

When Up is Really Down

The Ba'al Shem Tov's Great Rule

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Sometimes up is down, and below is above.

All too many people pursue mysticism and Kabbalah, practicing all kinds of rituals and meditations believing that somehow they are in contact with actual supernal worlds. It is a terrible shame that the majority of such believers are practicing a myth and a fantasy, the reality of which alludes them.

Throughout the centuries, all the great Sages, mystics and Kabbalists have cried out that all their symbolic teachings are simply to direct us towards personality refinement, and the betterment of human character and morals.

These words from the Ba'al Shem Tov so eloquently sum up that which many, both before him and after him, are saying. Read these words from Sefer Ba'al Shem Tov, Nitzavim 11, and understand how we are to properly serve Heaven.

“For this commandment which I command you this day, is not concealed from you, nor is it far away. It is not in heaven, that you should say, who will go up to heaven for us and fetch it for us, to tell [it] to us, so that we can fulfill it. Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, who will cross to the other side of the sea for us and fetch it for us, to tell [it] to us, so that we can fulfill it. Rather, [this] thing is very close to you, it is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can fulfill it.” (Deut. 30:11-14)

“For this commandment,” includes all the Torah and the mitzvot, to include repentance, prayer, yihudim (kabbalistic/spiritual unification meditations), sweetening of the judgments, shattering the klipot, and uniting the [supernal] lights, to draw [down] the [sefirotic] mohin.

“Is not concealed for you” [these] are not things separate or distant from you.

“It is not in heaven” that one should contemplate one's meditations upon the heavens above, to draw forth the [supernal] radiance to unite [sefirotic] lights.

“Nor is it beyond the sea,” to go to the depths of the klipot, to raise up souls and sparks.

All this is occurs when one rips out [of oneself] all negative personality traits, and [removes forbidden] desires from [one's] soul, and subjects all [of one's personality and behavior] under one's soul [power of mind/will]. With this does one tear apart and destroy the klipot.

*When one purifies oneself appropriately to [become] a dwelling for the Divine Presence, to draw down [upon oneself] the pleasant light of the radiance of the Shekhina, **when one performs the spiritual unification within oneself, "it is in your mouth and in your heart," then automatically is the spiritual unification performed above.***

This is the foundation upon which all is built. This is the great principle of the Torah and Divine service, to include oneself and one's soul in one's good deeds, then automatically is the supernal spiritual union accomplished."

Wait, there's more!

So many people become so heavenly minded, that they become no earthly good. We see this happening today, in epidemic proportion, throughout the global religious communities.

The terrible mistake made today, as in centuries gone by, is to believe that by culturally and ethnically making oneself different from everyone else around, one is somehow magically transformed into being holy, righteous, and superior to others. Countless examples, over centuries, have comprehensively proven this false, but such falsehoods have never stopped such believers, in their arrogant disdain and detachment from those, who in many ways, are fundamentally better human beings than the arrogant, deluded believers themselves.

Every human being has room for improvement. When the individual cannot see this because of one's perceived piety, the Sefer Ba'al Shem Tov, Nitzavim 10, has this to say.

"The man who considers himself to be fulfilling the Will of Heaven, complete in all his ways, and with no shortages in his service to God, such a person is lost forever! There is no hope for him as long as he lives. It is certain that he has not even started serving God, and does not know the truth."

For the religiously minded, whose true and dear desire is to see the coming of Mashiah, the Sefer Ba'al Shem Tov, Nitzavim 8, offers this very practical advice.

"Every person of Israel must prepare and rectify that portion of the stature of the Mashiah, that is related to one's [individual] soul."

We should not expect the Mashiah to come to the world, to transform it, prior to each individual human being embracing the messianic spirit of freedom, responsibility and maturity, thus transforming each person internally. Essentially, Mashiah comes to a world of people who have first internalized the messianic message. Being that this is the case, I suspect that we may have a long wait ahead of

US.

Religious hypocrisy is dangerously out of control. The solution for this problem is nothing new. Rather, the solution is some old advice that has been around for a long time.

Practicality! Stop living in a dream world!

Religion is not about dreams, it is about reachable aspirations!

Religion is not about what is “out there” in the supernal worlds, it is about what is here, now, within each of our individual souls.

***Those who want to draw closer to God
had better realize
that the only way to draw closer to God
is by drawing closer
to each other, our fellow human beings.***

By doing this, and this alone, we are performing and actually fulfilling all the mystical meditations and rituals, without all their, now unnecessary, symbolic garments and cloaks.

Dear God! Let's get it right!

If not, the apocalypse awaits us. Mashiah will only come to those ready for him. All others will simply have to be removed by Divine design, and by natural phenomena.

As always, the choice is ours!