

## Nourishment for the Neshama

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### On Preparing for Purim, Inspiration Towards Ruchnius

My father used to tell the story of the young man who killed his parents and then pleaded for mercy to the court because he was an orphan. I am reminded of this as we approach Purim and Pesach this year, with threats of nuclear destruction, terrible anti-semitism, huge financial losses, the shidduch crises and so much more that bears down on us. We plead before Hashem for mercy but, like the man who killed his parents and pleaded as an orphan, are we responsible for our situation?

Let's look at a few questions:

1. Are we looking at ourselves as souls in bodies or has our soul and its mission taken a back seat to more practical considerations?
2. Does the wisdom that mankind has acquired provide the answers we need to solve our dilemmas?
3. What can we do to improve our chances for mercy?

Are we looking at ourselves as souls in bodies or has our soul and its mission taken a back seat to more practical considerations?

Perhaps from time to time we realize we have a soul, but with our busy schedules and mortgages and tuitions, we are running all day to survive. And, we tell ourselves that because we are raising our families with Torah education, then everything we doing becomes spiritual for that significant goal. And there is truth to that. However, our souls themselves languish – where are we finding the greatest pleasure? Are the pleasures that we are experiencing the joy of connection to Hashem, of serving Him, or is what is bringing us happiness and pleasure something in this world – proper social circles, the benefits that Hashem bestows upon us so that we may do our missions, vacations, cars, or, chas v'shalom, our aveirahs that we forgive ourselves for because of "all we do" for the sake of Hashem? One thing that is apparent from the life of Reb Noach Weinberg zt"l is that a person can experience great joy and sense of mission through loving Hashem, from taking the time each day to want to feel Hashem's will. Reb Noach Weinberg zt"l would contemplate ten minutes a day crying out to Hashem to help him want to bring back all the Jewish people who have wandered off. To see Reb Noach come to tears about this makes visible an ahavas Hashem that we can only aspire to. In Micah, it says, "What does Hashem want from us, do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with Hashem." We are not here to build empires and fortunes. We are here to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with Hashem. In truth, Hashem does everything else. Our choice is whether we shall be just, kind, and humbly connected. And this must be our primary choice, not secondary. We must shift to this. Doing so will bring ahavas yisrael, the glue needed to re-create Klal Yisrael, to re-connect every Jew so that the Shechina can attach once again to Klal Yisrael and redeem us and bring the Bais HaMikdash.

Does the wisdom that mankind has acquired provide the answers we need to solve our dilemmas?

Just pick up the papers. Mankind's best has been overwhelmed in every headline, be it humanitarian aid to Haiti, stopping airplane bombers from boarding, solving health care reform, repairing the economy, H1N1 production, stopping nuclear threats, winning a war against hoodlums in the poorest country in the world and much much more. Dear readers, mankind's collective intellect is teeny. Puny. Remember what Rashi said, that the amount of Torah that he knows in relation to the amount of Torah there is to learn is less than a thumbnail. And that is Rashi, one of the greatest Torah scholars ever whose words we embrace and through whom we understand the Torah that we have today. We are ants. There is a far greater intelligence in the world. Knowing this is the beginning of true wisdom. We cannot know what we need to in order to solve our problems. Hashem is running everything and it is time that we view ourselves in this proper context. When we go to a surgeon and he does everything he can, we all know the result is in Hashem's

hands. We don't know very much at all.

Jewishly, we have many different groupings. But the Jewish people were twelve tribes. No one tribe can bring out all the facets of Hashem that the Jewish people can collectively. It is for us to embrace and respect the wisdom of each Torah observant community, for neither our wisdom, nor theirs, is supreme. We represent portions of Torah and can only be whole when Hashem sees us together, as a diamond, one soul.

What can we do to improve our chances for mercy?

The first step is to be open to the possibility that there is a far greater intelligence in the world that is running things. This should bring great peace of mind. The second step is to choose to do things that are pleasing to Hashem, that are consistent with His will as stated in Torah. In order to do so, we must rise above our natural physical selves, setting aside "the best" of what mankind knows to do should it be in contrast to Hashem's will. We are one body with many limbs and organs, ONE SOUL. We must recognize that we are one with every Jew. We don't have to like what they do or even feel a likability for them but we do have to treat each other with love and respect in thought, word and deed.

The hardest time to see ourselves as connected and unified is when our feelings and our judgments are negative toward each other, based on our intelligence. But this is THE time and occasion where we are being called upon to demonstrate ahavas Hashem and humility. Know that we do not know what is in another's mind. Know that we are being judged based on our judgment of others. Know that the groupings that are natural to physicality go beyond what Hashem permits when hatreds form – we are different but all alike at the same time, alike in our connection to each other through our connection to Hashem. Just as a glass of water with a drop of tea in it becomes all colored by the tea, so do the Jewish people become affected by feelings of hatred one to another. It is futile and self-destructive.

Ahavas Yisrael requires that we speak well of our fellow Jew, respect our fellow Jews, look after their needs and do teshuva on past failures in these areas. We must take that seriously right now, as we approach Purim when we did teshuva and were saved because of it and Pesach, the season of our redemption.

Each one of us can make a difference. Think of someone with whom there may be distance and reach out to make amends. Soon, when the Moshiach comes (may it be today) you will be so glad that you did!