

CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF CHAUTAUQUA

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Jewish Psychology - Week 7 - 2020

1. Do not add to the word which I command you, nor diminish from it, to observe the commandments of the Lord your G-d which I command you. (Deuteronomy 4:2)
2. Everything I command you that you shall be careful to do it. You shall neither add to it, nor subtract from it. (ibid, 13:1)
3. The Torah, when talking of the actual performance of mitzvos, stresses that “you shall not add it, nor shall you subtract from it.” Subtraction from Torah seems to be worse than adding to Torah. Why then does Torah *first* state “you shall not add to it” and only afterwards “you shall not subtract from it?”

However, if the Yetzer Horah (Evil Inclination) would openly tell a Jew to desist or subtract from Torah, a Jew would surely not listen. Hence the Yetzer Horah, who is a crafty expert in his job, first deceptively encourages a Jew to *add* to the mitzvos of Torah... This way the Yetzer Horah hopes to cause the Jew to stray from the right path, eventually leading his to detract from observance.

So, the Torah warns us of the Yetzer Harahs’ ploy, by warning us first of all, not to add to the Torah.
(Toras Menachem, 3 Tamuz 5742)

4. But of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, G-d said, "You shall not eat of it, and you shall not touch it, lest you die."
 - a. RASHI: and you shall not touch it: She added to the command; therefore, she came to diminish it. That is what is stated (Prov. 30:6): “Do not add to His words.” - [from Talmud, Sanhedrin 29a]
5. And the serpent said to the woman, "You will surely not die."
 - a. RASHI: You will surely not die: He pushed her until she touched it. He said to her, “Just as there is no death in touching, so is there no death in eating” (Gen. Rabbah 19:3). (Genesis 3:3-4)
6. ...any extra [limb] is considered like a removed [limb]. (Talmud, Chulin 58b)
7. ...for an extra limb or organ is considered as if it was lacking. (Maimonides, Hilchot Shechita 8:11)
8. My revered father, the Rebbe [Rashab], once said: “Truth is the middle path. A deviation to the right, being overly stringent with oneself and finding faults or sins that do not exist, or a deviation to the left, being overly lenient and covering one’s faults or being lax in one’s Divine service due to self-love, — these are both false paths.” (Hayom Yom, 27 Adar I)
9. The title “Chassid” [pious] is an ancient term found in the words of our Sages (*Eruvin* 18b), and refers even to Adam, the first man. It denotes a person of perfection and distinction in his intellectual attainments or in his character attributes, or in both these qualities combined.

Within the teachings of *Chabad Chassidus*, the description “Chassid” refers to one who recognizes his essential nature, his level of Torah knowledge and study, and his status in the observance of the *mitzvos*. He knows what he is lacking and shows attention and concern to fulfill it. And he shows great discipline in exerting himself [to his mission]. (ibid, 21 Adar I)

 - a. According to an old adage, “Knowing the sickness is half the cure.” For a person to grow in his Divine service, he must first recognize his shortcomings and acknowledge what must be corrected. And he must be honest about it all. Chassidim look askance at a person who — whether

consciously or unconsciously — deludes himself in his Divine service, for unless one has a clear and candid picture of his true level of service, he will be unable to advance.

As one does this, however, he finds himself walking a tightrope with undesirable extremes at either side. On one side lurks the danger of falling into the crippling pitfall of overly pious self-criticism; on the other side, the tantalizing pitfall of complacent self-delusion.

This lifelong balancing trick is summarized in the following well-known teaching of the Rebbe Rashab, as transmitted — with a pungent postscript — by his son, the Rebbe Rayatz.

- b. The Rebbe Rashab taught: “Just as a person ought to know his own shortcomings, so too should he know the positive qualities that he possesses.”

The Rebbe Rayatz added: “But also the positive qualities that he does not possess....” (Hayom Yom: Tackling Life's Tasks, *ibid*)

10. You have to begin with the knowledge that there is nothing perfect in this world. Our job is not to hunt down perfection and live within it. It is to take whatever broken pieces we have found and sew them together as best we can. (Letters by Rabbi M.M. Shneerson)
11. Thus, the purpose of the *Hishtalshelut* is this world, *for such was His will — that He find it pleasurable when the sitra achra is subjugated to holiness, and the darkness of kelipah is transformed into holy light, so that in the place of the darkness and sitra achra prevailing throughout this world, the Ein Sof-light of G-d will shine forth with greater strength and intensity, and with the superior quality of light that emerges from the darkness i.e., when darkness is transformed into light, the resulting light is superior to ordinary light; it will thus shine with greater intensity.* (Tanya Ch. 36)
12. *These are two nefashot — two souls and life-forces. One soul originates in the kelipah and sitra achra...It is this nefesh (which originates in the kelipah and sitra achra) that is clothed in the blood of a human being, giving life to the body; as it is written, (Leviticus, 17:11) “For the nefesh of the flesh (i.e., the nefesh that sustains physical and corporeal life) is in the blood.” ... The second ...soul is truly “a part of G-d above” (Job, 31:2).* (Ibid Ch. 1 and 2)
13. ...Such sadness is due to conceit. For he does not know his place, and that is why he is distressed because he has not attained the level of a *tzaddik*, to whom such foolish thoughts surely do not occur. For were he to recognize his station, that he is very far from the rank of *tzaddik*... then surely, this is the due measure of the *Beinonim* and their task: To subdue the evil impulse and the thought that rises from the heart to the mind, and to completely avert his mind from it, repulsing it *as it were* with both hands...

Therefore one should not feel depressed or very troubled at heart, even if he be engaged all his days in this conflict *with the thoughts which will always enter his mind.*
Though he may never rise to the level which precludes their occurrence, yet he should not be depressed. For perhaps this is what he was created for, and this is the service demanded of him — to subdue the sitra achra constantly. (*ibid* Ch. 27)
14. It is known, that it is the way of combatants and similarly of wrestlers that when one is gaining the upper hand, the other likewise exerts himself with all the resources of his strength in order to prevail. *Therefore, in the battle between the divine soul and the animal soul, when the divine soul exerts itself and musters all its strength in prayer, the kelipah of the animal soul too gathers strength to counter it, aiming to confuse and topple the Divine soul by means of a foreign thought of its own.*
The animal soul, sensing danger in the divine soul's increased efforts in prayer with devotion, contrives to jar one's concentration by conjuring up assorted foreign thoughts in his mind. Thus, the appearance of an

extraneous thought during prayer indicates that one's devotion was of sufficient quality to give the animal soul cause for concern; and this realization itself should gladden one and encourage him to continue his efforts. *This refutes a common error. When a foreign thought occurs to some people during prayer, they mistakenly conclude that their prayer is worthless, for if one prayed properly and correctly, so they mistakenly believe, no foreign thoughts would arise in his mind.*

They would be correct if there would be but one soul within a person, the same soul that prays being also the one that thinks and ponders on the foreign thoughts. For in this case, if the G-dly soul were truly immersed in the prayers, there would be no room within it for foreign thoughts.

but in fact there are two souls, each waging war against the other in the person's mind. Each of them wishes and desires to rule and pervade the mind exclusively... But if there are indeed two separate souls, why should the extraneous thoughts of one interfere with the devotions of the other? — They would not interfere, except that the G-dly soul is clothed within it — within the animal soul. Therefore the G-dly soul cannot ignore foreign thoughts rising from the animal soul; and thus foreign thoughts disturb one's devotion in prayer. (Ibid Ch. 28)

15. R. Joshua b. Levi also said: When Moses ascended on high, the ministering angels spoke before the Holy One, blessed be He, 'Sovereign of the Universe! What business has one born of woman amongst us?'

'He has come to receive the Torah,' answered He to them.

Said they to Him, 'That secret treasure, which has been hidden by Thee for nine hundred and seventy-four generations before the world was created. Thou desirest to give to flesh and blood! "What is man, that thou art mindful of him, And the son of man, that thou remember him? O L-rd our G-d, How excellent is thy name in all the earth? (that thy) give thy glory [the Torah] upon the Heavens!' [Psalms 8:5, 2]

'Return them an answer,' bade the Holy One, blessed be He, to Moses.

'Sovereign of the Universe' replied he, 'I fear lest they consume me with the [fiery] breath of their mouths.' 'Hold on to the Throne of Glory,' said He to him, 'and return them an answer,' as it is said, "He maketh him to hold on to the face of his throne, And spreadeth [PaRSHeZ] his cloud over him [Job 26:9]," whereon R. Nahman observed: This teaches that the Almighty [SHaddai] spread [Pirash] the luster [Ziw] of His *Shechinah* (Thus Parshez is treated as an abbreviation; in Hebrew the words follow the same order as these letters) and cast it as a protection (cloud) over him.

16. He [then] spoke before Him: Sovereign of the Universe! The Torah which Thou givest me, what is written therein? "I am the L-rd thy G-d, which brought thee out of the Land of Egypt (Exodus 20:2)." Said he to them [the angels], 'Did ye go down to Egypt; were ye enslaved to Pharaoh: why then should the Torah be yours?'

Again, What is written therein? "Thou shalt have none other g-ds (ibid 3)." Do ye dwell among peoples that engage in idol worship?

Again what is written therein? "*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy* (ibid 8)." Do ye then perform work, that ye need to rest?

Again what is written therein? "*Thou shalt not take* [tissa] [*the name ... in vain*] (ibid 7)." Is there any business [*massa*] dealings among you?

Again what is written therein, "*Honor thy father and thy mother* (ibid 12)." Have ye fathers and mothers?

Again what is written therein? "*Thou shalt not murder. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal* (ibid 13-15)." Is there jealousy among you; is the Evil Tempter among you?

Straightway they conceded [right] to the Holy One, blessed be He, for it is said, "*O L-rd, our L-rd, How excellent is thy name*, etc. [Psalms 8:10], whereas '*Who has set thy glory upon the heavens*' is not written. Immediately each one was moved to love him [Moses] and transmitted something to him, for it is said, "*Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast taken spoils* [the Torah]; *Thou hast received gifts on account of man* (Psalms 68:19)." as a recompense for their calling thee man [*adam*] thou didst receive gifts... (Talmud, Tractate Shabbat 88b-89a)

17. For man is born to toil, while spiritual beings soar in flight. (Job 5:7)

18. *As it is written in the holy Zohar (I 103b) on the verse (Proverbs 31:23), “Her husband is known in the gates,” that “This refers to the Holy One, blessed be He, [so called since He is the “husband“ and the soul is called the “wife”] Who makes Himself known and attaches Himself to every one according to the extent which one measures in one’s heart....”*

Therefore, fear and love are called “the secret things [known] to the L-rd our G-d, (Deuteronomy 29:28)” for people cannot know the varying degrees of love of G-d harbored in the hearts of others, while the Torah and mitzvot are those things which are “revealed to us and to our children to do....(ibid)” They are apply to all [Jews] equally, for we have all one Torah and one law, insofar as the fulfillment of all the Torah and mitzvot in actual performance is concerned. [All Jews perform mitzvot in the very same manner; the greatest Jew and the smallest both put on the same tefillin].

It is otherwise with fear and love, which vary according to the knowledge of G-d in the mind and heart, Here, people are not equal. He whose knowledge of G-dliness is greater, will experience the love and fear of G-d to a greater degree than his less knowledgeable colleague. (Tanya Ch. 44)

19. Just as He has power in the realm of the infinite, so, too, He has power in the realm of finite. For should you attribute infinite power to Him but dis-attribute finite power to Him, you diminishing his perfection. (Rabbi Meir ibn Gabbai - 15th-century kabbalist)

20. When we speak of the Infinite, Blessed Be He, we mean the utmost of perfection and abstraction, that which encompasses everything and is beyond all possible limits.

The only thing we are permitted to say about the Infinite then, would involve the negative of all qualities. For the Infinite is beyond anything that can be grasped in any terms - either positive or negative. Not only is it impossible to say of the Infinite that He is in any way limited or bad. One cannot say the opposite, that He is vast or that He is good. Just as He is not matter, He is not spirit, nor can He be said to exist in any dimension meaningful to us... (The thirteen petalled rose - Rabbi Adin Even-Israel)

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