



## Love to Feel: Passionate Service in the Thought of the Piacetzner Rebbe

*"The soul loves to feel. Not only pleasant feelings but the very experience of stimulation. . .*

*Sooner sadness or some deep pain rather than boredom of non-stimulation."*

*-Tzar Yzeiruz (the Rebbe's Personal Diary), Letter#9*

### (1) אש קודש (ראש השנה, שנת ת"ש) [September 14-15<sup>th</sup> 1939]

משל לבן מלך שנשבה בין פוחזים וריקים שמענים אותו, והרגיש פתאום שהמלך קרוב אליו, התחיל לצעוק בקולות מרים מאוד הושיעני אבי, הושיעני מלכי, מפני שהרגיש שהמלך בא עתה אל מקום הקדוב לו, נמצא שצעקתו היתירה סימן התגלות המלך הוא.

### (2) קדושת לוי (פרשת משפטים)

ומראה כבוד ה' כאש אוכלת כו' (כד, יז). דהנה האדם בעבודתו להשם יתברך בתורה ובמצות מביא תענוג גדול למעלה. וכשאדם רוצה לידע אם השם יתברך יש לו תענוג מעבודתו, הבחינה הוא על זה, אם אדם רואה שלבו בוער כאש ומתלהב תמיד לעבוד אותו, ויש לו חשק ורצון בעבודת הבורא, אז בוודאי מוכח שהשם יתברך יש לו תענוג מעבודתו, ולכך מסייעין לו מן השמים, ושולחין לו מחשבות קדושות לתוך לבו. לזה אמר "ומראה כבוד ה' כו'", שהסימן כשירצה אדם לידע אם רואה כבוד ה' והקב"ה נהנה ממנו, ולזה "כאש אוכלת", אם לבו בוער כאש. וקל להבין.

### (3) הכשרת האברכים (פרק ג')

קדושי החסידות מצאו רמז לזה בדברי הגמרא (ברכות יז) עולמך תראה בחייך, שרמזה הגמרא להאיש, שאת עולמך, עולם העתיד שלך, תוכל לראות בחייך. כי ההתרגשות והענוג שאתה מתרגש ומתענג בעבודתך בעולם הזה הארת עולמך של עולם העליון היא. עוד בזהר חדש פרשת בהר איתא מזה, וזה לשונו: אמר רבי שמעון וכו' דמזונא דעולם הבא לאו איהו בהאי עלמא אלא צמצומא זעירא, דחילא דיליה אשתכח במתיקו דאורייתא, עד כאן לשונו הקדוש [מזון של עולם הבא לא נמצא בעולם הזה אלא מעט מזעיר, וכחו (של מזון עולם הבא הזה שבעולם הזה) נמצא במתיקת התורה]. ובבית אהרן פרשת שלח בדבור המתחיל אמר אור זרוע לצדיק וכו' איתא, כי הגם שהעולם הזה והעולם הבא הם שני הפכים ממש מהקצה אל הקצה, עם כל זה הן קשורים זה בזה, וכדאמרי אינשי מי שיש לו עולם הזה יש לו עולם הבא, אין הכונה מי שיש לו עולם הזה כגון אכילה ושתייה ושאר תאוות חס ושלו, רק הכונה מי שיש לו עולם הבא בזה העולם, שטועם בהמצוות טעם עולם הבא, והיינו על ידי בחינת אור הגנוז, יש לו גם כן בעולם הבא, אבל מי שאינו טועם זאת בעולם הזה, אי אפשר לו שיטעם בעולם הבא, עד כאן לשונו הקדוש.

### (4) אש קודש (פרשת וארא, שנת תש"ב) [January 17<sup>th</sup> 1942]

נודע משערי קדושה להרב חיים ויטאל זצוק"ל שמן הד' יסודות שבאדם נמשך היצר הרע, מן יסוד האש כעס, מיסוד הרוח גאות וכו', ומן יסוד העפר עצלות. ובספר הקדוש אמרי אלימלך (פ' תולדות) איתא, שהיצר הרע של חמימות לעבירה יכולים להכניס לקדושה ולשמש בו להתעורר חמימות למצוה, משא"כ יצר הרע של קרירות עמלך אי אפשר להכניס לקדושה, עיין שם, כי היצר הרע משמש בהד' יסודות לרע, וביסוד העפר משמש יצר הרע של עמלך בחינת "והנחש עפר לחמו" (ישעיהו סה, כה), ונאמר לו (בראשית ג, יד) ארוך אתה מכל הבהמה ומכל חית השדה על גחנך תלך ועפר תאכל כל ימי חיך".

### (5) תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף לג/א

אפילו נחש כרוך על עקבו לא יפסיק: אמר רב ששת לא שנו אלא נחש אבל עקרב.

### (6) שפת אמת וארא תרל"ה

ואיתא בספרים [בס' אור ישראל מהרב המגיד ז"ל] כי נחש הוא מצד החמימות. רמז לדבר חס הוא אבי כנען. ועקרב מצד הקרירות כו' ע"ש.

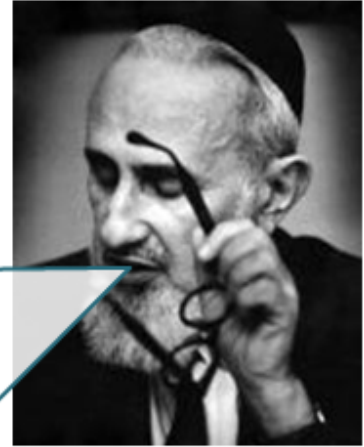
### (7) ספר ישעיה פרק כז פסוק יג

(יג) וְהָיָה בַיּוֹם הַהוּא יִתְקַע בְּשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל וְיָבֹאוּ הָאֲבָדִים בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשׁוּר וְהִנְדָּחִים בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לֵה' בְּהַר הַקֹּדֶשׁ בִּירוּשָׁלַם:



### **The Curse of Boredom**

Man is bored. Hundreds of millions of dollars are spent on his entertainment and amusement. He pays enormous sums to anyone who can elicit a smile from him and make him forget his daily worries. What are these worries? Poverty, sickness, persecution, physical pain? None of these. *His main worry is existence itself.* He is dissatisfied with what he is doing, with his job, trade or profession. He hates the routine of getting up at 7, catching the 7:45 train, and arriving at the office, where one meets the same people and discusses the same affairs.



He finds no joy in what he is doing; he wants to free himself from his daily obligations and activities. He resents the repetition, which is basically a natural phenomenon. He is the most miserable of creatures because he is confined to a circular existence which keeps on retracing its steps afresh; for he knows what he is going to do next and what is expected of him. He travels to far-off places, because he is tired of his hometown, with its familiar surroundings, and he engages in an incessant quest for new experiences and stimuli. Of course, all his attempts to break up the boredom and introduce change into his repetitive existence are futile. For there is nothing in creation that can offer man something new, exciting and fascinating. He soon realizes that whatever he was looking for does not exist and he comes home, back to his old surroundings and duties. He chases a mirage that recedes endlessly upon his approach.

Basically, this boredom is the consequence of the primal curse with which man in paradise was burdened when he rebelled against his Master: "In the sweat of your brow you will eat bread" (Gen. 3:19). These words convey the idea of a life that is not only hated but joyless, the idea of work from which there is no escape, the curse of uniformity and boredom. Man is engaged in a steady rebellion against repetitiveness and strives for change and renewal.

This curse of disapproval affecting man's mode of existence can be seen in two ways. (1) Man hates the work in which he is engaged and seeks to free himself from the so-called slavery: one looks for an escape-route which would somehow bring him to the safe place where he can live an free existence. This is exactly the illusion that ENTERTAINMENT tries to create for man, at least for a few short moments. (2) Alternatively, man commits

himself unconditionally to WORK in the hope that more accomplishments, greater successes, more fantastic conquests will fill one's being with joy and contentment. One says to himself: I hate my work NOW, because the attainments are small and I have not realized my life's ambition, which is not definable. However, when I shall LATER succeed in fulfilling my destiny, I shall find happiness.

Man, because of a desire for freedom, becomes more and more enslaved. He would like to liberate himself from all the restrictions of existence. He desires a limitless multitude of experiences and is indiscriminate about how he attains them. He seeks changes of circumstance, panorama, friends, and objects of enjoyment. What delighted him the day before is obsolete today, and what he indulges in now will lose its attraction with the rise of the morning star. New wishes, strange horizons, unique experiences, unknown ends, lure him from the security and warmth of his homestead. He becomes drunk with the endless opportunities which imagination paints before his mind's eye and he does not want to survey the landscape twice from the same spot. What he wants is a different sunrise every morning.

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## THE REBBE'S SOMERSAULTS



When a Jewish person reveals from within himself his inherent holiness with which to serve his Creator, then every act that he does for God, even self-initiated service, becomes for that while actually holy. And these physical acts, done in divine service, will in turn sanctify his physical body.

How else can you explain why I became so enthused when I decided to somersault in honor of the *Sefer Torah*? Why else did my whole body become so energized when I saw the place where I would dance and my whole body shook with excitement?

Frequently a Jew's yearning is ignited far beyond the normal level of his service. His soul then yearns to perform some great act for God, but his heart is broken



from the reality of his normal service. And even when his soul is not inflamed to actual self-sacrifice, it yearns for self-transcendence: if only now I were able to perform some act that would lift me out of myself. If only now I were able to extract my very being from my normal self, I would soar up straight to the heavens.

When I started preparing myself to attend the *Sefer Torah* dedication ceremony, my yearning already had begun to flare. The thought that such an awesomely holy and joyous occasion might come only once in my lifetime started to burn within me. I wanted very much to do something for God. "Right! I will rejoice in awe and dance with all my might. No, that may be nice, but my soul is still not pacified. This is not the great act suitable for such an awesome occasion."

### **Rebutting Self-doubt**

Then the idea came to me to somersault as the lowly peasants do for their masters. But a countervoice spoke up within me: "What kind of service are you trying to do; what is the reason for it? Do you really think it matters to God whether or not you do somersaults? And perhaps you might even hurt yourself or damage your health. Will you not look like a fool doing somersaults in front of all those people?"

Then from the depths of my heart I screamed at this voice: "God destroy you, forces of evil! This is no time for second thoughts—the moment is great, it is unique, and it is passing. To do some act of self-sacrifice for God is what I want, and you have only helped me to find it. The very act that you seek to intimidate me from doing because of health or personal reasons, that is the act I choose to do and I now hallow myself in preparation."

From that moment on, this self-contrived, unsophisticated act became for me a holy service. It was now

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very clear in my eyes and I surrendered myself completely to it. My conscious thoughts had just begun to wonder how I would somersault, when the flames of my soul engulfed me to self-sacrifice. No more did I imagine any simple somersault, but now God's altar shone before me. The place where the procession was about to pass became hallowed with the flames of holy fire. I felt as if my blood were bubbling while my tears were pouring forth.

By whom and how did this simple act become hallowed for the moment? Why did my entire body shake with fervor and become then also hallowed? It must be my "sparks," my potential spiritual energy, that were now being expressed in reality. The simplest Jew has such sparks. I greatly rejoiced later on to learn that King David also somersaulted before the Holy Ark (*Numbers Rabbah* 4:20, *Etz Yosef*).

### **Rebutting Postmortems**

But maybe I did fool myself. Maybe my act did not become hallowed for the moment. Maybe it was all my own imagination. The truth is that I did not have the spiritual experience I anticipated and the state of being I felt so sure to attain, I did not. But God help me from such self-doubt—this is also a self-destructive maneuver, to question what one feels and sees. How can one deny a real inner experience? I know that every time I sit down to learn, I feel God's Presence around me. It feels as if His Light is filling my mind, my heart, my very innards and even deeper. Was it not being moved by this feeling that I decided to sing *Adon Olam*? I was sure my ego would dissolve, my very being would melt, and I would become filled instead with God's Presence. The entire world would then be for me just a spark of God, shining from His brilliance.

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Yes, I did not attain what I felt sure I would. I guess I do not yet know myself. I may feel that I am aware of my lowly level, but I must be still ego-driven: I expected more than my capability. Nevertheless, what I did experience was real, because even the self-contrived service of the simplest Jew becomes hallowed for the moment.