

# Out To The Field – Many Openings In The Darkness

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*Continued from last week [here](#):*

## **Likutey Moharan I:9 – Week 2**

Just as my friend had advised me, I found the time I spent slowly learning the meaning of the prayers in the siddur along with the simple meaning of the words to be quite beneficial (yet certainly not a “silver bullet” by any means). I did have one important revelation during this process of studying the siddur though; a new found understanding for the meaning of the term *avodah shebelev* (literally: “work of the heart”; referring to prayer). I always understood this term to mean that I need to really work to make sure my words of prayer were an honest expression of my heart. However, I came to understand that this term could also mean that prayer actually consisted of two components – “work” and “heart” – and that sometimes my prayers might lean more to one side or

the other . With this new understanding, I was reassured that my prayers were not deficient if they were not always offered with both of these two components simultaneously. I didn't need to be so hard on myself if my prayers were not consistently "an unblemished offering".

In addition to working on davening *b'emes* during Shacharis, Mincha, and Maariv, I began to realize that I needed to apply the Rebbe teachings to my time in hisbodedus as well. Early one morning, it dawned upon me that there were things that bothered me so greatly and were so sensitive that I would not even speak to Hashem about them. Rather, I would just push them down so they would not surface in my consciousness again for a few weeks or months. I then said to Hashem, "If You know all of my thoughts, how can I think that You don't know about these things? Who am I fooling!?" I then began to speak to Hashem about all of these sensitive feelings with brutal honesty. I had not been this honest with Hashem since the last time I visited the Rebbe's *tziyun* (grave site) in Uman and I confessed to Hashem all of things that I had done in my life up to that point thereby shattering the hard casings around my heart.

The time I started to spend each morning in hisbodedus speaking to Hashem with complete honesty began to get me in touch a deeper level of self than I previously knew existed. I began to trace things to their source and come to a better understanding of who I really was. I came to understand that it was pointless to continually renovate my house (so to speak) if I had a basement that was flooded with sewage. I couldn't pretend those coarse and unrefined elements of my self did not exist. I could no longer arrogantly think to myself that I was better than anyone I saw around me.

I was reminded of this in a dream I had one night during this time as well. In the dream, I shaved off my beard which I have had for over a decade. I then went into a panic, crying hysterically when I remembered that I needed to go to work the

next day and would be showing up in front of my co-workers without a beard. Waking up from this “nightmare” in the middle of the night, I grasped my beard and said, “*Oh, Thank You, Hashem!!*”. Reflecting about this dream in hisbodedus the next few days, I tried to plumb its meaning. Did it mean that the “real me” was a person without a beard? Was my beard simply a costume I was putting on to make others believe I was some sort of “holy man”?

Eventually one morning, I had an insight during hisbodedus: The beardless me was an aspect of myself that was still very much present – the me that was motivated primarily by the desires and cravings of my body. The bearded me was that aspect of myself which was motivated primarily by my *neshoma* (soul).<sup>\*</sup> After following the dictates of the body and shaving off my beard in my dream, I was distressed because I had to go back among people without giving them any visual clues of who the “real me” really was. I felt as if I would be made to sit at conference table at the weekly staff meeting at work and have my animalistic thoughts revealed to those around me.

The dream lingered in my mind. How was I to get back in tune with the “real me”? How was I supposed to clean out the filth in this flooded basement? Returning to this lesson in *Likutey Moharan*, the Rebbe’s words encouraged me,

*“Know the darkness itself contains many openings from to exit...*

*...And know, a person merits to find an opening through emes.”*

I asked Hashem over and over in hisbodedus during the next few days to help me find these openings. “*Hashem, if there are ‘many openings’, why can’t I find even one!?*”, I asked. After spending time reflecting on this question it came to me that perhaps the answer was hinted to in something Rabbi Dovid Sears once [wrote](#),

*To follow the Rebbe's derekh (path), a person must go into himself.*

Perhaps it was time to return to one of my favorite lessons *Likutey Moharan*; one that had once confirmed in my mind that Breslov was the right path for me. Next week, I will tell you about my return to *Likutey Moharan* II:73, a lesson focused on how a person can find his unique path.

*\* Note: This posting is not meant in any way to cast aspersions on a man without a beard who can certainly be infinitely more pious than a man with a beard. I am not trying to imply that a person without a beard is hiding his true self. In this piece, I am only writing about myself and what a beard represents to me alone.*