

עדת אש קודש

Adass Aish Kodesh



CREATING REAL LIGHT

Harav Y. Reuven Rubin

You have a twinge, something you never had before. It hurts, and after trying to shrug it off, you go to the doctor. You feel bad, you really don't like to be a bother, but it is really hurting. The GP does his thing, prodding, pulling then putting that cold disc that is attached to his ears to your chest. He asks questions, probably tells you that you need to lose weight, (seems we all do). After a few minutes, he sits down, pad in hand and explains something about something, but your mind isn't taking anything in. He then refers you for a scan, promising that if anything is wrong, the scans will find it. Now your mind moves up a gear, you search for information, trying to find what it is that they aren't telling you. The referral comes thru and you go to the hospital for your scan. MRI, CT, PET these are some of the technological marvels they have waiting for you. These machines engulf us, and with their whirling and clanging, they actually look within our bodies, seeking out anything that may be untoward. This technology lifts the veil of secrecy and discloses that which may be lurking dangerously within you.

We take these advancements as a given, making appointments then going thru what is called, 'scan anxiety,' that inevitable apprehensiveness whilst waiting for the results. Hopefully we give a deep sigh of relief when given the all clear, (again they tell you about the weight) and then we forge further on with

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our lives. Some of these machines cost millions, but the ability to see that which was until comparatively recently beyond sight brings hope to many who are inflicted with dreadful conditions. The advancement of medical science is a gift and we all give thanks to the Eibishter for these tools.

There is another vital facet of our wellbeing that still seems blocked from sight. Our neshomahs often carry small irritants that bury themselves into the recesses of our spiritual selves causing disruptions with our connection with Hashem. How can we treat these life threatening maladies? Where do we get spiritual scanners?

In Beha'alosecha the Kohen is given the mitzvah to light the menorah in the Mishkan. The word used for this lighting, Beha'alosecha, literally means 'when you lift up', which implies elevation. Rashi explains that this word was chosen to hint to us two laws, pertaining to lighting. One is that when putting the match to the wick, do not take your hand away until the flame is burning strongly by itself, thereby teaching us that the flame must be lifted, rising on its own. The second law which is hinted at is that it was required to place a small platform in front of the menorah, a step 'lifted up' off the ground, on which the Kohen stood while preparing the wicks for lighting each day. Rav Moshe Feinstein Zt"l noted that it is odd for one word in the Torah to teach two such different laws, to light until the candle burns alone, and also to stand on a step; and that there must be some connection between these two requirements.

HaRav Yisroel Miller suggests that the connection can be found in a teaching from Chazal that explains that the menorah symbolises the light of Torah knowledge. We are told to hold the match until the candle burns brightly on its own, and, in addition to its plain meaning, this message is for every parent and teacher: it is not enough to give our children a lesson that will be parroted back mechanically. The goal must be to light a flame which will burn 'by itself', thus creating an eternal fire in the young. Such a love for all things holy will continue to grow on its own, long after the teacher is gone.

Rav Miller continues by asking, how does the teacher light this fire? How do we bring clarity to our young so the fire burns clean? The Torah offers direction, we step upon a platform, so as to be able to look into our young. The Menorah wasn't all that tall, why the platform? So that the Kohen can look into the interior of the lamp, see its condition and clean out any harmful particles that could hinder the lamp lighting ability. Without that step up, it would be impossible to do a thorough job of preparing the lights to burn their brightest.

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We cannot teach a child unless we first look into their soul and create a clean environment that will facilitate a flame that will burn on its own. One must climb up and look into the child; trying to understand who this particular neshoma is and what he is in need of.

I had the merit to learn from one of the greatest teachers of my generation about how looking into our young can be done. HaRav Shlomo Friefeld Zt"l was a Goan in teaching, and I often asked him questions regarding individual situations with youngsters who were struggling. His animated answers still live in my soul. He was alive, with the love for each child. When describing how to approach unique situations, he would become enlivened and enthused, actually emoting answers that were enflamed with love. His tall stature would shiver with the truth, and after just a few moments, I would feel as if I had just witnessed the thunder of Har Sinai. I was so alive with his words, his entirety was about giving over Torah that would bring the flame of a lebedika life to others. His individual prescriptions for each child were clear: Bring fire to each child, find his point of combustion and ignite it with your own enthusiasm.

Our kids are seeking hope, we can't just pretend things are just going to roll along without some warm intervention.

I just learned that in Bnei Brak several shuls were vandalized by a marauding gang of young Yiddisha teens who have slipped off the derech. I saw the faces, I saw them lifting poles and striking Yidden. On Shevuos! Kabolos Hatorah in Bnei Brak, gevalt! Tears must flood our eyes, we must get above the travesty of the world and heal their souls, Please, Hashem is in Golus crying for those neshomahs.

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