

Achieving Awareness

written by Eliyahu Hecht

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Let's start enjoying life! No, I don't mean the fleeting, superficial kinds of pleasures that product marketing campaigns seek to entice us to indulge in, or the lifestyles of the rich and famous flaunted by media celebrities. I mean the kind of joy for which our souls truly yearn – connection with Hashem. The soul, being a spiritual entity, a cheilek Eloka m'ma'al, a piece of a G-dliness from above, is out of its element attached to a physical body and lowered to a physical realm. The soul often gets overlooked due to life's demands and the prevalence of worldly pleasures.

But our souls keep trying to get our attention so that we will nourish them. Sometimes with a slight nagging feeling of unfulfillment, sometimes with self-criticism, and in more extreme situations, feelings of sadness or inability to cope when a crisis strikes, G-d forbid. A healthy diet for the

soul can alleviate these symptoms and provide us with a satisfying, long-lasting, enriched existence, and Rebbe Nachman teaches us how to cultivate it.

Olam Haba'a represents the notion of absolute awareness of and connection with Hashem, and it's this state of being that charges the soul. It's a state of reality in which we will have intense clarity of Hashem. We will appreciate Hashem's chessed, kindness, with which He runs the world, and we will even fully understand how things that look bad are truly for the very best. The way to experience Olam Haba'a even now is through two components: toda – gratefulness, and halacha – Jewish law. The Rebbe explains.

In the future, the only korban we will bring will be the toda. Therefore, the toda is bound to Olam Haba'a. We bring a toda when we are grateful for something, like the four kinds of individuals referenced in Tehillim 107 who were in danger and emerged safely, as the last stanza says "let the wise pay attention to all this and reflect upon the kindnesses of G-d" (Psalms That Speak to You). So too with halacha. Our rabbis teach that one who learns halacha every day can be assured a place in Olam Haba'a.

By learning halacha every day and being cognizant of and grateful for Hashem's chessed toward us, we can nourish our souls straight from the source – Hashem.

(Based on Likutei Moharan, Tinyana 2)