

What Else is There to Look For?

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When we discussed previously the importance of searching for the practical application of Rebbe Nachman's teachings, many people may have wondered, what is there to look for already?

Aren't Rebbe Nachman's principal teachings pretty clear? Hisbodedus, Chatzos, Rosh Hashanah by the Tzaddik, studying Halacha every day, putting all one's energy into prayer, joy, and a few other pieces of advice.

What else is there to look for?

The truth is that such an outlook on the Rebbe's teachings is fundamentally mistaken. It's in fact one of the reasons that many people eventually despair from their service of Hashem. They think that the general path and advice of the Rebbe they more or less know already, and Likutei Moharan and the eight volumes of Likutei Halachos they view only as lessons and ideas meant to inspire us in many different ways to serve Hashem. If so, how much can one hear and study over and over again the same words of inspiration and encouragement?

Very often when asked, "What are your goals in serving Hashem?" people answer simply, "I want to serve Hashem!" When asked, "What does it mean to serve Hashem," they answer, Torah, prayer, etc. However, when pressed, "How does one accomplish that," all they have to answer is, "Well, you have to pray!"

Such a conversation shows that the person is not so clear with himself what he really wants. He therefore cannot discipline himself to find any advice how to practically enter into the service of Hashem. Of course, it's true that in order to

actually accomplish anything it's necessary to put in a lot of effort and prayer, but it's also imperative to study the Rebbe's teachings in order to know what the service of Hashem is!

The Rebbe's advice are not just actions and customs, but rather new ways of thinking and awakening the heart and mind which are relevant to every individual. Through them, anybody can take hold of the service of Hashem, even if he has already despaired from it.

For example, we know of the importance of being constantly aware of Hashem's presence, as is explained in the first paragraph of Shulchan Aruch, "Shiviti Hashem Lenegdi Tamid, I have constantly placed G-d before me. This is the general idea of the entire Torah and the great level of the Tzaddikim." Nevertheless, the idea of actually working to acquire this level has been almost totally forgotten from the average person. Who can be always thinking about Hashem, besides Tzaddikim?

But the Rebbe does give us very simple, practical advice how every person can achieve this level. This is through "Azamara", the advice which the Rebbe gives in Likutei Moharan 282, that when a person sees that he is far from Hashem, he should search within himself for any good point of a Mitzvah which he has done in his life and rejoice in it. Therefore, since even a one-time Mitzvah which somebody has done attaches him to Hashem, when a person thinks about that good point of his, he is actually thinking about his personal connection with G-d. We now have a wonderful way how to perform Shviti, as explained by Reb Noson in Likutei Halachos, Hashkamas HaBoker 1.

The advice of Azamra, to search for the good points, is not just a good thing to do or a simple encouraging idea. Rather, it's a practical way how every individual can enter into the Avodah of Shviti. But for this it's necessary to study and

search for the practical advice which flows forth from the idea of good points, as explained inside in Lesson 282, and in the aforementioned Likutei Halachos, amongst other places. Then it's possible to understand the awesomeness of the advice, of being able to always think of Hashem through rejoicing in the good points.

The moment someone realizes that there is practical advice and paths for every concern, he's already out of the despair which has gotten a hold of him in many issues in the service of Hashem. He can now run to seek out the Rebbe's advice on whatever matter it may be, until he finds the path or the handle how to solve it.

Of course, much prayer is still needed in order to merit actually carrying out the advice, but at least from now on he knows how to pray specifically for what he needs. He will now have much more to say by Hisbodedus, because he won't only be making general requests, like "Help me to remember You". Now he'll be pour out his heart to Hashem how he wants to rejoice in his good, and to discuss what's preventing him from seeing his good. He can now end a Hisbodedus happy and full with feelings of closeness to G-d.

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