

Excerpts from Breslov Research Institute Publications

written by breslov.org

August 23, 2009

From: Where Earth and Heaven Kiss

A Guide to Rebbe Nachman's Path of Meditation

By Ozer Bergman

Appendix E: Don't Lose Your Head

In a slaughterhouse, animals lose their heads. In our world, too, something causes people to lose their heads and get caught in the thicket of confusion and the vortex of illusion. What drives us to distraction? We lose our heads over a coin.

Money—not only for pursuing luxuries, but even for maintaining the bare necessities—takes hold of us. Wherever one goes—academia, sporting arenas, boardrooms, bedrooms, street corners—everyone has money on his mind, some version of gelt on his lips.

Of course, it's always for something "good," like dream kitchens, dream vacations and dream cars, and often for something noble, like ridding oneself or others of misery or solving society's ills. "If only I had a million dollars, I'd..."

This is how money gains control of our heads. It plants a feeling of emptiness, a sense that "what I have is not enough and not good enough." This puts us in a dissonant place, making our minds a perpetual-motion machine of negative craving. Once the mind's eye is focused on "what's not there" and on "what they have," it can never be satisfied.

God is fullness, wholeness, shalom. Idolatry represents the opposite—it is a lacking, a deficiency. Idolatry is not an emptiness that needs to be filled, but an emptiness that consumes even what is there, making it impossible for you to enjoy even what you possess. Money, Rebbe Nachman teaches, is the idolatry that embraces all other idolatries.

The “it’s not enough” cancer spreads to other parts of your life as well: Your food and diet aren’t right, your wardrobe is all wrong, others have the power and respect that “belong” to you, and one partner (or at least the one you have) is not enough.

Can you buy your head back? Can you put a stop to the pursuit of material happiness before you go over the brink into a bottomless pit? Thank God, the answer is yes. The answer is to turn your mind to Shabbat—to think nothing.

The Torah describes Shabbat in this manner: “Six days shall you work, and the seventh day is an eternal Shabbat, holy to God...” {Exodus 31:15}. The Talmud asks, “Can one finish all his tasks in six days? No; but when Shabbat arrives, as far as you’re concerned, all your work is done” (Beitzah 16a on Exodus 20:9). On Shabbat, you’re “retired.” You have no more pursuits to concern or haunt you. Your mind is liberated. You can devote your thinking and focus to keep it liberated seven days a week.

The ability to stop thoughts is not an option, nor is it a skill reserved for super model Jews. It is a necessary skill for every Jew at every stage and step of Jewish growth—for reining in your lusts and confusion, hushing your emotions (even positive ones¹¹¹) and keeping your intellect in check.

Part of the quieting of the mind includes forgetting. Once something has passed, let it go. Don’t focus your hindsight on it. Yes, you may spend some time in hitbodedut to review whether or not a decision you made was correct or not, so that

you don't repeat a mistake, but do so without any "would've, could've, should've." What's done is done. Forget about it.

Copyright © 2006 Breslov Research Institute

Click [HERE](#) to purchase

From Where Earth and Heaven Kiss