

Dvar Torah for Shavuot

written by Ozer Bergman

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Based on Likutey Moharan I, Lesson #13:2

“Receiving the Torah depends essentially on seikhel (mind), Moshe-Mashiach, as is written (Proverbs 21:22), ‘The sage scaled the city of warriors.’ One who manifests Moshe-Mashiach-ness is capable of receiving the Torah and of drawing her light to teach it to others.”

What is this seikhel that Rebbe Nachman wants us to cultivate? Seikhel is that part of us which is higher, greater, than the angels. The nature of seikhel is as far from sin and sensual-desire as can be.* The purpose of seikhel is to perceive Reality, in its parts and its wholeness, as it genuinely is.

Obviously, we cannot expect to cultivate seikhel if we intoxicate ourselves with liquor or drugs. To the contrary—the damage to seikhel they can cause may be irreparable (for example, if one becomes addicted, God forbid). In our world, we are at risk of become addicted to all manner of pleasures, pastimes and emotions. Too much dependence on any of them prevents us from seeing Reality as it genuinely is. Even a Torah addiction (being a Gemara junkie, for example) can blur one’s perception.

Our first step in cultivating seikhel is self-control. We take that first step when our desire for God is so strong that its pull, our love of God, lifts us—even a tiny bit, even momentarily—so that we see that there is more to the Torah’s stories and mitzvot than meets the eye.

When Rebbe Nachman talks about receiving the Torah, he means gaining a new, more comprehensive understanding of the Torah than one had previously. This receiving of the new depends upon how well one listens to the current Torah. The Torah is

sometimes called musar, instruction/reproof (Proverbs 1:8). Very few like instruction and no one likes reproof. But our reticence can be weakened, and even removed, when we recognize that the Torah speaks to us out of pure love.

When we make the love reciprocal, when we lovingly follow the Torah's wise, well-meaning advice, our seikhel becomes clearer, more capable of perceiving and receiving the Torah's secrets—and secret secrets.

agutn Shabbos!
Shabbat Shalom!

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*Seikhel is not IQ.