

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Are we getting the most we can out of life?

Are we getting the most we can out of life? Is it possible we have overlooked something crucial to the pleasure and fulfillment we have every day?

Tehillim 25 Verse 14

The secret counsel of Hashem is with those who fear Him, and His covenant He makes known to them

Radak says about this verse that Hashem reveals Divine truths only to those scholars of Torah who are imbued with the fear of Gd. How can it possibly be that if we fear Hashem we will be the happiest that a person can be? Doesn't the word fear itself imply that we are NOT experiencing pleasure in the sense that we comprehend it? What exactly is fear of Hashem?

Fear of Hashem is one of the Six constant mitzvahs that it is incumbent for every Jew to be doing at all times. Rabbi Lazer Brody has translated into English "In Forest Fields" by rabbi Shalom Arush. The book shares a clear understanding of what Yiras Hashem is, fear of Hashem.

"When a person doesn't evaluate himself and ask Hashem's forgiveness on a daily basis, he neither fears Hashem or the consequences of his misdeeds. The lower-level fear of Hashem is a fear of retribution; one who fails to do teshuva on a daily basis doesn't even have that. The higher level fear of Hashem is the fear that we've done something to sadden Hashem, our loving and compassionate Father in heaven, instead of bringing Him gratification. This is an exalted form of fearing Hashem, for it is rooted in the love of Hashem [also one of the six constant mitzvahs]. Teshuva on this level is called teshuva from love, and it has the power not only of cleansing all wrongdoing but it can convert a person's transgressions into merits." Teshuva on this level, he continues, "includes confessing our wrongdoings, expressing remorse, asking Hashem's forgiveness, and resolving to do our best to improve our ways in the future."

The suggestion is that not only do we want to fear Hashem but we want to utilize guilt to improve ourselves! How in the world is this a tempting path to follow?

The sefer on page 55 gives a beautiful description of what our relationship with Hashem can be:

"He [a person] doesn't wait to be punished in order to improve his ways. Every day, he does a thorough process of self-evaluation where he weighs everything he did that day and asks himself if his deeds are really upright in light of his father's requests and standards. He then speaks to his father every single day and says, "Dad by virtue of the wonderful education you gave me, I was fortunate in doing such-and-such good deeds. Thanks so much. On the other hand, I don't think my speech or behavior in a certain situation today was the way you would have wanted. I'm really sorry and I'll try my best to strengthen this weakness." "The father of such a son glows with satisfaction and gratification, "What a beautiful human being! What a sensitive, considerate, and humble son! He doesn't wait for me to punish him – he's always trying to improve. Even if he were to do something seriously wrong, how could I punish him? He's constantly evaluating himself; he's always striving to fulfill my wishes. So even if he does make a mistake, I'll just give him a gentle hint. With his sensitivity he'll surely understand." The father will want nothing more than to fulfill this wonderful son's wishes." [In Forests Fields](#)

Dovid HaMelech's tehillim is filled with his personal supplications and prayers to Hashem. He shows us that we can live like a baby in his mother's arm, perfectly safe and secure. We need emunah for this, a deep unshaking confidence and belief in Hashem. And, we need bitachon, a perfect unwavering trust in Hashem such that we have no worry in the world.

Often with emunah and bitachon, people say, Gd helps those who help themselves, implying that WE are the cause of our success. What we have to understand is that we are the cause of expending effort, but success is in Hashem's hands. AND, ultimate, we are only the secondary cause of our efforts. Hashem is providing to us the energy and resources that we are utilizing in order to breathe, move, drive, see and more.

In Chovos Halevovos, it tells us that when we trust anything other than Hashem He allows us to be

dependent on the object of our trust. If we transfer this to a human being from Hashem, it is trusting in Who is trustworthy to putting our trust into something much less. When we trust ourselves we are trying to live without Hashem.

We can upgrade from our feeble intellect to a Divine intellect by asking Hashem before we make our decisions. Hashem can spark the right thought in our head for us to succeed. And then we thank Hashem, acknowledging His role.

How do we do this?

Spend time each day, and throughout the day, in personal prayer, in hisbodidus. Hashem is close to anyone who calls Him truthfully. Hashem has any number of messengers, media, a thought in our head, to give us the decision of what we need to do. We want to support the endeavors that Hashem wants us to be involved with. Our soul has to get its energy and satisfaction. Emunah and bitachon help us to know that Hashem is in charge and we can get to know Him, we can get closer to Him and bask in His light, the better we feel emotionally and we can come closer to Hashem in His Thirteen Attributes (see Tomer Devorah).

It is ironic that relying on our own hishtadlus can weaken our emunah - the more we believe our fate lies in our hands, our own efforts at connecting to Hashem are undermined and our energy in hishtadlus becomes self-defeating (see above reference to Chovos Halevovos).

So what is the balance of hishtadlus and emunah? Prayer is the vessel to hold the light of Hashem,. When we pray and build a relationship with Hashem (by choosing actions and thoughts and words that bring out within ourselves the Thirteen Attributes of Hashem, making ourselves in His Image), we are able to receive more of Hashem's light. The bigger the vessel the more trust. The more trust, the more compassion and lovingkindness will be in our lives.