

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Woven into man's most inner element the urge to advance is the yetzer hara, subconsciously snaking around

In our morning davening we say:

"May He open our heart through His Torah and imbue our heart with love and awe of Him and that we may do His will and serve Him wholeheartedly, so that we do not struggle in vain nor produce for futility."

Rabbi Yecheil bar-Lev in Song of the Soul Introduction to Kaballa, page 43, describes :

"Man's most inner element is the urge to advance, to achieve more and more. Rabbi Ashlag terms this urge the 'ratzon to receive.' The ratzon to receive is on four levels: (a) the ratzon to receive what is necessary for the physiological survival of the body; (b) the desire for luxury, such as physical pleasure beyond the basic needs of the body (this aspect is confined to animal desire alone); (c) the aspiration for honor and power; (d) the aspiration to expand the faculty of knowledge. The first of these four is an inanimate dimension, the second vegetable-like, the third animal-like and the fourth a human quality."

The Maharal teaches us that there are three things that take us out of the world, jealousy, lusts and the desire for honor. Woven into man's most inner element the urge to advance is the yetzer hara, subconsciously snaking around when we are pursuing the urge to advance in physiological survival, seeking physical pleasures beyond basic necessities, aspiring for recognition and honor. What refuge do we have for the yetzer hara? Bring him to the Bais Medrash and learn Torah. Torah is the antidote to the yetzer hara for the fourth inner element of the urge to advance is the aspiration to expand the faculty of knowledge.

Here is a chart for convenience of the above comparison:

Man's most inner element is the urge to advance	Maharal teaches the three areas the yetzer hara feeds from
(a) the ratzon to receive what is necessary for the physiological survival of the body;	jealousy
(b) the desire for luxury, such as physical pleasure beyond the basic needs of the body (this aspect is confined to animal desire alone);	lust
(c) the aspiration for honor and power;	Desire for honor
(d) the aspiration to expand the faculty of knowledge.	Learn Torah as antidote to yetzer hara
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Torah gives us ample examples of man's inner element – the urge to advance – starting with Adom HaRishon. The golus that we are in is called the golus of Esav, who had the potential strength to open the channels of the “no” required by the 365 negative commandments . He did not use that potential and we are all struggling with the yetzer hara at the most basic levels of our lives, often without even realizing how we have not distinguished its subtle mis-directing messages from serving Hashem to advancing our own agenda. We even think these could be one and the same!

But in truth, it is the arena where we can tell Hashem that truly wish to let Him know that we know He is real, that He is before us at all times, that we desire to advance our connection to Him and to His will and therefore will subdue our trained and developed skills that target physiological survival, comfort, and honor because the pleasure of these pale and are futile pursuits in golus in comparison to the joy of connection and relationship..

In all the world there is nothing but the simple unity of Hashem, Who is Real, Who Will Be Always. Hashem we are Your servants. Please answer us with salvation for the sake of the unification of Your Name!