

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Searching for Gd

We are searching everywhere for Gd ,Who is in hiding. Where is He hiding? Why can't we find Him -f we are taught that Gd is everywhere, ein od milvado – there is nothing but Gd, so why can't we find Him? It seems like a contradiction.

We learn from Adom's sin through the destruction of the Temples that we we ourselves caused Hashem to go into Hiding because of our inability to over-ride our basic thoughts speech and deeds with thoughts speech and deeds that sanctify His name. And upgrading our thoughts speech and deeds to sanctify His name is no easy task because it engages our every day otherwise healthy sense that "I have to get this done successfully" achievement oriented approach to mastering our lives.

Key to why we cannot find Gd in our daily lives is understanding that our Gd-given ability to make sense out of our circumstances can seem like it is just coming from our intellect, coming from something that is ours and not connected to Gd per se. We use our intellect with concepts that help us understand our world. For example, we learn in science the idea of prediction and control. By observing a pattern, people can come to predict what might happen next, thereby gaining a rudimentary idea of what they may do to control or avoid the consequence of deleterious circumstances. A simple one is predicting the weather in order to prepare for bad road conditions. A more complex one is establishing security systems to protect people from armed attack. The amount of time spent on this in today's every day life is growing, with Homeland Security trying to protect our free living. Is there a problem with prediction and control and using our Gd-given intellect in this way?

When it comes to our interactions with fellow Jews, we must be very cautious that we are serving Gd and not ourselves. Moreover, even if we think we are serving Gd, if we are emotionally invested in exposing someone, or harming their reputation, or interfering with their sense of self-determination, chances are we are doing this to satisfy a downward pull toward being right rather than an upward pull toward doing what is right (i.e. with love in our heart for the good of the other person). For example, in our own families, we examine the conduct of our children and want to shape them, guiding them here and there to be better equipped for life. How we do this makes all the difference. Do we label? Do we yell? Or do we, with unconditional love and limit-setting, shape the child and help them in a dignified way to improve?

Why do we often satisfy the downward pull toward being right rather than pulling ourselves upward to do what is good and right in Gd's eyes? When we feel that we are right, we strengthen within ourselves a sense of our own power and control. When we feel that we are doing what is right and loving, we strengthen within ourselves a sense of our being small and beloved in Gd's eyes and our sense of expending sincere energy in effort with trust that Gd will provide success. How do we tell the difference?

If in my heart I feel that I have "shot an arrow" at another Jew, with words, suggestions of negative content, or criticisms that I can only substantiate with emotional accolades and exaggerations using human reasoning and emotions as my proofs, the chances are that I am missing an opportunity to replace arrogance with awareness that there is only Gd in this world, ein od milvado. I am not a separate entity! Rather I am here to show Gd that I realize the natural negativity in our human condition and that I attempt to return to Him anyway through compassion! A comfortableness with getting things done through power, control and mastery reveals where Gd is hiding within us, in our very resistance to considering that we are edging Gd out by allowing our negativity to dominate our thoughts speech and deed!

May our need to feel intelligent, insightful, analytically able to see correctly into ourselves and others not substitute or obscure the important need to maintain the respect and dignity of another Jew no matter what. May we see behind the face of every Jew the spark of Hashem and may we remove from our consciousness and subconscious acts all arrogance, remembering that we are nothing more than a miniscule representation of Hashem's will, here for a finite period of time to sanctify His name.