



A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

by Aryeh Friedman



All of us are in this world for a purpose, which we are constantly trying to figure out, knowingly or not. I think that is what brought a lot of the guys to Orayta this year. Every Jew has something unique that only he/she can bring to the Jewish people and to the world. You may think of the entire world's purpose as one room, and each of us is walking into it through a different door. We all want to - and need to - become exactly ourselves, not try to be anything else. Being in Israel, especially in the Old City, has, over time, allowed me to be more and more real with myself; and has helped me get closer to finding that door that is mine. The Rabbis here really seem to get how important it is to give each guy the space to become himself, and it has been awesome watching friends here work out their totally different journeys right next to me.

As we get more in touch with our personal purpose, we might set small goals for ourselves; but it becomes very apparent how the entire journey itself is actually the goal. I have been realizing that becoming more connected and actualizing yourself is not a one year goal, rather a lifelong process. This is intense, but definitely exciting. Even when we begin to get in touch with our purpose, our real self, it doesn't suddenly come easy. I have been frustrated with this many times in the past. There are always the highs —moments when you are inspired and feeling good about where you are at — and the lows. Life is filled with these mountains and valleys, and this much does not change. What we do have the power to change is the way we *perceive* what goes on in our life. In the past, when I would find myself in one of these "valleys", it would feel as if life was a string of disconnected events. It was very easy to get discouraged at that moment, and forget the good times. However, as I become more connected to my entire process, it becomes easier to see how every moment of the journey is really valuable. If we are convinced that we are attempting to realize a worthwhile purpose, our true self, then all of our experiences — even the struggles — become united. If we are confident in the direction we are moving towards, it will be difficult for our setbacks and low times to overtake us. Slowly, all these experiences

become clear within the journey, and each fall could set up an even bigger climb.

When *Hashem* gave us the *Torah* at *Har Sinai*, the *pasuk* says: “And the people stood from afar, and *Moshe* approached the thick cloud where God was.” Rebbe Nachman of Breslav relates this *pasuk* to the process of someone who, after living a life focused on physicality, gets “fired up” and wants to get back in touch with his spiritual self, and follow the ways of *Hashem*. Because of *Hashem’s middah* of *din*, pure justice, such a person’s road back to Him is not made easy and He places obstacles along the way. However, since *Hashem’s* love for the Jewish people is greater than his love for justice, He actually conceals Himself within each obstacle through His attribute of *chesed*, mercy. A “*bar da’al*”, or person of wisdom and understanding, will be able to find the presence of *Hashem* within such an obstacle, whereas someone who is not, will run away from it. Rebbe Nachman explains that the cloud in the *pasuk* is an aspect of darkness, or obstacle. When the Jews at *Har Sinai* would encounter an obstacle, they stood back - “from afar”. However *Moshe*, the ultimate man of wisdom and understanding in Judaism, decides to teach the nation a powerful lesson by going right into the cloud, or the darkness, because he was able to fully see the presence of *Hashem* in every obstacle. Rebbe Nachman further says that since *Hashem* is hidden within each obstacle, it is specifically through finding Him in those rough times that we get closer to Him.

In reality, there is no such thing as obstacle in this world, and each apparent difficulty should be appreciated as a means for further growth.