

Look for the Good!

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Rebbe Nachman gave us a powerful tool to counteract these thoughts: “Azamra! (I will sing!)” to look for the good!

How often do we look down on others, thinking they are not behaving the way they should? And how many times do we look down on ourselves, feeling that we’ll never overcome our bad habits and self-defeating behaviors?

Rebbe Nachman gave us a powerful tool to counteract these thoughts: “Azamra! (I will sing!)” (Likutey Moharan I, 282). In this lesson, he explains that all we need to do is search for the good points. Everyone has at least one good point; even the most hardened criminal once held the door open for his mother, or gave a coin to charity. When you find one good

point, look for another, and another. Thus you elevate yourself and others to the side of merit, enabling everyone to return to God.

Reb Noson writes:

The Rebbe told me he had been speaking with someone who was complaining bitterly about how terrible his behavior was. This man wanted very much to draw closer to God and change his behavior for the better. But each time he tried, the temptations grew stronger and stronger. The days had turned into years and he had still not managed to extricate himself from his bad ways. But each time he would try even harder to control himself, and he was always struggling to get closer to God.

Everyone has at least one good point; even the most hardened criminal once held the door open for his mother, or gave a coin to charity!

As the man complained how terribly he behaved, the Rebbe answered with great wisdom, saying in a tone of sincerity and simplicity: "Then I have no one to speak to, because everything is totally bad."

At this the man got excited and said to the Rebbe, "But I do try to fight back at times and get closer to what I should be as a Jew."

"Only the slightest bit," answered the Rebbe. He then told the man to make it a practice to go with the teaching of Azamra!



"Only the slightest bit," answered the Rebbe...

I understood the Rebbe to mean that this was precisely how he revived this man. He had already fallen so low in his own estimation that it was not possible to revive him with anything. It was only when the Rebbe told him that he was totally bad that he was startled and became excited. Then he started feeling a little of the holiness of the good points still inside him. Then the Rebbe told him to go with the lesson of Azamra!

(Based on Tzaddik #569)