

## Nourishment for the Neshama

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### Rosh Chodesh Av 5772 - The beginning of the 9 days that hopefully will lead to a Yom Tov instead of a Day of Mourning. On Love and Fear of Hashem

Would we be happy if the only emotions we experience are love of Hashem or fear of Hashem?

Does it even seem possible?

Rabbi Yaakov Zalman Labinsky, [www.becomingdivine.com](http://www.becomingdivine.com), teaches that all fear is a diversion of the strength of our neshama from fear of Hashem to either fear of abandonment or fear of annihilation. When we experience fear that is not fear of Hashem, it takes us out of the world of the neshama, away from attachment to Hashem.

Is it possible that all negative emotions stem from fear? Can we trace the roots of our despair, anger, frustration, embarrassment and more back to fear and thereby understand why, because it has broken away from fear of Hashem, that are experiencing pain?

Torah tells us that jealousy, desire and ambition take us out of the world. Is the root of these three fear? If I feel jealous, am I afraid that I lost something that should have been mine? Or if I desire something, am I afraid that I won't get it and something will happen to me? But mostly, if I feel insulted, am I afraid that my honor has been compromised and that my self-image is damaged and that I will suffer? I think so.

Is it possible that all positive emotions stem from love? Can we trace the roots of our positive emotional bonds back to love and thereby understand why, because it is an expression or investment of love of Hashem, and for giving that love we are experiencing pleasure? I think so.

If we accept that all of our emotions are a subsection of either love or fear of Hashem, does that help us regain our balance in the moment? Consider the possibilities!

Someone has a strong opinion that is being expressed, causing tornadoes in the emotional makeup of the people being addressed. What is the tornado of emotions? I am afraid my opinion won't be heard, I am afraid my feelings won't be respected, I am afraid that I will be annihilated....the tornado is that the person forgot that all emotion is to fear Hashem alone. How does that help? The part of the body that is trembling is the sensory lower self that is reacting and yearning to respond in self-defence. The sensory part of us must come to see that its reactions are from a place of physicality alone and that what the lower self desires, pleasure, is far more likely to be achieved if it stays connected to loving Hashem rather than running to a place of disconnection out of fear.

And that emotional and spiritual gap is the playing field for all of our nisayons. We develop negative charges that overwhelm our thinking, straight from the subconscious. If we do not begin to approach becoming aware of where pleasure truly comes from, with what can we inspire ourselves to withstand the sometimes painful investigations

necessary to seek comprehension of how jealousy, desire and ambition are woven into our subconscious and become the tools the yetzer hara uses to trigger our basic spiritual wiring to fear Hashem, and redirect it from fear of Hashem towards something else. Most of the time we are totally blind and unaware of the underpinnings of our negative reactions. This is Hashem's design.

Hidden in our subconscious is a part of us that yearns to be close to Hashem, imprisoned in our blind reactions. Trapped there, a piece of our Gdly essence is in golus. When we begin a journey to hunt for the knowledge of Hashem out of love for Hashem and a yearning to be Gd-like, we set free from golus a piece of the tzelem elokim within us.

How do we take off the blinders to begin the search? Torah. We are told, when the yetzer hara is bothering us, bring it to the Bais Medrash. Torah is the antidote. Torah teaches us what Hashem wants, how to be like Him, how to avoid the pitfalls and traps that the subconscious lays for us and how do serve Hashem.

At every moment of our lives, we have the potential to be expressing love or fear of Hashem, may His Name be praised and may He become visible once again in the holy Bais Hamikdosh and bring a day of Yom Tov instead of a day of mourning on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av.