

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Wednesday, June 06, 2012

What is a body without a soul?

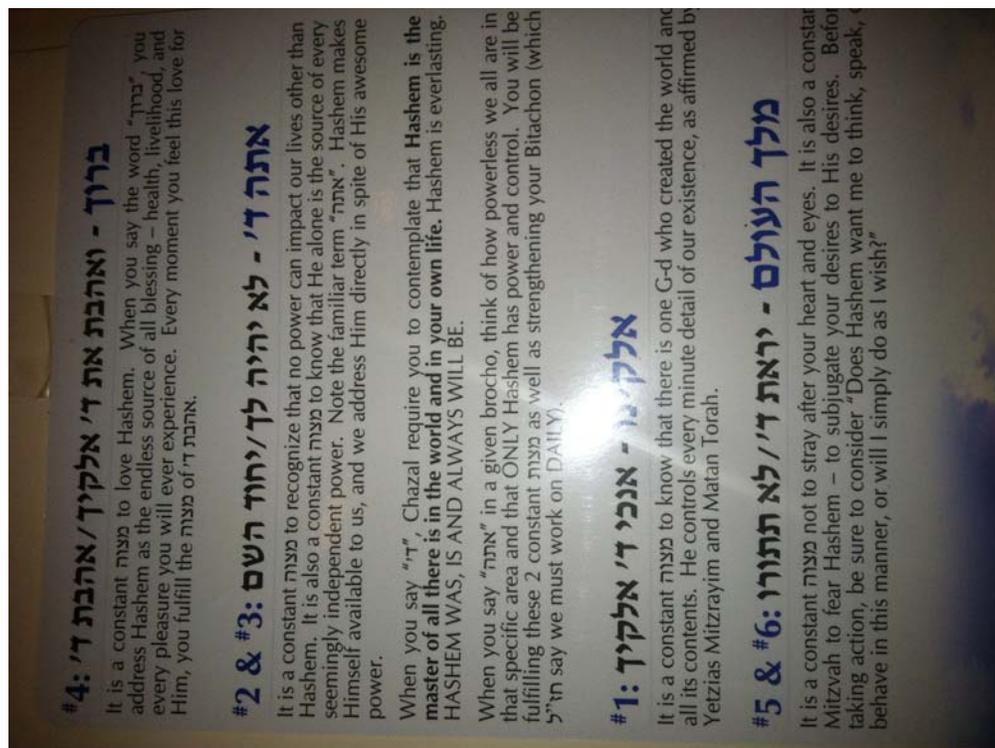
“And He will give you mercy and He will have mercy upon you” (Deuteronomy 13?18) – Heaven is merciful to all who have mercy on their fellow creatures. This is self-evident; for since the holy One Blessed be he pays measure for measure, one who is merciful toward his fellow creatures and treats them with lovingkindness is deserving of mercy and of absolution of his sins in lovingkindness....David exulted in possessing this good trait to the extent that he sought the good even of those who hated him “When they were sick, I put on sackcloth; I tortured my soul with fasting;” Tehillim 143 Mesillas Yescharim p. 229

Rabbi Moshe Weinberger in a class on Da Es Atzmecha asks what is a body with out a soul? A body without a soul is a dead person. Without a soul, the body is not alive.

Rabbi Nivin teaches us that a person’s focus is to hunt for the knowledge of Hashem and that each day, we should ask ourselves, what is my next step in avodas Hashem? What can I bring to this moment that serves Hashem?” Rabbi Nivin’s personal development chaburas www.newchabura.com lay out a clearly defined way that is friendly to the lower soul to being trying to live more transcendently, to trying to integrate Torah not only into our daily actions but into our hearts.

Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller in her video series [Duties of the Heart www.dutiesoftheheart.net](http://www.dutiesoftheheart.net) brings out the pathway to integrating into our hearts the service of Hashem.

Each bracha that we say has a hint to the Six Constant Mitzvahs – see the sheet below.



We have free choice and free will, we are our ratzon. While we have our lives, it is up to us to decide how we use our free will – toward what goals are we drawn? Are we missing anything of importance if we are not interested in hunting for the knowledge of Hashem in a way that integrates it into our hearts?

Rabbi Noach Weinberg describes first level pleasure as utilizing our strength to serve Hashem:

Levels of Pleasure Summary: (based on shiurim given by R. Noach Weinberg Rosh Yeshiva of Aish HaTorah, zt"l, listed from lowest to highest)

5. *Physical pleasure: tune into through action oriented mitzvot such as brachot; designed to fine tune us and bring us to an awareness as to who is the Source of this pleasurable experience, nature, conveniences of life, appliances, etc. (thank G-d my washing machine works, my computer, my car, etc.)*

**G-d orientation: life is sweet (ie. chocolate. Hashem loves me, He gives me these conveniences to give me more time to focus on what's meaningful and important in life).*

**Located in the Nefesh part of the soul. Accessed in the world of physicality.*

4. *Love: Emotional pleasure, connections, relationships. Tune into through mitzvot: regulating intimacy, family purity, etc., Bein Adam l'Chavero mitzvot.*

** Accessed through the Ruach (emotions) aspect of the soul.*

**G-d orientation: We love humanity as reflections of G-d, someone is lovable because he/she reminds me of G-d.*

3. *Meaning, Doing the right thing. Being Good. Self-respect. Tune in through mitzvot governing speech, morality, chessed, tzedekah, etc.*

**Accessed through the Neshama aspect of the soul.*

**Can be accessed through the Power of Speech. Saying the right thing as important reflection of doing the right thing.*

**G-d orientation: G-d is good. I want to be good.*

2. *Creative Power. teaching/empowering others/ becoming leader, creative pursuits
Tune in through mitzvot of shaliach tzibur/ laws governing actions of Kohanim, Judges, etc.*

**Located in the Chaya part of the soul. Can be accessed through the power of intuition Binah*

**G-d orientation: I want to be like G-d. I want to create as G-d creates. Everytime we re-create ourselves (ie. overcome a bad character trait or bad habit) or as mothers help to create our children's middos and help them overcome their negativity, we can access this pleasure. I want to change the world. I want to make a difference!
I want to change myself.*

1. *Transcendence: highest reflection of d'vekut. Tuning into Hashem's will and aligning our will with Hashem's will as highest experience of Transcendence, of love.*

** Located in the Yechida part of the soul. Closest we're able to access this level of the soul is through Ratzon (Will), specifically unifying our ratzon with Hashem's Ratzon.*

**G-d orientation: I am totally in love with G-d. I want to be one with G-d and G-d's will.*

Summary: The goal and purpose of life is to connect to Hashem and experience the pleasure of being in His constant presence. Hashem, out of His loving kindness and desire to help us in this ultimate goal gave us the compass, our souls, with its multi-leveled capacity to connect.

Furthermore He gave us specific tools/ kochot at the time of Creation to help us tune in to these various levels of our G-d given soul. And if that wasn't enough, to help ensure that the connection be made, He then created within us an innate drive to pursue the pleasures & experiences in life (along with the mitzvot to help us plug into these pleasures in a conscious way) thereby providing the arena through which we would naturally draw ourselves towards a more G-dlike orientation in life. And with the right "spiritual vision", towards a more real and tangible relationship with Hashem Himself!

In the words of Rav Noach zt"l:

"To be a Jew is to be constantly thinking, constantly alert. You can't become a zombie. You have to be conscious, awake in order to access fully this relationship. It takes work. It's worth the effort!!!"

If a person at any point in their life decides it is time to hunt for the knowledge of Hashem, the very first question that comes to mind is Who is Hashem and what does He expect from me?

Tomer Devorah tells us exactly Who Hashem is and how we can reflect His attributes of mercy. Just yearning to do so brings a person upwards in connection to Hashem, raising a person out of the world of disconnection. Yet it is a daily service. And an infinite path. Even one moment of connection is so pleasant that it far outweighs the pleasures we are accustomed to in this world. Imagine coming to love with all our heart and all our soul and all our might the Creator of the World. It brings a person to a state of being that we build here and benefit from in the world to come. Our thoughts and the state of being in this world are far stronger after we pass away because they no longer are covered over by a body. Wherever our thoughts are in this world is where our thoughts will be in

the next world for all eternity! While we have our faculties and free will, we are instructed to integrate into our hearts Hashem's will and make it ours, to love, fear, emulate and serve Him.

We may not be able to complete the work but it is incumbent upon us to start it, for the body does not live forever and our time in this corridor to the next world is limited. If we will not be for ourselves (our souls), who will be?

Here is a more on our soul:

The 5 Levels of the soul are "5 distinctive, qualitatively different levels of potential consciousness for perceiving G-d's presence in the world" (quoted from R. Yaakov Zalman Labinsky of www.becomingdivine.com).

highest to lowest:

1. Yechida: oneness, unity, connects us most directly to Hashem, cannot be directly accessed.
2. Chaya: highest part of the soul that we can access, part that makes us feel most alive, empowered, creative, intuitive, chiddushim in Torah come through Chaya.
3. Neshama: (breath) part of soul which we use to mean soul, the part of our higher soul that we have greatest access to, inner voice, inner wisdom. Accessed through focussed thoughts and power of speech
4. ruach: emotions lie here. Beginning of the lower soul dimension.
5. nefesh: part of the soul that connects most directly to the body, where physicality is animated.

One more Model...

- Not only did Hashem create us with a multi-level soul for tuning into His presence and the specific tools (which will talk more about next time when we begin the power of speech module) to access that soul level, but He also created us, built into us an innate, inherent drive for one basic thing: Pleasure. We are hard wired for pleasure (again, if the purpose of life is to connect to Hashem by having constant awareness of Hashem's presence, it makes sense that He would build into us the drives and tools that will help us to accomplish our goal of D'vekut/attachment.). It's this drive for pleasure, but only with the proper set of lenses/perspective, that guarantees we'll ultimately make the connection.
- These levels of Pleasure give us the orientation we need to seek after G-d. But beware, with each of these pleasures, there is a counterfeit pleasure: a pleasure that leads us towards the self, towards the ego and away from G-d. Each level of pleasure has the potential to make us self-conscious and self-absorbed or has potential for spiritual Divine pleasure by acknowledging that Hashem is the Source of the pleasure. Whether or not we experience the pleasure as a body for the pure sake of the body or as a soul for the pure sake of connecting to Hashem is a Free will decision.

Let us learn and enact the laws of [Ahavas Yisrael](#), let us integrate Hashem's mercy for us in our hearts and bring it to our relationships and circumstances, for this is what He is awaiting, for us, the Jewish people, to use our free will to hunt for the knowledge of Hashem's mercy and love, to dig wells to our inner penimius and find hidden below our subconscious human nature a connection to Him that will gush His attributes into the world and bring His light into visibility and tip the scales towards redemption.

May we be zocheh to see the Moshiach Tzidkeinu speedily.