כבהמות נדמו”?
4. How is our עבודה similar to digging a well?
5. What stage in עבודה does the phrase “שכחי עמך ובית אבירך” represent?
6. Which קליפה did the well שטנה represent?
7. What did the well רחובות represent? What was special about that well?
8. Which עבודה is referred to in the phrase “וקבלו היהודים”?

“כי ישאלך בנך”

Summary:

This מאמר describes the four types of people represented by each of the four sons, and explains the question and answer given to each one.

The majority of the מאמר is focused on the question and answer of the חכם, which discusses the value of doing physical מצוות.

Guiding Questions:

1. Which type of person is a “שאינו יודע לשאול”?
2. What is the question of the תם?
3. What is the answer we give the רשע?
4. What does not eating after קרבן פסח/אפיקומן mean spiritually?
5. What is the difference between the יצר הרע and the נפש הבהמית?
6. How does the love of בכל מאדך differ from the loves of בכל לבבך and בכל נפשך?
7. How does the מאמר explain the phrase “...ויעתק משם”?
8. What is the real question of the חכם? What is the answer?

“וספרתם לכם”

Summary:

This מאמר analyzes the פסוקים speaking about ספירת העומר, and asks a number of questions on them. It then explains how each of the details in the פסוק hint to the spiritual עבודה of ספירת העומר - transforming the מידות of the נפש הבהמית. It then describes each of the מידות, and how they can be used for either קליפה or קדושה.

Guiding Questions:

1. Why does the תורה use the word לכם in the context of שמיני עצרת and לולב?
2. Why is it problematic that the word לכם is used here?
3. What was the קרבן עומר made out of? Why?
4. Give an example of גבורה שבחסד [Not specific to the נפש הבהמית or נפש אלוקית?]
5. What are the two differences between humans and animals with regard to שכל and מידות?
6. Give an example of the נצח שבחסד of the נפש הבהמית.
7. Give an example of the יסוד שבחסד of the נפש אלקית
8. Why does the פסוק say "ממחרת השבת"?

"משכני אחריו נרוצה"

Summary:

This מאמר discusses the phrase "משכני אחריו נרוצה" and how these words describe the spiritual journey of the Jewish people between פסח and מתן תורה.

It explains how the words in the פסוק hint both to the spiritual עבודה of the Jewish people at the time, and the personal עבודה of our own נפש הבהמית and נפש אלקית.

Guiding Questions:

1. What are the questions the מאמר asks on the phrase "משכני אחריו נרוצה"?
2. What stage of יציאת מצרים does the word "משכני" refer to? How does this connect to רש"י's explanation on that word?

3. Why is the phrase משכני in singular, while the phrase "אחריו נרוצה" is in plural?
4. How is רצון stronger than שכל?
5. What are the two types of רצון for אלוקות? What is the difference between them?
6. Which type of חצוף is represented by a ram?
7. Which type of Jew is referred to in the phrase "נגילה ונשמחה בך"?

"מה טובו אוהליך יעקב"

Summary:

This מאמר describes the different levels of עבודה represented by the names אברם and אברהם as well as יעקב and ישראל. This explanation helps us understand the words of the פסוק of "מה טובו אוהליך יעקב..."

Guiding Questions:

1. What is the difference between the name change of אברהם and the name change of יעקב?
2. What is the purpose of changing a person's name when they are sick?
3. What question does the מאמר have on the phrase "מה טובו אוהליך יעקב"?
4. What is the significance of the גמטריא of the name אברם?
5. Which type of עבודה is symbolized by the name ישראל?
6. Why are we allowed to say the name יעקב, but not the name ישראל?
7. Why is יעקב associated with the word אהל, rather than the word משכן?

“נחמו נחמו עמי”

Summary:

This מאמר analyzes a נבואה in ישעיהו that comforts the Jewish people after the destruction of the בית המקדש.

The מאמר discusses the idea that both the Jewish people and Hashem, so to speak, need to be comforted, and explains why a “double comfort” is needed.

Guiding Questions:

1. How does רש"י explain the repetition in the words “נחמו נחמו עמי”?
2. Why does Hashem need to be comforted, so to speak?
3. What is the double pain that the banished sons have?
4. What reason does the מדרש give for the repetition of “נחמו נחמו”?
5. How does the מאמר explain the פסוק of “כִּי הוּיָהּ הוּא הַאֱלֹקִים”?
6. How are מצוות and עבירות always “doubled”?

“אני לדודי ודודי לי”

Summary:

The theme of this מאמר is the importance of doing תשובה, especially in אלול.

The מאמר contrasts the פסוקים of “אני לדודי ודודי לי” and “דודי לי ואני לו”, explaining that they are referring to two different types of people.

The phrase “אני לדודי ודודי לי” refers to the עבודה of a בעל תשובה, which is why it is the אלול of ראשי תיבות.

Guiding Questions:

1. How does the מדרש explain the phrase "הרועה בשושנים"?
2. Which פסוק refers to the עבודת הצדיקים? Why?
3. Which type of bread is a משל for businessmen? Why?
4. How does the מאמר explain the phrase "טוב וישר ה...?"
5. What are the four opinions concerning how to treat one who does an עבירה?
6. How are those four divided into two categories?
7. How does the מאמר explain the phrase "אחור וקדם צרתני"?

Test #4:

מאמרים תש"ד

"יחיינו מיומים"

Summary:

This מאמר discusses the importance of doing תשובה before ראש השנה and during the עשרת ימי תשובה.

If a person doesn't do תשובה on their own, Hashem helps them do so.

The מאמר uses the משל of a plant to explain how a person can get inspired from above.

Guiding Questions:

1. Which days does the phrase "יחיינו מיומים" refer to? Why?
2. Which day does "יום השלישי" refer to?
3. Which part of a person is similar to the roots of a plant? Why?
4. How can we tell that the body has a sustaining force other than the נפש?
5. What is the difference between the חיה/יחידה and the other parts of the נפש?
6. What causes a sudden awakening within a Jew to do תשובה?

“ובא לציון גואל”

Summary:

The theme of this מאמר is the necessity of doing תשובה before משיח comes. It defines what תשובה really is, and discusses different factors which can cause a person to do תשובה.

Guiding Questions:

1. What seems strange about רש"י's explanation on the words “ובא לציון גואל”?
2. What is the deeper meaning of רש"י's explanation?
3. Which פסוק proves that Hashem's mercy is one of the factors necessary for גאולה?
4. Why is the משל of father and son brought in ב' אות?
5. What is a common misconception about תשובה?
6. What is the more accurate definition of תשובה?
7. What are four different things that can arouse someone to do תשובה?

“ואתה קדוש יושב תהילות ישראל”

Summary:

The theme of this מאמר is the idea that Hashem “benefits” from our service of Him. The מאמר tells a story of the טוב שם בעל, and quotes a מדרש that speaks about how Hashem is “fed” by our קרבנות. The מאמר concludes with the רבי אלטער's explanation of what bringing a קרבן represents in our עבודה.

Guiding Questions:

1. How does the בעל שם טוב explain the phrase "ואתה קדוש יושב תהילות ישראל"?
2. What did the בעל שם טוב frequently do because of that?
3. What are the two reasons that Hashem calls us רעיתי?
4. Why did Hashem create us with a הרע?
5. What are the 2 parts of bringing a קרבן? Which part is most essential?
6. How does the רבי אלטער explain the phrase "אדם כי יקריב מכם"?
7. Which type of נפש הבהמית is represented by an ox?

"יענך ה' ביום צרה"**Summary:**

This מאמר discusses the difference between טבע and למעלה מן הטבע. The מאמר explains that טבע is simply a tool used by Hashem, who is beyond טבע.

When a Jew realizes this, and trusts in Hashem, Hashem will relate to him in a supernatural way.

Key Terms:

טבע/למעלה מן הטבע
חכמה/בינה/דעת

Guiding Questions:

1. What is the main difference between טבע and למעלה מן הטבע?
2. What are the three parts of the mind and what does each one accomplish?

3. When one studies טבע in a deeper way, what do they discover?
4. What does the example of the sun rising each day teach us?
5. Why does the פסוק say "בראשית ברא אלקים"?
6. What does שם הויה represent?
7. How does the מאמר explain the phrase "...יענך ה' ביום צרה"?

"דעו כי ה' הוא אלקים"

Summary:

This מאמר discusses the ideas of ידיעה and אמונה, and why a person needs both. It analyzes the phrase "דעו כי ה' הוא אלקים", and explains how it refers to the four ideas we need to have ידיעה in about Hashem.

Guiding Questions:

1. What is the עזרא's explanation of the פסוק?
2. What seems strange about רש"י's explanation?
3. What is the difference between the קרי and כתיב of the פסוק? How does it change the meaning?
4. What does the word "דעו" mean? Why is it in the פסוק, rather than the word "האמן"?
5. What is the common misconception about אמונה?
6. Why does the מאמר quote the phrase "האדם הוא עולם קטן והעולם הוא גוף גדול"?
7. Which idea does require אמונה?

8. What are the four ideas hinted to in the phrase "דעו כי ה' הוא האלקים"?

"וקבל היהודים"

Summary:

This מאמר describes how the Jewish people assimilated into Persian culture because they no longer believed in the גאולה.

מרדכי saved the Jewish people by strengthening their אמונה and inspiring them to do תשובה.

The same message applies to us today - we need to strengthen our belief in משיח and do תשובה for גאולה to come.

Guiding Questions:

1. How does the גמרא explain the phrase "וקבל היהודים"?
2. What reason does רבי שמעון בר יוחאי give for the low spiritual state of the Jewish people?
3. What is the other reason given in the גמרא?
4. What is the deeper meaning of ר' חנניאל's words to אחשוורוש?
5. How does the ילקוט explain the phrase "ומרדכי ידע את כל אשר נעשה"?
6. Which story did the רבי מיטעלער compare to the time of פורים? Why?
7. What are the two explanations given at the end of the מאמר for the phrase "וקבל היהודים"?

“בכל דור ודור”

Summary:

This מאמר emphasizes that גאולה is something that applies to everyone, at all times. We are all in our own personal מצרים. By working on our עבודה, and crying out to Hashem as the Jewish people did in מצרים, we too can merit גאולה.

Guiding Questions:

1. What question does the מאמר ask on the phrase “בכל דור ודור”?
2. How does the מאמר explain the word “דור”?
3. What is the root of the word מצרים? What does that mean spiritually?
4. How does the מאמר explain the phrase “לפי שכלו יהולל איש”?
5. Why does the word אלה refer to מידות?
6. Which feeling is aroused when a person thinks about the fact that Hashem is “מלא כל הארץ כבודו”?
7. What does גלות מצרים represent spiritually?
8. Which פסוק teaches us the method to get out of our personal גלות?

“המזבח עץ שלש אמות”

Summary:

This מאמר discusses the deeper meaning behind נטילת ידיים. It analyzes many of the הלכות of נטילת ידיים, and what they symbolize in the עבודה of refining our מידות.

Guiding Questions:

1. Which נביא said the פסוק of "המזבח עץ שלש אמות"? What was the context?
2. How do ר' יוחנן and ר' אליעזר explain the פסוק?
3. What is the body and the soul of Torah?
4. Why does the גמרא use the word שלחן rather than סעודה?
5. What are the two reasons we specifically use the word נטילה and not רחיצה?
6. What is the deeper meaning of the phrase "אדם מועד לעולם"?
7. Why does washing need to be done with a full vessel?
8. Why do we wash differently in the morning and before bread?

"אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי בכל יום ויום"

Summary:

This מאמר speaks about a בת קול, which calls out every day, urging the Jews to do תשובה.

The מאמר describes the differences between the נפש and the גוף, and how they work together. Using that concept, the מאמר explains that although we cannot physically hear the בת קול, our נשמה does, and it can therefore still affect us.

Guiding Questions:

1. How does the רמב"ם explain רבי יהושע בן לוי's statement?
2. What questions do we have on the statement, and the רמב"ם's explanation?
3. What are two ways of sensing/touching things?

4. Which way can be used to "touch" the נפש?
5. What is the difference between a body with a soul, and a machine?
6. Where does sudden inspiration to do תשובה come from?
7. What is the significance of the phrase "עוסק בתורה"?

"רבי חנינא בן דוסא אומר כל שיראת חטאו"

Summary:

The theme of this מאמר is the importance of having יראת שמים before learning תורה. Learning תורה requires using שכל, and יראת שמים is a מידה. Although שכל seems to be higher than מידות, there is an important advantage to מידות as well.

Key Terms:

מקיף
פנימי

Guiding Questions:

1. How does רב עובדיה ברטנורא explain the statement of רבי חנינא בן דוסא?
2. Why does יראת חטא seem to be greater than חכמה?
3. Why does the מאמר quote the statement from רב הונא?
4. Why is בינה called מקיף?
5. What advantage do מידות have over שכל?
6. Why does יראת חטא need to precede תורה study?

7. From where do we learn that fear of sin is greater than תורה?
8. How do תורה and fear of sin parallel intellect and emotions?

"הוא היה אומר כל שמעשיו"

Summary:

This מאמר emphasizes the importance of doing מצוות with אהבה and יראה. As explained in the last מאמר, learning תורה seems to be the higher, as it utilizes , the שכל, the loftiest of the כוחות. However מידות have the advantage of being more פנימי, and affecting a person in a deeper way.

Key Terms:

השכלה
הבנה

Guiding Questions:

1. What does phrase "הוא היה אומר" or "מרגלא בפומיה" always mean?
2. What is the difference between הבנה and השכלה?
3. Which ספירה does action correspond to?
4. What is the question the מאמר asks on the phrase "...כל שמעשיו"?
5. How does this מאמר define the word מעשה?
6. Why is a person able to think about something even if they don't like it?
7. What did רבי חנינה בן דוסה really mean when he said "...כל שמעשיו"?

"הוא היה אומר כל שרוח הבריות נוחה הימנו"

Summary:

The theme of this מאמר is the importance of having מידות טובות. It emphasizes how special the simple Jew is, and the importance of being kind to everyone, especially simple Jews. When a person has good מידות, he brings pleasure to Hashem and fulfills the purpose of creation.

Guiding Questions:

1. What are the two differences between the way חכמה and רצון operate?
2. Why does the מאמר quote the phrase "בנים אתם לה' אלקיכם"?
3. Which type of person is referred to in the phrase "רוח הבריות נוחה הימנו"?
4. What is the advantage that simple Jews have?
5. Which idea is explained through the משל of the talking bird?
6. How does the מאמר explain the phrase "גדולים מעשי צדיקים יותר ממעשי שמים" "וארץ"?
7. What are 3 examples of advantages that נשמות have over מלאכים?
8. What was the mistake of the מלאכים?

Test #5:

מאמרים תש"ה

"ביום השמיני עצרת"

Summary:

This מאמר explains significance of שמחת תורה, and why it comes right after שמיני עצרת. It also contrasts the joy of שבועות and יום כיפור, and emphasizes the value of the עבודה of a בעל תשובה over a צדיק.

Guiding Questions:

1. What are three meanings of the word עצרת?
2. What is special about שמיני עצרת in contrast to the other days of סוכות?
3. Why do we celebrate the תורה after שמיני עצרת instead of on שבועות?
4. What level were בני ישראל on by מתן תורה?
5. How does a person's environment affect them?
6. Why were the Jewish people at הר סיני able to hear that which is seen, and see that which is heard?
7. What does תשובה achieve?
8. Why isn't שמחה תורה immediately after יום כיפור?

"הייתה לי דמעתי לחם"

Summary:

This מאמר discusses the hardships that the Jewish people go through during גלות; the physical difficulties, as well as the spiritual darkness.

In גלות, we cry about our physical needs and forget about what's most important, our spiritual needs. However, through תשובה and feelings of bitterness about our spiritual state, we can form a deeper connection with Hashem and draw His ברכות into our lives.

Guiding Questions:

1. Why would Hashem make His nation go through suffering?
2. How do scoffers use this to their advantage?
3. What did the sons of קרח speak about?
4. How does the מאמר explain the phrase "אשר קרך בדרך"?
5. What is the message of the story of the חסיד?
6. What should a Jew be bitter about?
7. What is the source of all sins?
8. How does the מאמר explain the word איה?

"מאי חנוכה דתנו רבנן"

Summary:

This מאמר explains the significance of חנוכה in our time. Although the Greeks appreciated the cultural aspects of Judaism and the great wisdom of תורה, they

denied that it was G-dly. The lesson of חנוכה is to do מצוות with עול and not get influenced by the "Greeks" of our generation.

Guiding Questions:

1. What are some examples of things in the בית המקדש that needed to be supervised to make sure that they were the best?
2. Out of 9 types of oil, how many were fit to be used for the מנורה?
3. How was the war between the אידן and יונים different than wars fought by other countries?
4. Why is a מקוה able to purify those who are טמא?
5. Describe the three categories of מצוות.
6. Explain להשכיחם תורתך.
7. How did the Jews win over the Greek army?
8. What does that war with the Greeks look like in our generation?

"כי נר מצוה ותורה אור"

Summary:

This מאמר uses the analogy of a candle and light to explain how we should do מצוות and learn תורה. The three parts of a candle refer to three parts of doing a מצוה. There are three levels in תורה that one can achieve, and all are dependent on the נר מצוה.

Guiding Questions:

1. What are the three objects described in the phrase "נר מצוה ותורה אור"?

2. How does רש"י explain the word נר?
3. What is the "oil" necessary when doing a מצוה?
4. What are two ways we need to have קבלת עול when doing מצוות?
5. How is the הלכה of two people grasping a טלית learned in גן עדן?
6. Which type of תורה learner is missing the level of אור תורה?
7. What are the three levels on which a person can learn תורה?
8. How does one achieve the highest level?

"כי אני ה' לא שניתי"

Summary:

This מאמר uses the משל of a teacher and a student to explain how the different levels of G-dly revelation do not indicate that there is a change in Hashem. The various levels of revelation only exist from our perspective. In truth, Hashem remains One and creation makes no change in Him whatsoever.¹

Guiding Questions:

1. How is this פסוק explained according to רש"י?
2. Why does the מאמר quote the story of משה רבינו and רבי עקיבא?
3. What is the difference between מציאות and מהות?
4. What is the difference between the revelation in אצילות vs. that of עשיה?

¹ This idea is more fully explained in the next מאמר, entitled "אתה הוא עד שלא נברא העולם".

5. In what way does a teacher "change"?
6. How does the משל of the teacher help us understand how Hashem is one?

"אתה הוא עד שלא נברא העולם"

Summary:

This מאמר continues the theme of the last, explaining how creation does not affect any changes in Hashem. Although, it seems to us that the world conceals G-dliness, relative to Hashem there is no concealment. Hashem created the world יש מאין, and therefore the world is totally בטול to Him.

Guiding Questions:

1. Why do we start the morning specifically with מודה אני?
2. What unique relationship do the יש and אין have?
3. Does the יש have any true existence on its own? Explain.
4. How does a person craft a vessel differ from the way Hashem creates the world?
5. How is it possible that creation has no effect on Hashem?

"בכל דור ודור"

Summary:

This מאמר explains that גלות and גאולה are spiritual ideas. In order to merit the physical redemption, we must have a spiritual redemption. We can each experience a personal גאולה when the נפש האלקית and its שכל refine the נפש הטבעית.

Guiding Questions:

1. Did יעקב choose to go down to מצרים on his own? What does that teach us about גלות and גאולה?
2. What are 2 explanations of the word "בפרך"?
3. Why is the word "וייצר" written with two 's'?
4. When does the נפש האלקית feel like it is in מצרים?
5. What does the example of the thief teach us?
6. What is the difference between the מידות of an adult and those of a child? Why are they different?
7. Why is שכל called light?
8. What does a personal יציאת מצרים look like?

"יצא אדם לפעלו"

Summary:

This מאמר discusses יצא אדם לפעלו ולעבודתו עדי ערב as it relates to our life. Just as there are 3 parts to the day, life is divided into three sections. The מאמר brings an example of how a craftsman learns a skill to help us understand how to advance in our עבודת ה', and concludes with a deeper translation of the opening פסוק.

Guiding Questions:

1. How does the בעל שם טוב explain the phrase "...יצא אדם לפעלו"?
2. What do we learn from the הלכה the מאמר quotes from the רמב"ם?

3. What generally happens as a person gets older?
4. "הנשמות מתאימות ואב אחד לכולנה" - which qualities are found equally in every Jew?
5. What happens over time as a person learns a craft or a skill?
6. How does this help us understand how to develop our 'עבודת ה'?
7. What is the deeper explanation of the word ערב?

"טוב לי תורת פיך"

Summary:

This מאמר emphasizes the value of צדקה and תורה learning. The תורה we learn and the מצוות we do in this world have an advantage over the intense אהבה and יראה that גן עדן have in נשמות.

Guiding Questions:

1. What are the three differences between of משפט and צדקה?
2. How did אברהם אבינו combine משפט and צדקה?
3. What question does the מאמר have on the phrase "טוב לי תורה פיך...?"
4. What happened when Hashem gave the תורה? Why?
5. What is the difference between the אהבת ויראת ה' a person can attain in this world, and the one נשמות experience in גן עדן?
6. What do זהב and כסף refer to?

7. How does the מאמר explain the phrase "טוב לי תורת פיך מאלפי זהב"?

"ראשית גויים עמלק"

Summary:

This מאמר explains why עמלק, unlike the other nations, must be destroyed. It discusses the difference between the שכל and מידות of the נפש הבהמית and נפש האלקית to help us understand the spiritual source of the other nations and how they can be rectified. Since עמלק stems from a place that can not be fixed, it must be completely obliterated.

Guiding Questions:

1. How is עמלק different from all the other nations?
2. What does the extra ׳ in the word וייצר signify?
3. What does the נפש הבהמית use its intellectual capacities for?
4. What is the difference between the שכל/מידות of the נפש האלקית and those of the נפש הבהמית?
5. עשה את שאינו ישנו - This quote proves Hashem created the world in which manner?
6. What is the difference between נפש הבהמית's and נפש אלקית's view of existence?
7. How can the נפש האלקית rectify the נפש הבהמית's?
8. What is the quality of עמלק that must be completely wiped out?

“זכור ה' מה היה לנו”

Summary:

This מאמר emphasizes the value of the מ"ה - the מסירת נפש for תורה ומצוות - found within every Jew. Every Jew's body is equally beloved to Hashem. תורה scholars need to ensure that arrogance doesn't cover over the מ"ה in their נשמה. The purity of simple Jews brings out the מ"ה within them.

Key Terms:

מ"ה

Guiding Questions:

1. What is the simple meaning and context of the opening פסוק?
2. How did the תלמידי חכמים explain “זכור ה' מה היה לנו...” to the בעל שם טוב?
3. Why did משה say “ואנחנו מה”?
4. What strengthens, and what conceals the מ"ה within us?
5. Why does the פסוק quote the phrase “כל הנגעים אדם רואה חוץ מנגעי עצמו”?
6. What challenge does the תלמיד חכם face?
7. Why did the בעל שם טוב explain the פסוק differently to the תלמידי חכמים and the simple Jews?
8. Where did the בעל שם טוב bring the חב"א קדישא to show them the great quality of אנשים פשוטים?

"שלום רב לאוהבי תורתך"

Summary:

This מאמר explains the difference between אוהבי תורתך - lovers of תורה and לומדי תורה - learners of תורה. It describes the difference through a story of the בעל שם טוב's students, and concludes that it is specifically אוהבי תורתך who have true peace and do not stumble.

Guiding Questions:

1. What question does the מאמר ask on the term אוהבי תורתך?
2. Explain the two types of students that the בעל שם טוב had?
3. How is it possible for someone to give generously, while still being considered "ידיכם דמים מלאו"?
4. What is the difference between the way ר' נתן and ר' אברהם interpreted what the בעל שם טוב taught?
5. "טוב פת חרבה ושלוה בה מבית מלא זבחי ריב" - How was this seen at the בעל שם טוב's seder?
6. Why is it specifically "שלום רב לאוהבי תורתך"?

