

Infatuation or Alienation: Where Does Your Relationship with God Stem From?

Two p'sukim seem to depict two polar experiences of the Divine – “Mash'cheini, acharecha narutza” - a deep sense of God's presence and a desire to pursue this intimacy and attraction. Shir Hashirim saying, “draw me close, I am Yours, I will never stop being drawn to You, I am one with You”

And then, T'hilim – “P'liah da'at mimeni, nisgava lo u'chal lah” – Creator of the Universe, You are so Other, so beyond my ability to comprehend You, I will never be able to overcome this qualitative abyss that separates us.

Lover? Stranger? How do we experience God's presence in our lives? How do we navigate our journey between these two waves of emotion? And the gifts / challenges of each of these paradigms, what are they?

Our Chassidic Masters, seasoned with a few other voices of the mystics will accompany us on this exploration.

Social and Spiritual Activism – Does God Really Care?

The necessity of human action and refraining from action are derived from the same verse in the Torah, so teaches us the Chernobyl Rebbe, in his unique manner of reading Midrash. What is our personal / social / psychological “*Mitzrayim*” (temptation / danger zone)? What do chametz and matza have to do with this?

The boundaries of the human experience and the Divine realm are beckoning for definition.

The Shadow of the Torah: The Dangers and Darkness of a Life-of-Torah

Peter Pan is serious. He begins by trying to sew back on his shadow! Like Carl Jung he understands that anything that has a true existence has a shadow. Life is about the embracing of our shadow.

If living a life of Torah is more than reading words written on parchment then it has to have a shadow. If it is real for us then there have to be dangers lurking, fire that can scorch us.

Alienation, judgment, self estrangement are but a few of the fruits of the Tree of Life.

What did You say your Name is?

Not only are God's thirteen attributes of compassion so central to *selichot* and seeking forgiveness from God, but God's name seems to be one of Moshe's primary concerns when God sends him to speak to *Bnei Yisrael*.

What is that name that you feel most connected to? *Aveenu* (our Father)... *Malkeinu* (our King)... *Imeinu Malkateinu* (our Mother, our Queen)? God the Shepherd? God the Judge? God the Listener of Prayer? God the Lover?

What is the face of God that you need to experience in order to split your personal Reed Sea and claim your journey and life? Or perhaps, what is the manifestation of the Divine you are longing to experience? Could it be that you've been using a name which is not yours?