

KosherTorah School

for Biblical, Judaic & Spiritual Studies

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Spiritual Retreat

The Guide to Serving God

(HaMaspik L'Ovdei HaShem), Chapter 13
by R. Avraham, son of Maimonides

A Five-Part Audio Course
Taught by R. Ariel B. Tzadok

Course Outline

Lesson 1 – an overall introduction into the psychology of spiritual retreat.

The difference between dream experiences, and actual (physical) “alien” encounters. What it means to have a spiritual encounter, what is a numinous experience within the context of each individual, the psychology that is referred to in Kabbalah as the especluria sh'ayna me'ira (the unclear mirror). The importance of physical, emotional and mental balance and harmony. The absolutely devastating harm caused by the casual use of drugs, smoking pot, and the like. Relationship of this psychological practice with those found in the Sufi tradition.

Lesson 2 – inward and outward retreat.

How rural living leads to a transformation of perception. Seeing God in all things, everywhere. Reading from Maimonides' Guide to the Perplexed (3:51) about the high level of God consciousness (hasagah), and the life benefits that this brings. Examples of rural living from the Bible. Outward retreat is a means to the end of inward retreat, where the mind detaches from the delusions of dichotomy, and recognizes how all is God, as it says, Ayn Ohd Me'Livado (there is no reality other than “Him”).

Lesson 3 - Building in the Inner Temple of God.

R. Avraham's commentary on Psalm 84, and how it must be interpreted as a cry of the soul. Readings from Quadrant, the Jungian journal for Analytical Psychology. The psychology of meditation, the reorientation of psychic energy from a state of widespread diffusion (and weakness), to a state of focus and strength. The Temple is ruins and exile

are symbolic metaphors for a psychological state wherein which one is disconnected from one's inner self. Rebuilding the Temple is the psychological process of reconnecting with our inner selves and with God. The coming of Mashiah is also a psychological state, as is stated by the Ba'al Shem Tov. Before Mashiah can come to the world, Mashiah consciousness must first be realized in the individual soul. The desire for the Temple, the House of God, is the desire within the heart to experience the spiritual encounter. This is the purpose of spiritual retreat.

Lesson 4 - Synagogue or Temple, Shielding the Light.

R. Avraham's continued commentary on Psalm 84. He makes a very strong statement against hypocritical behavior performed in Synagogues, deploring the lack of focus and intent on prayer, and a general lack of respect for both Torah and God. He places emphasis how prayer and meditation is too focus on the development of one's inner Temple, and how from this inner place of psychological balance and harmony one can come to have an experience of the Divine Light. Experiencing Divine Light follows the path of nature itself. The sun does not rise all at once, but rises as a process beginning with dawn and going through to sunrise. So too does the experience of the Divine encounter not happen all at once, but develops in stages based upon one's personal development of inner balance, emotional maturity, and mental clarity. Also discussed is an important issue in Jewish law, when should one pray alone, and not at the Synagogue. One should also read this. <http://koshertorah.com/PDF/Daven-alone.pdf>

Lesson 5 - The Transformation and Empowerment of the Mind

Spiritual retreat is for the purpose of mental isolation. Mental isolation, when performed properly lead to transformations in human consciousness. These in turn are said to unleash the powers of the inner mind, releasing what are termed psychic powers of mind over matter. Reference to R. Shimon Bar Yohai and the episode of the cave. The experience of Eliyahu is psychological/psychic, and not necessarily an actual physical close encounter. Readings from modern Sufi texts and the powers that they claim can be unleashed through the version of chant meditation called dhikr.

Course Details

The cost of the course is \$50.00.

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