

Sparks

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Living G-d's Life

Quite frankly, I don't believe in G-d. The word spelled G-O-D does nothing for me; in fact, it interferes with my true belief.

I am not alone. Jews don't believe in G-d. Indeed, the word "G-d" is not found in the Torah or the rest of the Hebrew Bible. Moses never heard of G-d nor heard from G-d.

The name in the Torah that has been translated as G-d or Lord is *Adonai*. The word *Adonai* means "Master." In Jewish law, whatever a servant owns actually belongs to his master; the servant has no possessions whatsoever. This law also governs our spirituality: G-d is our Master, and in essence we own nothing. For example, it is incorrect to say "my" life because it is really G-d's life. We do not own the life force within us.

This is a difficult concept to accept for many people because it is not a concept—it is a self-evident experience. Consider this: If we are the master and owners of our lives, then we could stop our life and start it whenever we wanted. We could stop our heart beating and then start it again at will. So too, our thoughts are not really our own. If we were the masters of thinking, then we could stop thinking and start whenever we please. But we cannot; we are constantly thinking. The same goes with feeling; we are constantly feeling and cannot make ourselves stop. We can choose what to think, what to feel and what to do with our lives, but the actual act of thinking, feeling and living are G-d's powers that He shares with us. To take our life is to commit suicide. All we can do is humbly and gratefully receive the power of life that G-d, the Master of life, shares with us.

Even our will is not our own. We did not invent will; we are not the source of will. We do not have the choice to have a will. What we do with our will—how we direct it and invest it—is our choice. *What* to choose is our choice, but the fact that we are *able* to choose is not our choice. Even our motor skills are not ours. We did not create the knowledge or the skills required to open our mouths. To open our mouths, we tap into a wisdom that is clearly not ours.

Therefore, when I call to "*Adonai*" and want to feel His presence in my life I try to contemplate the miraculous mechanism of all my facial muscles and the wondrous ability to speak. I focus especially on the 17 muscles that mysteriously work with perfect coordination, shaping my lips to express every letter and syllable. Take a moment right now to simply open and close your mouth. Who taught you how to do that? Who empowers you to do that? Whoever that is, that is who we call *Adonai*. He is our Master Self who benevolently shares Himself—His life, will, wisdom, etc. with us and offers us to be His partners.

Aristotle taught that everything in existence could be defined in terms of substance and form. There is no such thing as form without substance, or substance without form. This

is true of everything we do. Our daily life is a partnership with G-d. G-d provides the raw materials—the substance—and we determine the form. We don't have the choice to want, think and feel—we are always wanting, thinking and feeling—but we can choose what we are going to want, think and feel. We didn't choose to be born, but we can choose what to make of our lives. And our goal according to Judaism is to take the powers G-d shares with us and turn them into praise.

What is praise -- *tehilla*? Rabbi S. R. Hirsh says that the word *hallel* means to reflect. In other words, to praise G-d means to become a living manifestation of His truth and reflect His greatness. Created in the image of G-d we are meant to mirror His splendor and glory; that His presence reverberate in everything we think, say and do.

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