

The Rebbe's Pharmacy

Pills of Chizuk for Today's Spiritual Illnesses—Part 24

The Illness: I know Hashem exists, but I can't find Him in my life. I've fallen so far and I'm completely lost.

We all believe that Hashem created the entire universe from nothing, and He continues to create and sustain every living thing. We believe that His Presence fills the whole world around us and beyond. This is the basic principle of faith in one G-d. We also believe that Hashem gave the holy Torah to the Jews and that the fulfillment of His Torah was and always will be the sole purpose of creation. In addition, we know that even if we have sinned, G-d forbid, Hashem is full of compassion and will give us a chance to do teshuva, so

that we can continue following His Torah.

However, we think — sometimes even subconsciously — that there is a limit to Hashem's compassion. There are certain mistakes that can always be fixed and there are certain places in which Hashem's Presence can still be found, even though they are distant from kedusha. But then there are some transgressions for which we simply cannot do teshuva. There are some very contaminated physical and spiritual places which are so

completely remote from any kedusha, that there is no way that we could possibly find Hashem in them.

When we fall into these places, our entire world goes dark. We feel bitter and cold, and utterly alone. We feel like we're being swallowed up by the forces of evil, without any hope of finding the light of Hashem once again. We know that Hashem exists, but not in the depths of despair that we are in.

The Rebbe's Prescription: Even in the darkest and most contaminated places Hashem can be found. We just have to search for Him. (Based on LM II 12)

Our primary purpose in this world is to reveal Hashem's kavod through fulfilling His mitzvos.

Rebbe Nachman says that, on a surface level of understanding, there is a boundary to Hashem's kavod. The verse says, "and My kavod, to the Other [Side] I will not give." This means that there is a boundary to Hashem's Presence, so to speak. There are places in which, at first glance, Hashem's light cannot reach, so to speak.

Rebbe Nachman explains this reality by going back to Bereishis. In the beginning, Hashem created the world with nine explicit utterances — correlating to the nine times that it is mentioned "VaYomer" in the six days of creation. These nine utterances were all unique revelations of Hashem's kavod in the world, each one according to the specific creation which was formed from it. For example, when Hashem spoke and created the sky, this revealed Hashem's kavod in the world by making it possible for us to praise Him for all the wonders of the Heavens above us. When Hashem spoke and created all the plants and animals for us to eat, this revealed Hashem's kavod by making it possible for us to bless Hashem for giving us all the sustenance we need to live.

The same is true for every mitzva of the Torah. Each mitzva is a unique

opportunity for us to reveal Hashem's kavod according to the specific aspects of that mitzva. For example, when we put on a talis, we reveal that Hashem's kavod exists in the wool of a sheep. When we put on tefilin, we reveal that Hashem's kavod exists even in the hide of a cow. When we say krias shema, we reveal Hashem's kavod by making Him One in the heavens and the earth, and in all four directions. This is our purpose in life — to reveal Hashem's kavod by following His Torah.

Since it is necessary for us to have a yetzer hara, it is almost impossible for us to never sin and fall away from Hashem's kavod.

However, if we were to be completely holy without a yetzer hara, we would never be able to reveal Hashem's greatness. In a place full of sunlight, a candle goes completely unnoticed. But in a dark room, even one small candle can illuminate the entire space.

So too, without having the potential to sin, our mitzvos would not be able to reveal Hashem's kavod. Rather, in order to be able to truly reveal Hashem's kavod, He had to give us freedom of choice. Only through having the capability to do evil, can we make Hashem great by choosing to do good. This is the purpose of our yetzer hara, and in the bigger picture, all the forces of darkness and contamination in the world: to give us the opportunity to reveal Hashem's kavod by turning away from them.

But since we have freedom of choice, it is almost impossible that we will never fall. If we were always able to do the right thing, then it wouldn't really be a fair fight with our yetzer, and we would no longer be able to reveal Hashem's kavod. Therefore, it is inevitable that we will in some way or another end up in the contaminated places of our yetzer hara.

The problem is that these low spiritual places were not created by the nine revealed utterances of Hashem (VaYomer). Since they are so far away from Hashem's kavod, He could not create them so explicitly, so as not to give them too much power in the world. Thus, when we fall

into these places we are below Hashem's kavod, so to speak. We are in a place of darkness and contamination in which it appears to us that there is no way to connect to Hashem and get out.

The most contaminated places receive their existence from the highest revelation of Hashem, albeit in a very hidden way.

However, Rebbe Nachman explains that, in truth, even these places must receive their existence from Hashem. If not, how could they exist at all? Nonetheless, since they are so contaminated, Hashem has to sustain them in an extremely hidden way, so as not to give too much strength to the Other Side, as mentioned before. Therefore, instead of creating them through one of the revealed utterances, Hashem created them through the hidden utterance of the word "bereishis" itself.

This hidden utterance of "bereishis" is in fact much higher than the nine revealed utterances. It is so incredibly exalted that its light cannot be revealed explicitly in this world, because it would be much too powerful for this lowest world to receive. Rather, it is the source of existence for the other nine utterances, which cloth the light of the bereishis utterance, so to speak, in order for this world to be able to receive its light.

Thus, since the bereishis utterance is so hidden, it can directly sustain the places of contamination without revealing its light. Because its light is not explicitly revealed there, it does not destroy those places and it also doesn't give them too much power over the forces of kedusha.



There is never a reason to despair in the world!

Therefore, when we fall into these spiritual and physical places of darkness and contamination, we should not lose hope! We must remind ourselves that even though it seems like we're completely lost and we couldn't be any further away from Hashem, this is not true at all. We must remind ourselves that even though it seems to us that we've fallen so far and messed up our lives so badly that we are beyond repair and there is absolutely no way for us to find our way back to Hashem, this is simply not true. In fact, we are closer to Hashem than ever! The highest revelation of Hashem's Presence — the utterance of bereishis — is right

We must throw away all of our own logical explanations for why we will never be able to attach ourselves to kedusha. We must let go of all of our "good reasons" to lose all hope and reach out to Hashem with all of our soul in prayer, "Where are You, Hashem?" "Where are You?!"

here with us masha. The only thing which can sustain us in such a disgusting and filthy place, is the highest light of all the worlds, the source of all creation — the bereishis utterance.

The only problem is that it is incredibly hidden. It is so concealed that it appears to us that it is impossible

for any light to reach such a low place, let alone such an exalted light. It is so concealed that we are completely unaware of it and we can't even believe that it could exist where we are. However, as Rebbe Nachman explains, it is there. Thus, there is no reason to despair at all! We are still very close to Hashem and we can find Him and get out of our garbage dump.

We must let go of our logical reasons to lose hope and have faith in the tzadikim.

So how do we find Him? The first thing is that we have to strengthen our faith that He is truly with us. We must throw away all of our own logical explanations for why we will never be able to attach ourselves to kedusha and believe with all of our soul in this teaching of Rebbe Nachman. We must let go of all of our "good reasons" to lose all hope. We must realize that we know absolutely nothing. We are like tiny ants trying to climb a huge mountain. Without the guidance of the tzadik at the top of that mountain, we will certainly remain lost forever. However, the more that we strengthen our faith in the teachings of the tzadik, the more he can help us rise above our darkness and contamination.

We must erase from our mind all our thoughts of despair which tell us that the teachings of the tzadik only apply to people on a higher level than us, and we must replace them with the truth that the tzadik reveals to each and every one of us: Hashem is with you even in when you're completely lost in the world of temptation and sin.

By searching for Hashem's light from our darkest place, we achieve the highest revelation of Hashem and destroy the forces of evil.

Then, once we've strengthened our faith, we have to look for Him. Even if we're sitting in the middle of a spiritual garbage dump, covered in waste from head to toe, we must peck around like chicken looking for the bits and pieces of exalted kedusha that are hidden underneath all the refuse.

We have to build a deep desire for Hashem. We have to long and yearn from the depths of our neshama to find Him. We have to search for Hashem with every ounce of courage that we have left. We have to call out to Him. We have to daven to Him and plead with Him to help us find Him. We have to reach out to Him with all of our soul in prayer and beg Him to reveal Himself to us. We have to scream to Him from the bottom of our heart, "Where are You, Hashem?" "Where are You?!"

What happens after this is truly remarkable. From the lowest spiritual place, we ascend up and up to the source of all creation. Through our deep search for Hashem's Presence, we're able to find Him even in our bitter darkness. However, not only do we find Hashem's light in our lives, rather we find and reveal the most exalted place of Hashem's kavod — the hidden utterance of bereishis.

Through our yearning and search for Hashem, we create a vessel which can receive His highest light and not break. We make ourselves into a kli which can reveal the source of all of Hashem's kavod in this world. We attach ourselves with the ultimate deveikus in Hashem and destroy all of the contamination which was covering over His incredible light.

This is because the entire strength of the Other Side is only through the *hiddenness* of the "beret ishis" utterance. It is only because we don't realize that we're so close to Hashem and we think that His Presence can't be found in such a low place, that the Other Side has any power over us at all. However, once we search for Hashem and find Him in our darkest spiritual place, we cut them off from their source of existence which is only through the concealment of the light of bereishis.

Through this search, our sins can themselves become merits.

Thus, we go from the worst level of contamination — our countless sins and physical desires — to the highest level of purity — the source of Hashem's kavod. This is what is described in the sefarim hakadoshim as "yerida tachlis ha'aliyah" — our descent is for the purpose of going higher. Although we should never intentionally sin or cause ourselves to have a "yerida," G-d forbid, nonetheless, as described above, it is inevitable due to our constant struggle with our yetzer hara. If we never fell and made mistakes, we wouldn't have real freedom of choice and we wouldn't be able to reveal Hashem's light. Therefore, each one of us according to his level is bound to have "yerida" at some point, and in our generation, they usually come on a pretty regular basis. Sometimes it seems to us like our entire life is one huge "yerida."

Regardless of how it happens, when we find ourselves in the darkness and contamination of our sins, we must know that right now we have an opportunity to turn everything around and reach an even higher level than we were before. We have an opportunity to use our "yerida" like a trampoline and bounce up to the most exalted places in avodas Hashem.

This is because before we sinned, we were living in the spiritual place of Hashem's revealed kavod. We were living according to Hashem's Torah and mitvos which are revelations of Hashem's light in the world. However, when we sinned, we fell below Hashem's kavod, so to speak, to a place of filth and contamination. We fell to a place where it seems as though no kedusha could possibly exist there.

Nonetheless, as explained before, there really is kedusha in such places. Not only that, but it is the

highest level of kedusha and light, just that it is extremely hidden. Therefore, now that we've fallen to such a place, we really have an amazing opportunity which we never had before: to reveal the highest light of Hashem — the hidden utterance of bereishis.

However, when we're in such low places surrounded by the dark forces of evil on all sides, it is very easy to give up. It seems impossible to believe that we could really turn things around. It seems impossible to believe that Hashem is really with us. We've sunken so deep into the thick mud of contamination, that we're in extreme danger of complete despair.

Therefore, we must gather all the strength we can possibly find to believe that we now have the greatest opportunity in the world. Now we can do something truly remarkable. Through our search for Hashem with all of our heart, we can turn our sins into merits. What? This sounds ridiculous! But it's true.

When we were able to strengthen ourselves after our sin and find an even higher light of Hashem than before, it turns out that our sin actually helped us come closer to Hashem. This is what the Sages say, "Through teshuva from love, one's sins become transformed into merits."

From the lowest tuma to the highest purity.

From here, we see the power of teshuva. From here we can understand how someone can mess up their entire life and go completely against Hashem, G-d forbid, but nevertheless, be able to transform and come even closer to Hashem. From here we can understand how someone could go from a serious drug addiction with seemingly no possibility of escape, G-d forbid, to an addiction to tehilim and hisbodedus. From here we could understand how someone could go from a constant, relentless attachment to his smartphone, to a constant, relentless attachment to learning Torah.

From here we can understand how someone who didn't grow up with any yiddishkeit at all, can have a spiritual awakening later on in his life and search for Hashem with all his strength until he finds his way back to the Torah, and reaches high levels in avodas Hashem. From here we can understand how a Jew can go from eating pork on Yom Kippur and become a rebbe in a yeshiva. From here we understand how a non-Jew who's living his life with absolutely no purpose, can look for the truth and become a holy Jew. From here we can understand how someone can go completely off the derech, but then turn his life around and create a deeper and more meaningful relationship with Hashem and His mitzvos than he ever had before.

The main thing is our ratzon. We have to want Hashem to save us. We have to build our desire to find Him, and we must also express our yearning in words and daven to Hashem. Sometimes, it is not enough for us just to speak to Him and we must scream to Him with all of our body and soul, "Where are You?!" Like someone who is looking for something in a dark room which he knows is definitely there, we have to believe that He is really very close to us and He hears our screams and prayers, and He will reveal Himself to us, and lift us out our spiritual destruction.

Through this, we can reach the highest deveikus in Hashem and His avoda. Through this we can attach ourselves to the source of all of Hashem's kavod and merit to fulfill all of His mitzvos and learn His Torah on a completely higher level. Through this we can do complete teshuva and come truly close to our Creator.

Based on the Torah of Rebbe Nachman of Breslov zt"l and his primary talmid R' Noson zt"l, as given over by R' Nisan Dovid Kivak, Shlita. For further comments and questions, or to sign up to receive the articles by email, you may contact: leventermusic@gmail.com