

Ask A Breslover: How Do I Learn Mussar?

written by Yossi Katz

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Q: I'm confused about when Rebbe Nachman says that you should be happy 23 hours a day, and than for one hour admit your sins work on ways to improve etc. Does that mean we shouldn't learn mussar seforim or listen to shiurim of mussar? I'm very confused, and I would greatly appreciate clarification.

A: Reb Noson explains (it is brought in Meshivas Nefesh) that we must not allow ourselves to become depressed or down from Sifrei Mussar. If one is doing this, he isn't studying them properly. There shouldn't be a problem with studying them during the day but you need to work on how they are effecting you and maybe even take a break from them for a while until you figure that out. (This is suggested by Reb Eliyahu Godlevski.)

The point of these sefarim is to teach you the spiritual realities of the world in order to instill Yiras Shomayim. But not to make us depressed Chas V'Shalom. But in order for this to work, we must first live with the Rebbe's chizuk, once we know how to be mechazek ourselves, there shouldn't be any contradiction between these two. If the sefer suggests our faults, we admit them and use sifrei Breslov to work on improving them and make hisbodedus etc... But we don't become depressed because we have nekudos tovos, and because there is a way where everything can transform for the good etc... (See Meshivas Nefesh.) You are correct that the time for proper introspection is during Hisbodedus and not in the middle of the day but just to learn the emes, shouldn't be a problem.

My suggestion is that you switch to Meshivas Nefesh ([Restore My Soul](#)) until you have a better understanding of this.

Be Matzliach!

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