

Awakening from Below

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December 28, 2010



We find that Reb Noson very often refers to the Rebbe's teachings as 'eitzos', advice. He called his compilation of the main points of the Rebbe's teachings '*Likutei Eitzot*', 'A Collection of Advice'. In *Likutei Halchos*, Shluchin 5, he writes that the deepest meaning in the Rebbe's Torah is the advice which can be gleaned from them.

If we think a little into Reb Noson's choice of words, there is much we can learn regarding the proper and healthy approach we should have in studying the teachings of the Rebbe and Reb Noson and applying them into our lives.

Reb Nosson doesn't exhort us to look and search for the 'inspiration' which we can have from studying the Rebbe's sefarim, although we all know that it's very possible to experience feelings of inspiration from learning them. Even Reb Nosson himself writes as such in several places. Even though the Rebbe's Torah is full of 'encouraging words', that's still not what we are to be looking for. We are looking for advice.

The reason is, as Reb Nosson teaches us throughout *Likutei Halachos*: What Hashem wants from us is not an "Awakening from Above", but an "Awakening from Below".

As any person who's honest with himself knows, spiritual highs

don't last very long. They certainly don't leave too much of an impression behind. All that's left is usually just somewhat of a pleasant memory, if but a faint one.

So someone who's looking for temporary highs and inspirational feelings might find it through Breslov, its Sefarim and songs, and in the company of other Chassidim. If he's feeling down, he might get a spiritual pick-up. But when the feelings wear off, he's out looking for a new fix. And he'll realize when he finally sits down to make a reckoning that he really hasn't changed much on the inside.

The reason is because all of these feelings are just "Awakenings from Above". Hashem sends us feelings and inspiration in order to wake us up and motivate us to strengthen ourselves in our Avodas Hashem and aspire to new spiritual heights. But now it's up to us to do something about it. We have to make an "Awakening from Below".

These are the "Eitzos" which we are looking for in the Rebbe's sefarim. These are practical ideas which we can apply to ourselves, and to actually *do* something, not just get all pumped up. We must look for ideas that we can *actually* and *practically* apply to ourselves. We are looking for advice to be followed.

For example, it's not enough just to feel like we would like to be better. The Rebbe teaches us that we should articulate our spiritual aspirations in the form of a prayer, to tell Hashem, "I want to become closer to You, I want to serve You better." The Rebbe wants us to *do* something, like make time for Hisbodedus; daven more seriously, set time for Torah study, etc.

Sometimes the advice the Rebbe gives is not an action, but a specific way of looking at our world and ourselves differently. For example, when the Rebbe discusses the greatness of Good Points, *Nekudos Tovos*, the idea isn't just

to get all excited with the abstract idea that we all have good points. The Rebbe wants us to actively *search* within ourselves and to actually *find* the good points, and to *value* them!

When we learn about how Hashem's Godliness fills the universe, the Rebbe wants us to *live* with that, not just to get all excited with an intangible idea.

May Hashem help us to truly and honestly search for the advice which the Rebbe has provided us throughout his sefarim and the sefarim of Reb Noson.