

מַמְתִּים יָדָהּ ה' מַמְתִּים מִחֻלָּד וְכו'. אֲנִי

Serving Hashem Only to Know Him

THE TEACHING

The rule (הַפְּלָל): the main purpose (עֶקֶר הַתַּכְלִית) is only to serve Hashem and walk in His ways for His sake, in order to know Him and recognise Him. That is His will. A person should have no other aim in serving Him, only to do the will of the One who spoke and the world came to be.

Some chase this world's pleasures (תַּאֲוֹת עוֹלָם הָזֶה); others work hard for the World to Come (עוֹלָם הַבָּא). The second is wiser and far better, yet it too is called filling the belly (מְלֹוי בֶטֶן). King David chose neither: only to see the face of Hashem.

MAIN POINTS

- That is the verse: “הָלֶקֶם בְּחַיִּים וּצְפוּנָה תִמְלֵא בִטְנֵם” (תהלים י:יד), “their portion is in life, and with Your hidden treasure You fill their belly.” Some choose their portion in this life, some the hidden good, the World to Come; both fill the belly.
- The one who chooses the World to Come chooses the lasting world over the passing one, and it is surely far better to serve Hashem even for that. Yet it is still filling the belly.
- “יִשְׂכְּעוּ בָנִים וְהִנִּיחוּ יִתְרָם לְעוֹלָלֵיהֶם” (תהלים י:יד), “they are satisfied with children and leave their surplus to their little ones.” One who chases desires and leaves his money to his children covers one leftover (מוֹתְרוֹת) with another: the money left after his desires, and children not born in holiness. Holy money (מָמוֹן דְּקִדְשָׁה) and holy children are very high.
- But David said: “אֲנִי בְצִדִּק אֶחְזֶה פָנֶיךָ” (תהלים י:טו), “I, in righteousness, will behold Your face”: he chose only to see the face of Hashem and recognise the Creator.
- Even the children he wished to leave were for Hashem’s sake, to complete, as it were, the Divine image (צֶלֶם): “אֶשְׂכְּעָה בְּהִקְיִי תְמוֹנֶתְךָ” (תהלים י:טו), “I will be satisfied when I awake with Your image.”
- “מַמְתִּים יָדָהּ ה' מַמְתִּים מִחֻלָּד” (תהלים י:יד): some die a natural death when their strength runs out, “from the world”, the people of this world; others die early by Hashem’s decree, as a punishment, and these have the World to Come. From both groups David set himself apart.
- And still it is very good even to serve for the World to Come, and good to leave merit (זְכוּת) to one’s children. Only the complete tzaddikim, who truly love Hashem, like David, want none of it: only to do His will.

A PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY · OUR OWN REFLECTION

Serving for reward is good, and Rebbe Nachman says so. But the higher goal is to know Hashem, and to raise a family that reflects His image. Ask not only what you will get, but how you can know Him.

In the full shiur: 1. Two Ways of Filling the Belly · 2. In Righteousness I Will Behold Your Face

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