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Droschos - The Only Way Out Of Our Problems

This isn't the first time I am speaking here, and it won't be the last.

People like to come together and hear a speech, and this is definitely commendable. Firstly, it is fulfilling a mitzvah of learning Torah, and in addition, it is learning that leads to action. However, you can see already from physical matters that there must be structure, or else nothing happens. A business needs to be properly planned in order to succeed. An hour of learning Torah is certainly rewarding, but the question is, is it building the person, or are people just trying to kill off an hour?

We are comprised of a body and a soul, and each have their needs. Our body's needs, as we know, must follow certain rules. Medicine for one part of the body cannot be used for another part of the body. When you sit in your house, no one is coming to serve you and provide for you. A child is given his needs, but eventually we all learn how to provide for ourselves. There are some people of course who do not know how to be responsible for themselves, and they need to go to a therapist, but we all recognize this as a problem. The normal, average person knows that he must take care of himself or else he will not survive.

But when it comes to taking care of our soul, we are often not clear about how to do it. For example, people think that learning Torah is for certain people in the world who can sit and learn, such as a Rav, and that not all of us are cut out for learning. That would be true if only a Rav had a *neshamah* and some of us didn't. But the fact is, that we all have a *neshamah*. So all of us have spiritual needs, and we all have to worry for ourselves spiritually, no less than how we must worry for our physical needs.

With our spiritual needs, you must put in work. The problem, though, is that people don't know the structure of how to go about taking care of their spiritual needs.

People "know" that they have a *neshamah*, they believe in the words of Chazal that we have a *neshamah*, and we know that there is life after death, so we know we have a *neshamah*. But people do not often feel this as a palpable knowledge. The truth is that you can really feel how you are a *neshamah*, no less than how you can feel yourself breathing.

Let me explain to you what I'm trying to tell you. I am under the impression that you wanted to hear from me some *Divrei Torah*, to be inspired, and inspire others from the words I am saying. This is commendable, but that is not the goal of why I am speaking here. The goal is totally different than that.

The goal I have is that you should get used to changing how you normally think. Just like your body has to go to work, so must your soul work in order to provide for its spiritual needs.

I'm not asking you to leave work and stop making a living so you can take care of your *neshamah*. I am also realistic, and I know that this cannot be done. But I am just asking you to realize that we have a problem, before we get to the solution.

The solution to the problem will already be the second step. First, we need to realize that we have a problem. When one has a problem and he can't find a solution, that's a problem, but at least he's looking for a solution. The real problem is when a person is in a problem and he doesn't even realize that he is in a problem, because then he won't even try to help himself.

So first, we need to realize that we have a problem. We need to see how it is a very real problem. It will not go away on its own, just like your bills don't go away on their own. Once you realize that there is a problem, you have the basis to solving the problem.

When a person realizes he doesn't have money, he has a solution: go to work. He feels the problem, so he has a solution. In spirituality, we usually don't find that people relate to spiritual problems as being real. People don't feel the reality of Gan Eden, of Olam HaBa, because these realities cannot be seen with our physical eyes, therefore, people aren't aware of what their spiritual problems are. A person feels fine as long as he learns a little and keeps some mitzvos. If a person would see Gan Eden as real, though, his excuses would all vanish in an instant. He would realize that all his answers are just excuses.

The Chofetz Chaim said that our mitzvos are called *levushim* garments; therefore, if a person claims his whole life that it's not his fault that he can't keep some mitzvos, maybe he has the best excuses, but what will happen when he comes to the Next World? He comes up with no garments. Is there any excuse for walking around unclothed? If a person is walking around undressed in the street, he might have the best excuses, but there really is no excuse. A person who comes up to the Next World with no mitzvos, because it always wasn't his fault - he might not get Gehinnom, but he will still have no "clothing" on him - nothing in the Next World that sustains him.

If we would see spirituality as real, it wouldn't have to be explained to us how to live spiritually.

When a poster goes up that there is a lecture of "How To Make Money", every seat is full. You don't have to push anyone to come. But when a poster goes up of "How To Improve In Our *Ruchniyus*", Baruch Hashem that people are coming, but, we must understand - why must it be explained to us? Why isn't it clear to us on our own? The answer is because although we believe that we have a soul, we don't feel how real it is, and therefore, we usually identify ourselves as being a body. If anyone reflects, he will see that he identifies much more with the physical and not with the spiritual.

So the point of coming here to this speech is not so you can hear words of inspiration. The point of why you should have come here is to hear a new perspective on how you view life. Begin to think differently. Get used to thinking that you have two parts in yourself - a body, and a soul. Just like you need to worry for your body, so must you worry for your soul.

When you go home after this lecture, I'm not saying that it won't have any effect on you, because hearing spirituality always has some effect. But it's like making a shekel a month. It is something, it's better than nothing, but it doesn't help you survive. So hearing an inspiring lecture, while always being better than nothing, will not get you anywhere in your spiritual growth. A person can hear thousands of shiurim in his life, yet he doesn't change, and he remains as the same person!

We must learn to accept a whole new view towards life. The point is not that you will start learning

Torah more. Of course, that is better than nothing. But the point is that you need to get used to thinking more often.

A person gets up in the morning and drinks a coffee, and he feels like he doesn't have any energy that day unless he has his coffee. When he goes to daven, does he feel that he needs his davening just as much as he needs his coffee? Or does he just daven because it says in our Shulchan Aruch that we are obligated to daven, or because he doesn't want to Gehinnom, or because he wants reward, or because he doesn't want to disrupt the minyan.... all kinds of superficial reasons.

We all know we have a soul. No one denies it. No one here is denying that there is life after death, that our soul continues to live on after the body is buried in the grave. After death we become aware of it, but what about in our life, in how we go about our life? We live our life totally the opposite of the true perspective!

In order to live a true life, a person when he gets up in the morning, when he drinks his coffee, he should ask himself what he is doing for his *neshamah* as well. It should really be that you are worrying at least 50% about your *neshamah* and 50% about your body, because you have two parts in yourself. Again: I'm not telling you to leave work. Just understand that we have a problem. We have a body and a soul, so doesn't it make sense that we should spend half the time worrying for our body, and the other half of our time worrying for our soul?

The real question is if it bothers anyone that there is such a problem. It has to bother you. Your body and your soul both equally exist. Your body is getting its needs, and your soul is not. Imagine a partnership in which one of the partners is making all the money, and the other partner isn't making a cent. Your body and your soul are two partners, and only your body is being given attention! But both of our body and our soul need to be taken care of!

The problem should be very clear to you. The solution is already the second question – first, you need to see clearly how we have a problem, and it should bother you.

The truth is that we should just stop right here. You can all go home now and wonder what the solution is to the problem, and ask advice from people. But first, you need to deal it with yourself. If no one else can help you, than ask others for help. But first, you need to take responsibility for yourself and try to solve it yourself, before you throw yourself upon others for help.

There are people who think that the Rav in their shul is responsible to help them come to a shiur. After all, it is the Rav who gives the shiurim in the shul. It is true that the responsibility of the Rav is to give shiurim, but it is the responsibility of the people in the shul to come to the shiur! A person has to worry for himself, and it is his sole responsibility. You are in charge of yourself, so you must worry for your needs. We have an obligation of course to share in the burden of each other, but each person on his own is responsible for himself.

So first, we must understand that we have a problem, and after we understand that there is a problem, we must realize that each of us, individually, are responsible for ourselves. If we cannot find a solution, only then should we ask others for help and advice.

Now comes the third step in what we need to do, though it will come at a later stage: Is there really a solution to the problem we are describing?

There are wars all over the world. Is there a solution to those wars? In Israel, will there ever be peace with the Arabs? They've been trying to appease them for years and years. There is not always a solution to every problem. When people get sick, G-d forbid, there is not always a cure. There are problems we can solve, but there are some problems we must live with. When we speak about our

spiritual problem we have [of not recognizing how we are a soul], is there really a solution to this problem?

How do we deal with a problem that we can't solve? One kind of person, when informed of a problem he can't solve, will fall into despair and self-absorption, and for all of his life he is depressed. Another kind of person reacts differently. The problem bothers him, but he doesn't let it destroy his life. He takes his mind off it and puts his focus on other things.

With the spiritual problem we have, it won't help if we take our mind off it, because that will just make the problem worse. We can't run away from our spiritual problems, and we must learn how to deal with it.

I will tell you the truth. I do not have a solution to the spiritual problem that we have.

I'll tell you why. I can't tell people to leave work so that you can learn Torah all day, because you have to be on a high level of *bitachon* in Hashem in order to do that; if one is not on this level of *bitachon*, it is forbidden according to *Halacha* to leave work. There is no permission to take a person who is not on a high level of *bitachon* and tell him that he should just have *bitachon* and leave work and just learn Torah all day and that everything will be okay. This is forbidden to do. Okay, so that leaves us with the other option: to work all day and make a living, from morning to night. Well, if we are working all day, then when in the world are we supposed to find time to take care of our spiritual needs?!

So there is no solution to our spiritual problem.

But there is a piece of advice that does exist.

When the Jews were enslaved in Egypt, there was no way for them to escape it. There was a decree of exile, and anyone who tried to escape was caught by the sorcery that protected its borders. There was no actual solution that they could do. Even when the non-Jewish astrologers wanted to get rid of the Jews from Egypt, they could not find a way. The non-Jews there did not have a solution, but the Jew has a solution even where a non-Jew doesn't. A Jew's solution, when he knows that there is no natural solution, is that he turns to Hashem in prayer. He can tell Hashem, "You created me. You placed me in this situation. I can't do it on my own. The doctors have given up on me. The only one who can help me is You, Hashem."

In the world we live in today, there is no solution to how we can reconcile our physical needs with our spiritual needs. Some people abandon all spirituality and only take care of their physical needs, and others ignore physicality and are only immersed in spirituality. But as for the average person, who is caught somewhere in the middle - and he is not on the level of abandoning his physical situation and become more spiritual - he has no solution.

The first thing we must know is: there is a problem. The second thing you must know is: you are responsible to help yourself. The third step is: let it bother you. Then, when it bothers you, cry out to Hashem to help you (just as the Jews cried out to Hashem in Egypt).

When you understand the problem and you feel responsible for yourself, and you cry out to Hashem, earnestly, Hashem will help you. How? I have no idea exactly how. But Hashem can do anything, and He can solve your problems for you.

But on one condition: you have to cry out to Him, from the depths of your heart, about your spiritual problems. Feel very bothered at the fact that you don't feel the reality of your *neshamah* and that your life is lacking meaning. It should bother you that we don't even worry 50% about our *neshamah*'s needs, even though it really should be that way. It can bother you that you are lying to

yourself all the time, and that will help you cry out to Hashem, to scream to Him and scream to Him, that He take you out of the situation. If you keep crying out to Hashem, you are guaranteed an answer.

There is no natural solution that can help us right now. The world is designed like that – Hashem made the world in a way that we must turn to Him. There is no natural means to escape our problems. The only advice is to turn solely to the Only One who can take us out from this situation. But we must turn to Him from the depths of our soul, from inner pain at our situation, from being bothered.

We need to understand that the way we live our life currently, although it is necessary for us (to work for a living), it is still a life that resembles death. It is a life devoid of any inner content. That will get us to really cry out to Hashem, each day. People cry to Hashem each day for their physical needs, but what about their soul's needs...?

In this way, you will surely receive salvation.

I hope that you feel that the words here are really simple, and that each of you can really say them on your own; if it's because I am telling it to you, then it is not worth much.

Reb Chatzkel Levenstein zt"l would say that each person has to write his own Sefer Koheles. In Sefer Koheles, Shlomo HaMelech says how this world is futile. A person can read through the entire sefer and realize, "Ah, how right Shlomo HaMelech is." But what does it help to know that Shlomo HaMelech got it right? The next day the reader is back to pursuing various pursuits, and reading Koheles didn't help him change. For this reason, a person has to write his own Koheles, Reb Chatzkel said. This doesn't mean that you should add onto the words of Koheles – it means to write from your own perspective of how futile this world is, from your life experiences.

I hope that all of you can say these words from within yourselves, and not because you heard these words in a lecture. If you are able to say the words here from within yourself, then you will surely be saved.

There is one more thing I will say.

I am new here, and I do not recognize anyone here. But I want all of you to know that I came here to say very simple words, words that anyone can keep. I hope that you won't go home afterwards and say that someone came here to inspire us and then he went back home. The point here is that all of you should realize that in the way people are living their life right now, by all natural means, Moshiach cannot come here, at all!!

Forgive me for making such a harsh statement. But if anyone recognizes the situation, 20 years ago, the world was much less indulged in physicality. They didn't have so many phones like there are today, and there was much less going on then; not that 20 years ago people didn't indulge in materialism, but, it was much less. Will our situation get better in 20 years from now, the way things are going? We all know that it won't. No one can deny it. How will Moshiach come? Will we have better Rabbonim then?

The change will have to come from us. If we, ourselves, are not prepared to change over in one day, there is no hope. We all know that the world we live in today, with its indulgent lifestyle, Moshiach cannot come here. The decision to change must come from each of us, individually.

Are we prepared to change over in one day, or do we want to just continue on our life as it is now? Everyone here has the power of free will; we can all choose either to continue living a materialistic life until the day we die, or, we can tell ourselves: "Enough." We were in Egypt, but at a certain point we get out of there. It is in your hands to get out – when you cry out to Hashem.

Through the help of Hashem, just as He brought us out of Egypt to bring us to the giving of the Torah, so should we merit the giving of the Torah, each on his own level.

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