

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Birthpangs of the Moshiach...what are the contractions for?

It is not hard to see that the number of people who kill at random or for political purposes seems to be far more regularly occurring. Our very lives, our existence in this world, has become almost cartoonish in its fragility – from knock outs to stabbings to shootings to slaughters to exterminations to benign neglect of the elderly to changes in the allocation of medical care, life appears to be about the quality we have while we are able to move and contribute without getting blipped off the screen by some lunatic who perhaps has forgotten that we are real and not objects in a video game.

We are far more than the vessels that carry our souls. Without our bodies, we do not have life. However, without our souls our life has no purpose. The purpose we have is to bring Hashem's glory into the world by consciously choosing His attributes over our natural reactions in every moment. When such choices more and more become our natural reaction, we can measure our progress towards that purpose.

Our intellect can shift to attach to this purpose. This is the goal of the birthpangs. To shift our identity from a body enlivened by a soul to pursue the agenda of ego and physicality to a soul enabled by a body to reveal in time and space Hashem's Torah and attributes.

If we struggle, perhaps we can even get to the point where we realize that we can never truly accomplish such devotion as long as we are in this world because of the nature of having a body. That in and of itself would reflect that we understand something of who we are for all eternity. And in the moment, we then ask Hashem to please help us rise above our limitations in order to fulfill His Will, because we love Hashem and wish to be the vessel to reveal Him, fearing with trepidation the consequences of ignoring our responsibility to do so because of the great awe we have in the manner that Hashem has designed the universe and our existence, including this amazing paradox and struggle between external ego feeling internal and internal soul seemingly concealed.

The way we identify ourselves is crucial. The pathway to shifting our identity is verbal introspection. The time is now.