

So Far Yet So Close

written by Davy Dombrowsky

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Towards the end of Tinyana 78, the famous lesson where [Rebbe Nachman](#) yelled “Gevalt, there is no [reason] for despair at all”, he said something remarkable.

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“The Jewish people are now so close to the end of time and they have more longing for Hashem than ever before.”

The first time I read this I was excited by the magnitude of the statement. But as I think about it more, I’m perplexed by it. How can it be true? What about all the generations of

prophecy and the ones who merited to see the Temple built? They didn't long for Hashem more than us? And, honestly, are we longing for Hashem? I mean, I'm not seeing a lot of longing around, are you?

How do we understand this longing?

The truth is that we are so bogged down with everything in life. Life has become so hard. I don't need to tell you, I'm sure you know. Everyone is struggling and we're all looking at ourselves and wishing things would be better. We're wishing the virus would go away, that things would go back to normal and our family life and/or income would improve. We all feel a lacking. Maybe the Rebbe is saying that the lacking that we feel, which is increasing all the time, is a result of our souls' yearning for Hashem? As time goes on, it's possible that our souls are getting less and less satisfied. It used to be that we experienced attachment to Hashem in the world. Shabbos, holidays, Torah and mitzvos were infused with holiness. Nowadays our souls are longing for authenticity. They really are longing for Hashem but because of everything we're busy with, the longing is surfacing under-cover as pain. But the vacuum isn't going away and it's making us nuts. Depression, anxiety, suicide and addictions are rampant because we feel the void. What we feel is the void. That void is the longing. How fitting that the Tzaddik would understand that all the noise in our heads and anguish in our hearts is a true longing for closeness to Hashem. It's so covered up and hidden but it's real and it's more than ever.

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