

Physical and Spiritual

written by Yossi Katz

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Rebbe Nachman of Breslov taught...

Become the kind of person who makes fulfilling physical needs a spiritual experience. Some people eat to have the strength to study the Word of G-d.

*Others, the more spiritually aware,
Study the Word of G-d in order to know how to eat..*

(The Empty Chair, p. 24)*

What does this mean to me?

Even though I love to read this teaching to remind me of how to approach eating (which is, personally, one of the hardest areas of my life to work on), the beginning helps me keep in mind that all of the physical work that I'm involved in is potentially spiritual.

When I'm working for a wage, I need to keep in mind that the money I earn is going to be used to build my Jewish home, feed and care for our children who study Torah, provide for guests who come on Shabbos...the needs are endless! And when I'm doing chores, I'm helping to make my home a welcoming and joyous environment for growth; a place that our children and visitors feel good about when they are here. And when I'm taking care of the physical needs of others—even the most mundane—I'm emulating G-d's attribute of lovingkindness. As one of the great spiritual masters used to say: "Yenem's gashmius is mein ruchnius"—"Taking care of the other's physical needs are my spiritual needs!"

A prayer:

*Holy One,
grant me the wisdom
to bring harmony
to the alliance
of my body and my soul.
Let them rise together
in my devotion to You.
My soul perceives Your light—
let my body discern it too.
My soul sounds Your praise—
Let my body sing it too.
(The Gentle Weapon, p. 74)*

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*“The Empty Chair: Finding Hope and Joy – Timeless
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