

DAILY CHESBON HANEFESH #19

TOOL #10

Spend some time thinking about the reality that Hashem observes you outside and inside equally. He recalls everything you do and think, good or bad, and we should make an effort to make improvements in both areas.

Use the analogy of voyeuristic television, where every activity that you do is being watched. How would you act if you knew that there were hidden cameras in every room of your house, and there were people watching on the other end? Do you think Truman would have acted differently if he knew that millions of people around the world were watching his star performance on “The Truman Show”? Would he do things that he really was not proud of that would sicken those viewers who were watching? How about if among the people who were watching was someone who did him exceptional favours? How about if he knew that it was his employer watching him as he was calling in sick from a tropical island feigning an illness? All the more so, how we should be humbled knowing that Hashem is always watching, and we should refrain from rebelling against Him, and hurry to serve him, as well as win His favour and love instead!

Another analogy. You have been invited to a very posh and fancy occasion, where many VIP’s will be in attendance. What are you going to wear? How much time will you spend selecting your outfit? You know how every one there will be judging you by your appearance. Will you attend with that wrinkled suit and shirt of yours or take it to the cleaners? How often do you get upset with your spouse on a late Friday afternoon when you realize that he/she forgot to pick up your cleaning, and you will have to go to Shul with an old suit that does not portray you as a sharp dresser. Would you even go to Shul? If you did, how self-conscious would you be about your appearance. What if you still had time to buy something new right before Shabbos? Would you hop in the car and buy it at the local mall even if it was a bit overpriced? How far would you go to avoid such an embarrassing scene, coming dressed like a “Shlump”? For whom are you making all those efforts for? All that effort just for what people will think? How much more so should we “dress up” our actions (outer garments) which the Almighty will be watching. And his impression really is important!

Let us take it one step farther. Modern medicine enables us to know take very accurate pictures of what is going on inside us. One hundred years ago, no one knew what was going on inside you. Today, almost everything inside you can be discovered. All of it - but only from a physiological perspective. Now let us go into the future 100 years and watch the new version of “The Truman Show.” Little Truman’s brain has been wired to reveal every single thought that he has, and everyone can watch that too. Guess what? You do not have to wait 100 years. Hashem is already scanning your thoughts As you are reading this.

Let us go back to the special occasion analogy, where every One of the VIP’s can see your inner garments of thought, and they are filthy! Those feelings you have about many of those people - many of them you do not like or you have low opinions of - they can all see them. Which cleaners are you going to take these garments to? Can you easily run out to the mall and buy some new garments?

The Chovos Halvovos is reminding us that we must be aware of the reality that the Almighty is watching to see how “dressed up” we are from the outside and the inside. **He constantly observes our outward and inward appearance in an identical fashion.** This statement is not meant to scare you, but to realize that “reality check” is happening every moment of our lives. Living in this constant awareness pays handsome dividends. You no longer are doing anything for foolish external reasons. You do not need to put on a show for people. You do not need to act and lead a double life. Being

“dressed up” all the time will “do away with your sadness, alleviate your fears, open the gates of knowledge of Him for you, reveal the secrets of His wisdom to you, and guide and manage you, rather than leave you to your own devices.” How does the Chovos Halvovos know that? King David composed this very concept in Chapter 23 of Psalms, which says, “G-d is my shepherd, I will not need...”

Today's Activity: Spend the next 5 minutes being the star of your own “Truman Show.” Remember: The cameras are throughout the house, and the people you care about most are watching. After you are finished, spend 5 more minutes starring in the futuristic production where the cameras are also throughout your brain. Do you notice a difference in how you acted before you were “on stage”, and then between the two performances? In which scenario did you feel more in touch with reality and more honestly connected to Hashem? Try to increase the length of your performance by 2 minutes every day. When Shabbos comes, sing “Mizmor LeDovid” (CH. 23) with a little more Kavana this time. Does it apply to you a little bit more now?