

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Awareness - Notes from an essay by the Slonimer Rebbe

Does the sense that we are living more and more in the dark with less successful strategies at our fingertips strike home?

It does to me.

Based on learning Chapter 4 entitled Awareness of the Slonimer Rebbe and on the teachings of Rabbi Aryeh Nivin (www.newchabura.com – new classes starting Feb 6, 2012) I am imagining two cities:

City one everyone has equal standing within the society. There are certain rules, such as pay your taxes, keep the laws, eat healthy, and do good and the mayor will send bodyguards to protect your home and person/family. These guards, though, answer to the mayor, and not directly to you. How safe do you feel? Do you feel that your fate is controllable 100%? For me, I feel that much could come to play where I might not rank as high in being protected as others who might have more influence and power. I feel a need to pursue an agenda for myself and family.

City two, everyone is born with the free will and ability to choose to have the same status in the eyes of the mayor – no one has more inherent influence or power than anyone else. The mayor asks only one thing, only one main rule, which is that at all times, we remember that there is a mayor and that the mayor is our Designer, as well as the Designer of everything we see, feel, and experience. When we remember this, we ourselves become part of the Designer's Mind, Who Himself, through the vessel that we become, stands and protects us, our homes, our families, our lives and our property. How safe do you feel? Do you feel that your fate is controllable 100%? For me, I feel that if I could actually do this 100% of the time, then my fate is controllable, but I recognize that I probably do not know how to maintain this attachment enough. That scares me! And THAT is a healthy fear of sin.

Healthy fear of Hashem is knowing that the greatest pleasure possible is to be in rapport with Him – the Designer, the Force behind everything, the All Powerful, All Knowing Gd at all times. The beauty of city 2 is that just sincerely yearning for it, for being attached to Hashem at all times, and regretting when we fail is the process, a process that He allows imperfections within, and continues to give protection.

Being aware of Gd is the foundation of everything. We have a soul from a heavenly reality and that is the context of our life. Why get caught in gashmius and ego, where material things or our desiring emotions become central? We can only have one priority in life, not 2. Attach to Hashem and seek knowledge of Hashem.

The Yetzer Hara will do anything, including making a person a solid citizen, an ethical and upright person, even a learned person, to keep a person from fulfilling this ultimate purpose – attaching consciousness totally to the reality that everything is a manifestation of Hashem.

The goal of life IS this awareness, it is the highest priority, otherwise we are in darkness. Not possible to have any other priority other than this as a pathway to achieving the ultimate purpose for which Gd created the world.

The 6 constant mitzvahs and ein od milvado consciousness are the major effort, the major priority to strive to bring into our hearts. When we work on Gd awareness, the ego nullifies itself – that is how

you do tikkun hamiddos.

The foundation of the Baal Shem Tov's Torah is that Gd is one. "I" does not let us put Hashem in the center because "I" takes away our existence – the "I" wants to be the center. This is the root of all bad middos, a negative qualities. It is mistake to think Gd is in my world. I am in Gd's world. Go to ein od milvado, not to the El Zar, the strange gd within.

Malchus means to make ourselves the ultimate vessels, not to exist for our own agendas. If we can let Hashem in so much that the "me" leaves, we can achieve being an absolute extension of Almighty's will itself. We can go to naase v'nisma and become the best bride for the groom.

The Kotzker Rebbe asks: Why was Torah given on a mountain and not a valley? The answer is that to be a Jew you do have to have a little bit of ego. But we are supposed to cease to exist within your personality. Instead, when we make His Will our will, He makes His Will ours. The more we observe His Will, do His commandments, and emulate His Attributes, the more protection we receive.

Thus it makes logical sense to channel all inclinations to Hashem. Don't have inclinations that interfere with the idea that you and Hashem are One. When we properly bittel ourselves we become an appendage of Hashem. Then, we in our consciousness can become One with Hashem.

Our soul is love, while the body experiences fear – but we can feel both at the same time. When a person leaves dimensional reality of time and space and goes higher, that is rises above our limitations, we can experience an infinite pleasure beyond the pleasures within time and space. It is paradise because we touch Perfection.

So if we feel we are in the dark, it is probably because we are. But we have the tools and a pathway to bring light to the darkness. It is a matter of free willed choice to seek attachment to Hashem and knowledge of Gd.