

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Why is Fear of Hashem Only so crucial to our spiritual journey?

In Mesillas Yesharim, chapter 20, Concerning the weighing of saintliness, the Ramchal tells us:
...the weighing of one's deeds ...is an extremely fundamental process and one which constitutes the most difficult operation in Saintliness because of the great subtlety it demands and because of its susceptibility to great inroads by the evil inclination...it is within the power of the evil inclination to draw many good things far from me, as if they were evil and to draw many sins near to him, as if they were great mitzvos. ...man must fulfill three requirements in order to succeed in weighing:

1. he must possess the most just of hearts, whose only inclination is to give pleasure to the Blessed One;
2. he must submit his actions to the closest scrutiny and exert himself to perfect them in accordance with this end; and
3. he must cast his lot with Hashem, after which it may be said of him (Psalms 84:6,12) :Happy is the man whose strength is in You...Goodness will not be lacking for those who walk in purity

If he correctly observes all three - purity of thought, analysis and trust, he will walk securely in truth and no evil will befall him..."he will protect the feet of his Saints..." "And He will not forsake his Saints, they will forever be protected"

Our free will is given to us so that we can accomplish this looping of yearning to serve, cheshbon hanefesh and teshuva, and deep emunah and submission to ratzon Hashem, which then energizes our yearning to serve.

What is the crucial role that fear of Hashem only plays in this process?

Fear of Hashem only gives us continuous energy to push out the yetzer hara. Fear of Hashem only brings a person under the canopy of Hashem's consciousness. It brings consciousness that He is the primary cause of all, that consciousness is eternal even though physicality ends, and that physicality is a time bound present moment opportunity to serve Hashem with all our heart and all our soul and all our might.

When we react fearfully and misattribute the Source of our challenges to perceptions and deceptive illusions of this world, and then when we subsequently misappropriate energy toward circumstances around the challenge rather than connecting back to Hashem with trust, in prayer and supplication, directing fear of Hashem alone, we ironically experience greater physical pain and suffering than necessary because we remain within time and space and physicality rather than transcending and experiencing Hashem's constancy and presence in our lives. When we use consciousness to free ourselves of fears that take place in the moment, within time, we submit to Hashem's will, accept what is before us in time and space, and are able to move with the circumstance at hand rather than fearing the future (which fear could otherwise cause us to feel paralyzed as well as pained). Instead, we are aware of being in a harmonious relationship that shows us we have no real separate conscious existence, a relationship and consciousness that touches every aspect of our past, present and future. The more we can constantly experience the absolute pleasure and joy of the presence of Hashem in our lives, the more we thirst for and bring ourselves to fulfillment of our purpose and mission – with gratitude, to serve Hashem fulfilling His Will.

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