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Our Body and our Soul

Baruch Hashem we have passed Rosh HaShanah, and we are about to enter Yom Kippur. Let us think about this in practical terms. The following is not mere ideas.

Elul has the same numerical value as the word *chaim* (life). Why? This is because in *Elul*, we can receive a new kind of life. We are asking for life – “*Zochreinu lechaim*”. What is the kind of life we are asking for?

Hashem breathed into a man a “*nishmas chaim*” – a breath of life. All of us have in us a *nishmas chaim*.

Hashem gave us a body and a soul. The body itself, and the soul itself, cannot survive. We need both. We all know this, but let us think: does our body need to eat? This we all know. Does our soul need to eat as well? It sure does. Just like our body needs to eat, drink and go to sleep in order to stay alive, so must our soul eat. Our soul is fed through Torah and *mitzvos*.

There is an obligation to eat on Rosh HaShanah, but not on Yom Kippur. Yet, on *Erev Yom Kippur* if someone eats a meal, the Sages say that it is considered as if he fasted on Yom Kippur, so we see that even Yom Kippur has to do with eating. This is how we feed our body – and it is also a *mitzvah*. But we also have a soul. Our soul needs to be fed as well. How do we feed our soul?

We can learn from our body how we can feed our soul – it is written, “*From my flesh I see G-d.*” If a person isn’t hungry he doesn’t eat. This tells us how to feed our soul as well. If a person doesn’t feel a hunger in his soul, he won’t feed his soul. In order for a person to feed his soul, he needs to feel a spiritual hunger.

The Root Of All Our Problems - When We Don't Feel Our Soul's Hunger

We usually don’t feel how hungry our soul is. Although we do a lot of *chessed* and *mitzvos*, we don’t feel how hungry our soul is. If we would feel its hunger and feed it, we wouldn’t even have to go to a *shiur*.

Before we go into Yom Kippur, we have to first identify: who are we? In order to fix our problems, we must get to the root of the problem, just like when we go to a doctor. It seems as if we are just full of many problems, but what we need to work with is the root of our problems. There are all kinds of problems we have – problems with our *middos*, problems with how we honor our parents, problems

with how modest we are. But those are just the branches of our real problem. We need to get to the root of our problem.

With our bodies, we are hungry, so we feed it. But we don't feel our soul's hunger for spirituality, and that is why we don't feed it. How hungry is a person to want to daven? Of course we all daven, but do we feel a hunger for it?

Our weaknesses all stem from that we don't feel a hunger. If we don't feel this hunger, we won't know how to fix our problems. For example, if a person feels hungry for the *mitzvah* of honoring parents, he will be able to carry out this *mitzvah*, and if a person doesn't feel a hunger for this, he doesn't do it.

A Superficial Kind of Life

What are people thinking as Yom Tov sets in? Some people are talking about the *ruchniyus* of the coming Yom Tov, but most people are busy with mundane matters.

What are we thinking about on Erev Yom Kippur? Most people are busy with how to eat and drink enough before the fast so that their fast will go easy.

And what about Sukkos? As Sukkos is about to enter, people are busy with how the Sukkah looks.... Before Chanukah, people talk about doughnuts... Before Purim, people are busy with how their *Mishloach Manos* will look... Pesach preparations are all about how to clean the house, the *seder* and when it will start and how it will look... On Shavuos, people talk about their jobs (*Baruch Hashem*, people have *parnassah*...!) During the Nine Days, people talk about what the best dairy recipes are, because we can't eat meat...

Is this the way a Jew should live??

Where is our *ruchniyus* is something?! Is Sukkos our *zman simchaseinu* to us? What is our *simcha* on Sukkos - about how nice the Sukkah is?! What about being happy with the Yom Tov itself?

On Erev Rosh Hashanah, what are people discussing? People are busy with the best honey buy to dip their apple in!

We know that there are *mitzvos* every Yom Tov, and we have all heard a lot of *hashkafah* and *shiurim*. But we don't have a hunger for *ruchniyus*! In order to live properly as a Jew, we have to have this hunger, or else our whole life is superficial.

We must change our whole attitude toward Yom Tov. Yom Tov to many people is like just another day in our life, and at best it is a day to catch up with our social circle. But Hashem gave us a power for *ruchniyus* - our soul.

A person can do *chessed* a whole day, but his emphasis is on his body the whole day; his soul isn't in it. Life - and Yom Tov especially - is supposed to be, "*No hunger for bread and no thirst for water, except to hear the word of Hashem.*" This is not just a prophecy for the End of Days - it is referring to us, even now. Even a woman who dresses modestly might not feel a hunger for the spirituality found in being modest.

Rosh Hashanah has passed. What do we feel when it's over - do we want Yom Kippur now? Do we feel a hunger for it?

We are living in a superficial world. Our social life, our clothing and all our behavior is superficial. Life just passes by; each day we spend is usually about gratifying our body, and not our soul. What do we

talk about as Yom Tov is upon us? Do we talk about *ruchniyus*...or do we think that only people who learned *mussar* in Europe spoke about *ruchniyus*?!

When people ask each other, "How are you?", and the person answers, "*Baruch Hashem*", what is the conversation about? Is the asker referring to *ruchniyus*, and is the other referring to *ruchniyus*? Usually not. When people ask each other "How are you?", it is unfortunately just like when two non-Jews meet each other and ask how they are. There is no *ruchniyus* to be found in our daily conversations.

Our main focus should be on our souls. When we talk, when we meet people and we get into a conversation, we need to speak about what's important - we need to talk about soul matters.

This is not a high level to be on - we can all be on a simple, basic level of spending at least a little of our day focused on our souls. We can be able to feel at least a little of the hunger to feed our soul. I am not saying that people need to spend the whole day or even half the day immersed in soul matters, but at least for a small part of the day we should think about how hungry our soul is.

Putting Our Heart Into Life

"*Rachmana liba bae*" -- Hashem wants our heart. He doesn't want our actions - He wants our heart. We ask Hashem for life - *zochreinu lechaim*. We are asking for a life in which we live for Hashem - not for ourselves.

All of us, before anything, must at least be on the minimum of *Yiddishkeit*: to put our hearts into *Yiddishkeit*, into Shabbos and Yom Tov.

We have become so used to going through life without thinking about what we do. We have lost what the goal of life is - what's important and what isn't. A person needs to feel a hunger for *ruchniyus*, and to be connected to this hunger.

Our *chessed* isn't the main thing - even wicked people do *chessed*. Avraham Avinu is epitomized by his *chessed*, but that is only because he did it from his heart. He felt a hunger for *chessed*. We are not Avraham Avinu or any of the Avos, but what we can do is do things from our heart.

What are we missing, and what do we need? In order for us to have a good year, we need to think about what life is about. I am not saying to sit a whole day and think about this a whole day, but just for two minutes a day, think: Who created you? What are you - a body or a soul? Realize that we only feel physical hunger, but we don't feel spiritual hunger. Realize this problem.

Your Tefillah for Ruchniyus Is Always Answered

Once you conclude that it is indeed a problem, begin to daven to Hashem. Beseech Hashem that He should remove your *lev even*, heart of stone, and give you instead a *lev basar*, a soft heart of flesh.

Hashem is always next to us. He is close to anyone who calls out to Him truthfully. But first, we need to call out to Him! Once we call out to Him, He is next to us. We must daven to Hashem from the depths of our heart and say, "Hashem, please open my heart!"

Reb Yisrael Salanter *zt"l* said that if a person davens for physical matters, sometimes he is answered and sometimes he isn't. But when it comes to davening for spirituality, we will always be answered!

Think About Your Life

The problem is that we never think. We go through life and we just don't think about what we do. But, as Chazal say, "If not now, when?"

First, realize that we have a problem: we aren't hungry for spirituality, we don't feel how our souls are hungry. Then, upon realizing the truth of our situation, we must daven to Hashem to help us open up our heart and feel our hunger for spirituality.

When a person wants a *shidduch*, he cries. There is no parent who doesn't cry when he davens that his child should get a good *shidduch*. Just like we cry to Hashem when we need a *shidduch*, because we really want it, so must we cry to Hashem to feel a hunger for spirituality.

Is there any hope for us to have a good year? Yes - there is. It is our choice! It's our choice if we will have a good year or not. If we realize how empty our souls are, we have hope for this year. We must remember Hashem, who created us. Then we must daven to Him to feel a hunger for spirituality.

The words here are a simple guidance for life, to live life through our soul in very simple terms.

My Main Message To You

I usually don't speak in front of women. It's not my type to do this, and I'm not used to it. But I made a *cheshbon hanefesh* (soul-accounting) with myself and I realized that it is necessary to do so. The situation today in the world is so far from the true way a Jew lives. I am not saying we have to do major things, but just to live our simple, daily life the way it should be. What will be with us? What will be our end...?

Unless a person feels a hunger for spirituality and to feel that we are missing something spiritual in our life (and to daven to Hashem for help), he has no hope on this world. Even if a person does a lot of *chessed* and davens with a lot of concentration, it won't do anything for him unless he feels hungry for spirituality.

I came here to speak for one reason alone: that all of you should know that Hashem gave us the choice to talk to Hashem and beseech Him. In this way, we really live through our davening and *mitzvos*. Without realizing this, a person can daven his whole life and even concentrate on the words, but he won't feel a thing. We need to realize that we are able to talk to Hashem, just like we can talk to a parent. Daven to Hashem that you should feel like you are deriving a vitality from spirituality.

I hope that these words have pierced your heart; the words here are really very simple. We must daven to Hashem for all of this, and may we merit a good year - to truly feel alive from spirituality.

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