

Sparks

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Rosh Yeshiva, Orayta*

Is G-d Just a Cosmic Party Pooper? How to Find Our Mission in Life

I recall a cute comic strip depicting Moses coming down from Mt. Sinai with the Ten Commandments written in stone. "I've got good news and bad news," he announces to the Israelites waiting anxiously at the bottom of the mountain. "The good news is that I got Him down to ten." The crowd cheers. "The bad news is that adultery is still in."

It is not uncommon for people to think the commandments spoil the fun of life -- that G-d is really a cosmic party pooper, and that there is a conflict of interest between man and G-d.

People think that serving G-d is demeaning; servitude implies a slave-master relationship. But that is not the real meaning of serving G-d. The opportunity to serve G-d is the greatest gift we could ever imagine. It's empowering. To serve G-d means that we can do something on behalf of G-d. It's an unbelievable honor!

The Talmud teaches that if you come close to fire, you will be warm; that the servant who comes close to the king partakes in royalty.

I've been at the home of some very, very wealthy people. I always find it so interesting that the various workers in the home -- gardeners, caterers, hair dressers, etc. -- live in the mansion with their boss, eat the same food, and enjoy the use of the same facilities like the pool, sauna and jacuzzi during their breaks. The workers in the palace in many ways enjoy the life of royalty. They come the closest and thereby enjoy the most intimate encounters with the king.

Working for G-d is not a diminishing experience. It's the most incredible elevation of status. If I build my business for my sake, to make money for *me*, it is really no big deal. But if I build my business for G-d's sake -- if I look at what I do and I ask myself how can I promote G-d's purpose in this world; how can I bring into the world more love, peace, kindness, justice, wisdom; how can I be an instrument serving to reveal Divine qualities and ideals in the world -- it's an unbelievable opportunity! This is the secret to a profoundly meaningful and fulfilling life.

There's an amazing song by Bob Dylan: "You're gonna have to serve somebody." Everybody's serving somebody. There's nobody in this world that isn't serving somebody else. The question is not -- to serve or not to serve. The question is - *who* to serve?

If my life is dedicated to gaining approval from certain people, then I am always less than they are. But if my life is dedicated to G-d, then the sky's the limit to my self-worth. There is no greater mission waiting for me. There is nothing higher.

All human beings have been given a mission in this world. There is a universal mission that we are all obligated in. However, there is also a unique mission for every nation -- United States, England, China, Israel, etc. And within each nation's mission each citizen has a special, personal mission. Sometimes

you know your mission and sometimes you don't know your mission. But that doesn't mean you're not performing it. All in all, it is important to remember that even if you are not sure what your precise personal mission is -- even if you don't feel like you're fulfilling your mission -- you may in fact be on target. This is one of the most important lessons of the Torah and Kabbalah. Each and every one of us has a Divine purpose and mission on earth.

By now I am sure you are wondering how you can find out what is your calling and mission. The Vilna Gaon, who was one of the greatest sages of the Jewish people in the 18th century, tells us how. He quotes Ecclesiastes -- "In all your ways know G-d and He will straighten your path" -- and explains the difference between a "way" and a "path" like this: A "way" is known to everyone. It's the highway. Everyone knows where the highway is. It's a public thoroughfare. But a "path" is off the beaten track. A path is not public. It is the private and unique way for the individual.

There are certain ways that we serve G-d that are common to us all. These ways are not unique to any of us. They are the highways of life. You can't get anywhere unless you get on those highways. However, once you get on the public highway, suddenly you will see a sign that says, "David -- exit 3 miles left." That is where David turns off to continue his journey to fulfill his mission. Now Jan who was also on the highway sees David get off and feels a little jealous. "Lucky guy! He found his path." But with some patience Jan plods forward until she discovers her path. And sure enough there's a sign for her too. "Jan, 5 miles exit left."

Everyone has a unique path waiting for them to journey upon. To find it we've got to get on the highway. Collectively we have a mission. It's the highway. The collective mission of human beings is to become more and more humane.

Each nation has a mission. One nation may be responsible to lead the advancement of technology in the world. Another perhaps is meant to lead research and development in the field of medicine. Another perhaps is called upon to increase art and music. And yet another may be appointed to head up promoting the moral and ethical progress of the world.

After we have accepted our mission as a member of the human race and our mission as a member of our specific nation, then we will be shown our individual mission. Until that time you should work at becoming a more decent human being and a better citizen of your nation. You get on the public highway when you fulfill G-d's commandments and then G-d will lead to your unique path.

Each and every one of us has a mission in life -- a calling. The thing you have to always remember is "Who" is calling. G-d is calling you to be His agent on earth, and the mission He is asking you to fulfill is not only your mission but G-d's mission.

Unfortunate is the person who thinks he or she doesn't have a mission in life. Nietzsche, the German philosopher famous for saying that G-d is dead, ironically insisted that "unless a person feels that some infinite whole is working through him, his life has no meaning."

That "infinite whole" is G-d and every one of His commandments is an opportunity to experience the profound meaning of service. Our mission in life is our meaning in life.

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