

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Overwhelmed! And The Meek will Inherit the Earth

The year 5770 is 1,940 years after the destruction of the Second Temple (3830), that is 1,940 years of human history/wars/empires, wealth, romance, art and more. The intelligence of mankind, the grandeur of Adom – to where have we arrived?

Rabbi Tatz, in a shiur on Adom's sin, teaches that Adom was not capable of sinning. That the nachash, which was the yetzer hara in an external form, knew that in order to get Adom to do the wrong thing, it had to make Adom think he going to be doing a mitzvah.

Adom wanted to show Hashem that he, Adom, could come into this world and sanctify Hashem's name, that he, Adom, would be able to glorify Hashem in this world. Hashem said to him "I know you can, but let me do it for you." But Adom chose. And Hashem changed the makeup of the world so that the yetzer hara could confuse us by making the yetzer hara internal to us. He placed us in a life and death battle with the yetzer hara. When we choose to do good or evil in the world, we create indeterminate forces through which Hashem runs the world. The power is ours to choose, so it is good if we can understand the metaphysical reality and accept it and operate within it.

The very best of man's intelligence seems to be repeatedly coming up short! Dec 25 bomber, Fort Hood, Snow removal, power restoration, wild fires, humanitarian aid to Haiti, recession and Wall Street crash, disease control/H1N1, AIDS, Ponzi scandal. Could it be that man's hand has been played out, that now is the time to see that there is a far greater intelligence and a metaphysical reality beyond what the naked eye can know or discover? If so, what model can we understand that may help us acquire this understanding?

What does a parent do with a teenager or young adult who wants to "do it himself?" A good parent allows the child to experiment, to grow, to see what happens with his best efforts. Hopefully, the child grows into a responsible, intelligent adult who is able to bring integrity and fine qualities to the world. But what if the child grows into someone who finds brilliance in values less than ideal? What if the child finds out how powerful he is from the temper tantrums that he throws? What if the child sees that if he can get away with something without getting caught that he can take what he wants with impunity? What if the child can effectively blame someone else and find out that there are no consequences for him?

A good parent should and would step in. "This has gone far enough!"

Let's take a look at a few things that mankind's wisdom without consideration of the 10 commandments has shown, offered as possible reasons that "This has gone far enough" is coming into the world:

1. That people who hate each other and are determined to commit acts of violence on each other are very hard, if not impossible, to stop (i.e. terrorists, ethnic cleansing, Al-queda, etc. but more in our own homes, lashon hara, ona'as devarim, machlokes, power struggles, disputes, exploitation and more) Hatred is a form of violence in and of itself. But when it is acted out, it is a breach of the 10 commandments.

2. That hateful tactics can be very useful in acquiring and maintaining power (i.e. tyrants, abusers, bullies and cliques) and in giving the appearance of success – that is, success in the three dimensional world. As long as the perpetrator can hide in concealment and strike in the dark, he can take and ruin and destroy with impunity and not be accountable - there is a whole range between illegal and unethical in which he can hide. If there is no proof, those who suffer and are pained just lose. The perpetrator looks powerful and wise and strong and may even acquire wealth and tremendous success. In a "looking out for number one" environment, many may see him as a role model, a shrewd get the job done expert. Hiding behind human frailty, some even feel sympathetic to the predators. A "leave no bruises abuser" hurts emotionally and in other ways and walks away, looking victorious.
3. That if there is something that goes wrong, find someone to take the blame and call that justice, appealing to the emotional component of the matter.
4. That if people demand something long enough, they can change what is considered ethical and proper, changing the face of society (i.e. same sex marriages, gays in the military, unmarried couples living together, single never been married mothers, sexual immorality, pornography, and more) It is urgent to remember how much Hashem hates sexual immorality in every form.
5. That alliances established by doing favors with an agenda of using this new "friend" for a selfish agenda can help a person advance by taking advantage of the people whose trust is earned based on a sense of loyalty that has a faulty base (faulty because it is self-serving and power-based, albeit it may be put forward on an ideological plane). When people do not have good self-esteem (i.e. a self-esteem based on their relationship with the Creator) they are vulnerable to feeling good about themselves when those with power, influence, or a certain knowledge appear to show interest in them and want to include them in their ideological goals. This "ego stroking" helps them to feel good about themselves but makes them vulnerable to the takers who will bribe them with personal benefit while using the person's wealth, influence, and skills to serve themselves and their own political goals - perhaps even in the name of the greater good. Those wise in human nature can and do manipulate and wield great influence over people who may never realize that their life-force has been diverted (through their emotions and fear of losing ego pleasure) toward someone else's selfish personal agenda for success. Or if they do realize they are within someone's power, find the bribes and ego pleasures to be sufficient "payment" for their alliance and conformance, even if their conscience feels it conflicts with the 10 Commandments, because they know they will receive a negative "check" from the alliance builders (i.e. they will be ostracized, they will suffer financial consequences or public rebuke or humiliation, or simply lose ego-pleasure and status.) Instead, they find a way to see what they are doing as acceptable and normal so as to belong, yet somehow trading in their inner life for an appearance of a successful life.
6. That actions that are undetectable by other people due to the limitations of human perceptions and ability to gather evidence are essentially okay to do, especially if they are covered up with warmth and appearances of well-being. Every thought and action that we do is known, even if people cannot perceive it, and has an impact on the entire world. Know this.

Those who are meek are not well-versed in these tactics, better known to those seeking power, influence, empire-building or political gain. The meek have not formed themselves in these ways.

Yet, as a race, have we brought to fruition what Adom set out to do, to sanctify Hashem's name by bringing His light into the world? Or have we forgotten that depth and adjusted ourselves to a normalcy that leaves out the inner life and soul of a person, something that those considered meek continue to pursue? Man is responsible for his choices because we create indeterminate beings based on our responsibilities to Hashem and the values Hashem has commanded us, not based on the persuasions, favors and ideologies of those in positions of power and influence. Without this realization, we are distant from Hashem and He has the role to say "This has gone far enough!"

May all that is overwhelming us help us to come to the realization that there is an intelligence in the world far beyond mankind's intelligence. The beginning of wisdom is fear of Hashem. And may we be successful in challenging within ourselves conduct that is considered "normal" and choose to elevate our conduct to something above this world, something that contains holiness and that brings Hashem's light to this world.