

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Igeret Hakodesh 11 - Nullifying our will for absolute belief

"There is to be only an absolute belief in the Yotzer Bereishit; that is, that the creation of being ex nihilo (yesh meayn) [which is called reishit-chochmah, i.e. His wisdom which is not apprehensible to any creature] - this creation occurs constantly and every moment, by all creatures coming into being [as a substance ex nihilo [yesh meayin]) from His blessed wisdom which animates everything. And when man will contemplate in the profundity of his understanding and will imagine in his mind his coming to be ex nihilo - truly every moment, how can he possibly think he has ever suffered, or had any afflictions related to "children, life and sustenance," or whatever other worldly sufferings. For the naught (ayin) which is His blessed wisdom is the source of life, welfare and delight. It is the Eden which transcends the world to come, except that, because it is not apprehensible, one imagines to have sufferings, or afflictions. In fact, however, no evil descends from above and everything is good, though it is not apprehended because of its immense and abundant goodness. And this is the essence of the faith for which man was created: to believe that "There is no place void of Him" and "In the light of the King's countenance there is life," and conclusively, "Strength and gladness are in His place, " because He is but good all the time. Therefore first of all, man ought to be happy and joyous at all times, and truly live by his faith in the Lord who animates him and is benignant with him every moment. But he who is grieved and laments makes himself appear as if he has it somewhat bad, and (is) suffering, and lacking some goodness; he is like a heretic Heaven forfend. That is why the Kabbalists strongly rejected the trait of sadness.

The faithful, however, is not indisposed by any afflictions whatever, and with respect to all mundane matters "yes" and "no" are all the same to him, in a true equation. But he to whom they are not the same, shows of himself that he is of the erev rav who act but for themselves and loves himself to the extent of removing himself from under the hand of the Lord and to live the life of heathens - because of his self-love; that is why he desires the "life of the flesh," and "children and sustenance" - for that is his good. It would have been better for him had he not been created,. For the purpose of man's creation in this world is to test him by these trials, to ascertain what is in his heart; whether he will turn his heart towards the other gods, namely the passions of the body which evolve from the sitra achra, and desire these, or whether his desire and wish is to live the true life which evolves from the living G.d.

One must believe that he really lives in it, and all his needs, and everything related to himself, truly evolve in all their details not from the sitra achra, but] from the Lord by whom the steps of man are established" and there is not a word...conclusively, everything is absolutely good, except that it is not apprehended.

By believing this truly, everything becomes good even in appearance. For by such a faith, that one believes that the very substance of what manifestly seems to be evil in fact of the Supreme Good [i.e. His blessed chochmah which is non-apprehensible, and is the Eden which transcends the world to come], through this faith the imagined evil is truly absorbed and sublimated in the concealed Supreme Good.