

used

By the Grace of G-d
8th of Tishrei, 5715
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mr. [redacted]
Polygon Road
Manchester 8.

Sholom uBrocho:

I have received your letter in which you write that during your learning the Sicho of Shabbos Mevorchim Elul, several points were not clear to you, and you request an explanation.

Generally speaking, it is difficult to elaborate in a letter on this kind of question, but perhaps the following brief remarks will be helpful to you:

(a) You ask, what is meant by the statement in the Sicho that even physically the Jew should by his very nature flee from sin and avoid it even 'b'shoigeig;' just as an animal instinctively avoids danger. Your question concerns the term 'guf' since the body without the soul cannot commit any act, and how can the two be considered separately in this connection.

The explanation should be clear from the illustration used, namely the animal, i.e. a living animal. In other words, the term 'body' was not meant to exclude the 'animal soul;' but the 'Divine soul' and even the 'rational soul' (Nefesh haSichlis).

(b) The above explains your other difficulty regarding reward and punishment, namely, if the Jew instinctively, so to speak, avoids sin and does good, why reward him for it?

In general, with the Jew there is first of all the 'Divine soul' pulling to the good, then there is the 'animal soul' in the strict sense, and both are influenced by the 'rational soul' with the free choice of action to the follow the lead of the Divine soul or to oppose it. It is this free will to do good (uvocharta bachayim) despite the animal soul and Yetzer Hora pulling in the opposite direction which merits the reward. There is no contradiction here with (a) because in an act committed inadvertently (b'shoigeig) the rational soul does not participate, and therefore, in truth, the body and animal soul ought to avoid it because it is harmful.

(c) Your question, based on Rashi in Bobo-kamo (22), presents no difficulty, for it is a matter of common knowledge that an animal under normal conditions flees from danger. In the case of the kid, however, as Rashi points out (in distinction from a grown animal), it is not experienced to recognize danger which is not quite clear and immediate. May G-d help you to learn Nigle and Chassidus with success, and, especially, to translate them into action, in daily life.

With the blessing of Chasimo uGmar Chasimo toiva,

By