

Why don't I "feel it"?

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Question: What is the cause of a person losing his vigor and energy in Avodas Hashem?

This is because a foreign 'melody' is playing in his heart; a storm wind made up of the voices of Loshon Hora and idle chatter, politics, fighting and all sorts of ideas and opinions which are confusing his mind.

We should know that the Yetzer Hora doesn't really have too many of ways of hiding Hashem's light. The entire universe sings and shouts out Hashem's honor. *Lift up your eyes and see Who created all of this.* Someone who takes a calm moment to look a little at the world can arrive at a great longing for Hashem. An inner song can awakens which pulls him strongly towards Hashem, and causes him to be disgusted by all of the vanities of this world. Even if born with negative character

traits and inclinations, the powers of impurities are literally like a peel covering a fruit- that being Hashem's light- which can easily be peeled off.

This is how things would be if a person would live alone in the world. But since reality necessitates us to live together with other people and we have to speak and live together with them, the world become full of improper voices which feed the forces of impurity. This gives the Concealment a life and a mind of its own, and the ability to fool people to be drawn after it and to awaken an improper melody throughout the world which pulls people towards materialism.

The Yetzer Hara throws people into the mindset of the Concealment in the form of very confusing thoughts. This comes about through hearing and speaking with people too much. This causes one's entire mind to be preoccupied with thinking only about other people, and thoughts such as "what did he say", "what did he do", "why did he do that", "what will he do back", etc. It's like a stormy song which knocks in the ears and causes us to lose all of our energy and concentration. We can thus understand that when a mind is befuddled with people's business and news, one can't possibly invigorate himself with the true sweetness of Avodas Hashem. It's only a short way from there to falling and being dragged after the Yetzer Hara, once one has been trapped in the melody and mindset of the Yetzer Hara.

This is the punishment of a gossip, to be a Metzora. He is driven outside of the encampment of holiness, the supernal light is blocked from shining on him, and he is unable to attach himself to the light of the Divine Presence. At the time of the Beis HaMikdash, we were able to see Tzora'as on a person's skin and he was able to immediately understand the hint and Heavenly reprimand that he was being given that he must repent in order that the supernal light return to him. But now during our exile, the evil tune has overpowered the world by spreading the noise of lack of faith, idle chatter

and vain speech, until we don't even see a sign of Tzora'as that it should awaken us.

A clear sign for a person is if he's lost his liveliness, he should awaken himself to hear the voice of holiness, voices of building Hashem's Kingship, and to run like a bullet from other voices which awaken a foreign melody and liveliness in a person.

Question: How is it possible to be saved from hearing these negative voices?

First of all, as we've said, on a simple level we have to be careful to keep away from evil and to study the Halachos, and to watch everything that comes out of our mouth.

But the main thing is not just to be careful to follow the laws of not gossiping. The main problem is in the root, to uproot the melody and the vitality of the Yetzer Hora which dwells in the heart. We have to be careful to awaken the good melody, to hear proper voices which will pull the heart to Hashem and will nullify the vitality of the side of evil.

This is through accustoming oneself to sing to and praise Hashem, and to attach our minds to our hearts to what we are saying. Say the words of prayer with a tune, not necessarily with a song, but with sort of a *nussach*. Even if unable to concentrate, still, try to say the prayer word by word until the tune starts going into your heart and attaches your heart to a holy awareness of Hashem, until you start realizing a little of Hashem's greatness or the pride which He takes in His nation. Then, all the fantasies of people's actions won't interest him at all, not to talk about them, or to take to heart everything people say and do. All the negative energy in the heart which is pulled after materialism will be lost.

You should know that the final and complete Redemption depends on this. At the time of redeption, such a true awareness of G-dliness will be revealed , just like the prophets saw, and our

hearts will be purified so much until the verse, "Hashem will be King over the entire world, sing to Him", will be fulfilled, and the true melody will be revealed throughout the world.

Don't think that all this is something distant from you. The Rebbe wants to allow us even today in exile to live with the essence of what will be in the future, through our trying to serve Hashem in Avodah of prayer and song to inspire our hearts to be totally drawn after Hashem. It's comparable to a person who sits on a bus between people who are gossiping and he has earphones in his ear and is listening to joyous music. Although he is traveling to the same place as everyone else, still, his mind and heart are in a totally different place.

So too, someone who works to grow his faith through simple music and song, and through concentrating as much as possible by prayer, with time, faith becomes like an inner song which livens up his soul. Then, even if he is living in this world, and conducts himself like everyone else, eating and sleeping and even mingling with people, he now translates everything he sees with different eyes. Since he hears a different tune, a proper tune of Hashem talking and calling to him to return to Him, Yisrael who I take pride in, How fortunate are we, etc.

(Based on Likutei Halachos, Apitropus 3)