

## **Developing a Personal Relationship with G-d, and Bringing Him into Daily Life**

by Rabbi Dr. Nachum Amsel

***This essay is reprinted from the book, “The Encyclopedia of Jewish Values” published by Urim, or the upcoming books, “The Encyclopedia of Jewish Values: Man to Man” or “The Encyclopedia of Jewish Values: Man to G-d” to be published in the future. This essay is not intended as a source of practical halachic (legal) rulings. For matters of halachah, please consult a qualified posek (rabbi).***

In the distant past, it was possible to have a direct and personal relationship with G-d. That did not include everyone of course, but for many people. Moses spoke to G-d and G-d spoke to Moses from between the Cherubim.<sup>1</sup> Many prophets had a regular dialogue with the Almighty, and G-d could disseminate His specific words to the people through each prophet. Most prophets had to wait until G-d communicated with them, but Moses could even summon G-d to speak to Him when he felt it was necessary.<sup>2</sup> But, alas, the age of prophecy directly from G-d has passed,<sup>3</sup> and G-d does not communicate directly to anyone today. Or does He? Is it possible for an average person to have an ongoing relationship with G-d today? Although all religious people speak to G-d through prayer, does G-d ever answer them directly or speak to those who pray? How can the average Jew, then, develop a personal relationship with G-d today? Is it even possible? Our Rabbis and traditional sources give us specific guidelines how to do this seemingly impossible task.

For the Jew, it is particularly difficult to communicate with G-d because Judaism believes in a G-d who has no physical attributes, and praying to a G-d with any physical representation is forbidden.<sup>4</sup> (One Christian who studied Torah and was considering converting to Judaism told this author that the main obstacle to his conversion was the inability in Judaism to have a three-dimensional representation before him to pray). In fact, G-d told us in the Torah that it is impossible to actually see Him and live afterwards.<sup>5</sup> Even though Jews can and should pray to G-d daily, and although Judaism has a mechanism for each person to be able pour out his or her feelings and requests of G-d in any manner and language one desires,<sup>6</sup> it is still most difficult to develop a personal relationship to G-d in Judaism. In fact, statistics from 2012 seem to prove this. In a survey reported in *Jewish Week* (April 29, 2012), only 25% of Jews said they believed in a personal G-d, while for Catholics, it was 60% and for Protestants it was 72%. How, then, can Jews develop a daily, ongoing, meaningful relationship with G-d?

### **G-D DOES COMMUNICATE TO US TODAY?**

The solution to our problem begins with the one time that G-d actually did communicate to every Jew alive at the time, at Mount Sinai, where each Jew heard the “voice” of G-d giving the Ten Commandments. Judaism is the only major religion that claims that G-d ever spoke to an entire nation. In a verse that describes that one time Revelation at Mount Sinai, the Torah says<sup>7</sup> that G-d’s

---

<sup>1</sup> Exodus 25:22

<sup>2</sup> Deuteronomy 34:10 and Rashi commentary

<sup>3</sup> Sanhedrin 11a

<sup>4</sup> Deuteronomy 4:15-18

<sup>5</sup> Exodus 33:20

<sup>6</sup> Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 101:4, 219:1

<sup>7</sup> Deuteronomy 5:19

voice was great/powerful and did not stop. Rashi<sup>8</sup> explains that the “voice” or communication by G-d at Sinai has never ceased since that moment, and G-d continues to communicate with all Jews and all people every day until today. G-d’s message has never ended and has never diminished. And that is the reason when we recite the blessing before reading the Torah we say the words, “Blessed are You our Lord who gives the Torah,”<sup>9</sup> not in the past tense, but in the present tense. G-d continues to communicate with us daily. But how and in what form?

There are those that explain that G-d’s communication is through the words of the Torah itself (and some believe, by extension, the Oral Law as well). The Torah can and should be understood by each person on a different level. It has so many layers that it continues to send us messages and ideas for daily living, if one looks and studies it deeply enough.<sup>10</sup> The answers Jews seek and the ongoing relationship with G-d is developed through intense Torah study, for each person on his or her level.

### **G-D’S DAILY MESSAGES THROUGH EVENTS IN OUR LIVES**

Another explanation of G-d’s non-stop “voice” or messages that began at Sinai involves the events that occur daily in our lives. Jews should interpret what happens to them, for good or bad, as messages that G-d is sending them. For example, it says in the Torah<sup>11</sup> that Jews are rewarded for our moral behavior and mitzvah (commandment) observance by G-d maintaining one’s good health. The implication is that if Jews sin, they will experience sickness as a result. Therefore, one way G-d seems to “communicate” with Jews is by signaling to them that their moral behavior is lacking if they become ill. This is not a mere inference from the verse. Rabbi Yehuda HaChasid says this explicitly.<sup>12</sup> If people get sick, they should not attribute the sickness to bad food or drink or any reason other than their moral behavior.

Thus, many events in life that occur are messages from G-d. When people behave properly, G-d signals them on a daily basis by rewarding them with good results, and when they behave badly and transgress, G-d brings us unpleasant consequences. To believe otherwise is contrary to a specific admonition in the Torah. The Torah<sup>13</sup> warns Jews not to treat events in their lives as if they occurred by happenstance (*Keri*), and that those who continue to believe that events “just happen” and are not messages from G-d, will be punished seven-fold from the original punishment. One commentary<sup>14</sup> explains that while some rewards are due to moral behavior, G-d sometimes brings to people pleasant events, even though they do not deserve them. But regarding negative experiences in life, G-d is clearly communicating that they have acted improperly, immorally and have sinned. Failure to recognize this signal from G-d is a Torah violation. Therefore, G-d does communicate with Jews through events that occur in their lives. The problem is that it is not always clear which events are connected to which specific actions that are performed, whether positive or negative. How can Jews properly interpret the specific events in their lives to know what G-d is communicating?

---

<sup>8</sup> Rashi commentary on Deuteronomy 5:19

<sup>9</sup> Blessing recited before the Torah reading

<sup>10</sup> Ktav Vekabalah commentary on Deuteronomy 5:19

<sup>11</sup> Exodus 15:26

<sup>12</sup> Sefer Chasidim 791

<sup>13</sup> Leviticus 26:21, 28

<sup>14</sup> Rabbeinu Bechaye commentary on Leviticus 26:21

### **THE RIGHT SPIRITUAL GLASSES OR TRANSMITTER TO SEE G-D DAILY**

It seems that Judaism aims for a much more intimate and ongoing relationship between each human being and G-d than the general ideas discussed above. We know that G-d cares about each Jew and knows his or her innermost thoughts and feelings.<sup>15</sup> G-d wishes for Jews to serve Him with all their hearts, all their thoughts and all their souls.<sup>16</sup> But this relationship is supposed to be a two-way street. The acronym for the month of Elul, the month of preparation before Rosh Hashana, the first day of repentance, is the verse “I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine.”<sup>17</sup> This verse represents the relationship of the Jewish people and G-d, indicating that G-d desires a relationship with each Jew, that of a “loved one,” not only the relationship of King to subject, or father to son, frequently cited in Jewish prayer.<sup>18</sup>

There are many texts within the prayers that demonstrate that the relationship Jews ought to have with G-d is that of a friend, an intimate, not only a more formal relationship of a king. For example, when speaking to a king, an officer in the army or even a Jewish teacher, it is proper to address the authority in the third person, indicating a relationship of distance and respect.<sup>19</sup> And yet, in every blessing Jews utter and in numerous prayers<sup>20</sup> when addressing G-d, the King of Kings, Jews speak to Him in the second person, using the word “*Ata-You*,” the equivalent of the French familiar “*tu*” indicating closeness, and not “*vous*”, the formal “*you*.” Thus, it is clear that the intended relationship between each person and G-d is that of “friends” and “intimates,” who know each other’s secrets and the desires in their hearts. But how does a person achieve such a relationship with the Creator of the universe – a G-d who cannot be seen – to become a friend and communicate on a regular basis?

To solve this problem, we have to remember the story of the man who went to the psychiatrist to complain bitterly that everything he sees in the world is only “pea soup.” He wants to the doctor to fix his problem. People appear as pea soup, trees look like pea soup as do houses and everything else. He begs the doctor to return him to his former “normal” life. The doctor looks at the man, removes the man’s glasses, and promptly wipes off the pea soup stain from the lenses. It is clear that if we have pea soup on our glasses, everything in the world will appear as a form of pea soup. When it comes to G-d, the Almighty wants people to put something on their spiritual lenses that will influence how they see the world. That is why G-d commands Jews to put “Judaism” on their hearts.<sup>21</sup> If Jews put G-d upon their hearts, the place of spiritual glasses, then everything they see and feel, like the pea soup on the glasses, will have an element of G-d in it.

In a similar manner, Jews need to develop the ability of not only “seeing” spiritually but also “hearing” spiritually. For thousands of years, many radio waves were travelling throughout the galaxy and in the air all around human beings. No one heard or saw these radio waves until the first radio transmitter was invented. Then, what was previously not heard could be heard. Today, through these waves, people send out all kinds of messages: they sing songs, broadcast news, speak of sports, etc. All these same unseen radio waves are still not perceived nor heard in the air around us unless a person purchases a transmitter, a machine that sends out these waves and makes them

---

<sup>15</sup> Psalms 44:22

<sup>16</sup> I Chronicles 28:9

<sup>17</sup> Song of Songs 6:3

<sup>18</sup> Morning prayers of “*Baruch She-amar*” and “*Ahava Rabbah*” for example

<sup>19</sup> Berachot 27b, Maimonides, Hilchot Talmud Torah 5:5, Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 242:16

<sup>20</sup> Every blessing and numerous references in the morning prayer service

<sup>21</sup> Deuteronomy 6:6

audible. We call this transmitter the common “radio.” When the machine is turned on to the correct frequency with the proper volume, the sounds being transmitted are heard loud and clear. G-d has informed us that He has been sending spiritual sounds that He began transmitting since Mount Sinai, without stop. But until each of us acquires the spiritual transmitter to hear G-d’s messages and G-d’s “voice,” like the person without the radio, nothing will be understood or heard. How does a person acquire that spiritual transmitter and put G-d upon his or her heart?

One way to do this is quite simple, yet, at the same time, quite difficult. A person must train himself or herself to become sensitive to events in one’s life and read the messages being sent daily by G-d to us. By looking at one’s life through the spiritual lenses or spiritual transmitter, many seemingly meaningless or inconsequential events all of a sudden take on meaning and can be read as a personal message. King Solomon already told Jews that they can see, hear and understand G-d in every aspect of this world<sup>22</sup> if they only pay spiritual attention. One simple but profound example is cited by Rabbi Tzadok HaKohen.<sup>23</sup> He says the messages are all around us, and shows the example of Reb Zusha, who had embedded in his heart the spiritual transmitter and spiritual glasses to pick up on these messages. One day, Reb Zusha passed by a non-Jewish wagon driver who was stuck in the mud, unable to move his wagon. The man called out to Reb Zusha for help, but Reb Zusha replied that he was not able to help the man. The wagon driver then said “You are certainly able, but you are not willing to help me.” Hearing these simple words from the non-Jewish wagon driver, Reb Zusha realized that this was a message from G-d about his own life and his observance of Judaism. These words helped Rabbi Zusha realize that when he felt like he could not do something or succeed in a mitzvah, the truth is “I am able to do it, but not willing.” Reb Zusha understood that if he increased his desire, he would accomplish so much more, and he learned this profound message from a non-Jewish wagon driver who may not have even believed in G-d. But Zusha’s “antennae” were up and he recognized these words as a message from G-d.

#### **HOW CAN WE SEE THE DAILY MESSAGES FROM G-D AND LEARN FROM THEM?**

Rabbi Nachman of Breslov writes<sup>24</sup> that if Jews spend the time and effort to look for these daily hints and messages from G-d, then they will see them and understand what G-d is trying to communicate to them. This will enable them to connect between events that occur in their daily lives and to understand what they are doing right and what they are doing wrong. Every day, people face many situations that are both spiritual tests by G-d as well as messages that G-d is communicating to them. By turning on their spiritual transmitters to the right frequency, they will hear the messages and understand. We will find the answers or “hints” as Rav Nachman calls them.

But how do people know for sure that G-d is sending them a specific message? One way, Rabbi Nachman of Breslov says,<sup>25</sup> is through the concept of equivalency, by seeing a direct connection between their behavior and something that occurs in their lives, especially if these events happen within a short time of each other. How does this law of equivalency (*midah kinaged midah*) work? For example, if we give exactly \$8 of Tzedaka (charity) to someone one day, and the next day we find under our bed exactly \$8, that is a message from G-d that we did the right thing. That is the law of equivalency at work. But this happens also when people do something immoral. For example, if they make fun of the way a person walks and then a few minutes later, he or she

---

<sup>22</sup> Proverbs 3:6

<sup>23</sup> Pri Tzaddik Naso 13

<sup>24</sup> Likutei Maharan 54:2, Likutei Eitzot, Derech Zikaron

<sup>25</sup> Likutei Maharan 187

stubs his or her toe, causing them to walk (for a few hours) in an unusual manner, G-d is sending them the message that they were punished (slightly) for making fun of that person's walk. The message may be sent, but only if people are sensitized to it can they read the message properly. This concept of equivalency is not only an idea of Rabbi Nachman. The Talmud<sup>26</sup> informs us that G-d works in this manner, measure for measure. In fact, the Midrash says<sup>27</sup> while most other avenues of communication between G-d and humankind were eliminated, this aspect of how the world works continues unabated.

Of course, if a person is not attuned to the message, it will be sent for naught. There are many people, even religious people, who ignore G-d's messages, even when staring them in the face. There are two stories which demonstrate this. A religious man caught in a flood prayed to G-d for help. While he was praying, a police officer came to the door and offered to evacuate him, but the man said, "No thanks, Officer, I am religious. I'll stay here, and G-d will deliver me." Then, as the floods got higher, a person in a rowboat came by as the waters were rising, and the man said, "No thanks. I am religious. I'll stay here; G-d will deliver me." The waters continued to rise and the man had to climb onto his roof. At last, a helicopter came with a ladder and the pilot told him to climb aboard. He again refused, continued to pray to G-d and said, "I am religious. I'll stay here, and G-d will deliver me." Finally the waters covered him and he drowned. After he got to Heaven he told G-d how disappointed he was that G-d didn't answer his prayers. G-d said, "What do you mean I didn't answer? I sent a police officer, a rowboat and a helicopter; what else did you want?" This man could not recognize these obvious and direct messages from G-d.

A second story involves a wealthy Jewish businessman who was late for an important meeting in Manhattan. Every parking garage is full and all the parking spots on the street are taken. If he misses the meeting, he stands to lose a fortune. Finally, he turns to G-d and says, "G-d, if you can get me a parking space in the next two minutes, I will pray in synagogue every day, give a lot to charity and become a much more moral person." Within 20 seconds, a parking space opens up, and the man promptly pulls in. Then he turns to G-d and says "G-d, never mind. I found a parking space all by myself." Certain people refuse to see or hear the messages.

#### **NOT ALL AGREE WITH THIS ANALYSIS OF COMMUNICATION BY G-D**

The idea of actively looking for daily hints and communication from G-d is alluded to in many sources and advocated by Rabbi Nachman, as seen above. But not all Rabbis agree with this approach. While all admit that G-d does communicate with people through the Torah and through events in their lives, the fact that Jews should be able to clearly see daily signals from the Almighty is a bit simplistic and even possibly dangerous.

If it were that easy for us to discern what G-d is telling us each day, for good and for bad, then the key element of free will would be compromised. If we could ascertain and get direct feedback from G-d, then the element of performing acts simply because they are commanded to us would be lessened. And the maintaining of absolute free will is crucial to the entire system of our purpose in the world and the concept of reward and punishment.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> Sanhedrin 90a

<sup>27</sup> Midrash Beraishit Rabbah 9:11

<sup>28</sup> Maimonides, Hilchot Teshuva 5:1

Another problem with the system of easily ascertaining each day what G-d is communicating to people is that the Talmud seems to say that it is not so simple. Bilaam is castigated for thinking that he could understand G-d, even though he possessed various powers in comprehending the Almighty that other men and prophets did not.<sup>29</sup> In the end, continues the Talmud, G-d put a donkey in Bilaam's path that Bilaam could not fathom, as if saying to Bilaam, "You think you can hear and understand G-d? A simple donkey understands G-d and His intentions better than you." Another Talmudic passage<sup>30</sup> shows us the danger of interpreting events through G-d's messages. In explaining why it is forbidden to remind someone of his evil past, the Talmud uses the example of Iyov-Job and his friends. In addition to the sin of making a person unnecessarily feel bad (*onaat devarim*), the example the Talmud chose demonstrates our problem. Iyov's friends were "sure" that all the suffering that Iyov experienced was a result of his sins. G-d was clearly communicating this. And they were totally wrong in their interpretation of events, as Iyov indeed was righteous, and, thus, they erred in their interpreting this "message" from G-d. Thus, like Iyov's friends, individuals cannot be totally sure of the daily messages G-d is sending us. We are permitted and even encouraged to look at our own behavior if we are suffering (see above, Berachot 5a) because even if we err in our assessment, we are still improving our moral behavior. However, human beings are not able to understand all of G-d's messages, and even Rabbi Nachman himself writes that we cannot truly understand all of G-d's messages to us.

Finally, we have the story of the great Rabbi Judah the Prince, who when seeing a small calf running from the shochet-slaughterer, remarked, "Go, little one, for this is your purpose in life."<sup>31</sup> From that small insensitivity to that calf and animals in general, the Talmud continues and tells us that Rabbi Judah suffered great stomach pains and kidney stones for 13 years, until he made a statement of compassion about a weasel that was being swept away, and only then those terrible pains subsided. If we were able to understand G-d's daily messages, would not the great Rabbi Judah also be able to understand that G-d was punishing him for his insensitive comment about the calf, and then he could have avoided thirteen years of needless pain with an earlier demonstration of kindness to animals. Therefore, it is very difficult to correctly read each message G-d is sending. The messages are indeed there. But our spiritual transmitters and glasses may not be set at the right frequency or the right prescription to catch each and every message.

#### **DOES G-D DO PERSONAL MIRACLES FOR US?**

If people seek out G-d, and see each moral decision as a test, can they expect G-d to help them out? Like the businessman who needed a parking space in Manhattan, can individuals not only ask but expect that G-d will help them out when they really need it? The answer is that G-d indeed performs miracles for individuals, even today. These are not necessarily the supernatural miracles of Biblical proportions, but G-d does help people out, sometimes, in their hour of need.

Rabi Nachman of Breslov clearly says<sup>32</sup> that by withstanding a moral test and if Jews have enough trust in G-d, He sometimes will perform miracles for each of us i.e., come to save us just when we need it. A medieval commentary writes<sup>33</sup> that G-d performs many miracles for each person every day (!), but that the miracles are hidden and usually unknown to the person. Only the "great

---

<sup>29</sup> Berachot 7a

<sup>30</sup> Bava Metzia 58b

<sup>31</sup> Bava Metzia 85a

<sup>32</sup> Sefer Middot of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, Yeshua 16-17

<sup>33</sup> Rabbeinu Bechaye on Exodus 30:12

ones” are worthy to actually see and feel the miracles. But Jews can be assured that G-d is helping them, secretly, with miracles on a daily basis. The Talmud<sup>34</sup> also speaks about private miracles, and debates whether a blessing should be recited after experiencing a private miracle. What specifically is a private miracle? That Talmudic passage gives the example of a person who is attacked by a lion but manages to survive. It does not say that the person emerges completely uninjured (which would be supernatural), but survives. Thus, a miracle would be defined as a situation where a person is in deep trouble and logically things should go really badly for him or her. The person prays to G-d, relies on G-d and then comes through the situation relatively unscathed. That is indeed a private miracle today. The Code of Jewish Law brings this concept<sup>35</sup> as part of normative Jewish law, that G-d indeed performs open miracles today for certain individuals, and the person and his or her family should acknowledge that miracle each and every time the family returns to that specific place where the miracle occurred by reciting a blessing. And if many miracles were performed for a person in many places, then all the miracles should be remembered each time a person comes to even one place that a private miracle occurred. Therefore, the idea that miracles can occur today, i.e. G-d helps people out of a difficult situation, precisely when we need it and ask for it, is a phenomenon that Jews not only believe in, but are obligated to bless G-d afterwards.

#### **OTHER WAYS TO DEVELOP A CLOSE, DAILY, PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH G-D**

There is a famous story about the Kotzker Rebbe who was asked, “Where can G-d be found?” he replies “Wherever you let Him in.” It is clear that people must take the first step and try to let G-d into their hearts. But one not need be a Chassidic Rebbe to develop this close relationship to G-d. A personage of no less stature than the non-Chassidic Rabbi Moses Sofer from Pressburg writes about this issue.

Rabbi Sofer<sup>36</sup> speaks about King David, who went to a foreign land and feigned mental illness (craziness) in order not to be identified, and to escape from the soldiers of King Saul who were trying to kill him. Later on, King David writes about this ordeal in the Psalms.<sup>37</sup> Rabbi Sofer says that in these verses King David was really asking himself why G-d put him in a situation where he had to act crazy. Perhaps he was actually doing something crazy during his day-to-day life, and this was G-d’s “punishment” for his actions. What did he do that could have been considered crazy? King David writes (in the verse) that every day he praised G-d with his mouth. But that was the truly crazy act, because David only did lip-service, but did not sincerely pray to G-d with his entire soul. In other words, King David was criticizing himself for simply going through the motions without feeling anything in his heart. Jews who do this, says Rabbi Sofer, are indeed “crazy” because they have not developed that close relationship with G-d. The verse continues and says that only when King David praised G-d with his entire soul (בד' תתהלל נפשי), only then was he not acting crazy. Thus, Rabbi Sofer is telling all Jews to imitate King David after he realized his “craziness.” They should not simply go through the motions of praying and doing commandments, without feeling anything. Feelings must accompany every action. Only then can the normal and intended relationship with G-d commence.

Maimonides, in an unbelievable statement written more than 500 years before Rabbi Sofer’s comments, gives us a suggestion about how to attain that closeness to G-d that we all seek.

---

<sup>34</sup> Berachot 54a

<sup>35</sup> Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 218:4-5

<sup>36</sup> Derashot Chatam Sofer for Shabbat Shuva

<sup>37</sup> Psalms 34:1-2

On the Mishna that states that G-d wanted to purify the Jewish people and therefore gave them many more commandments, Maimonides writes<sup>38</sup> that if a person performs only one commandment but does it properly, with love and with the right intention, then that person will receive his or her share in the World to Come. Not for 613 commandments – just one commandment. The “catch” is that this one mitzvah has to be performed perfectly. Thus, it has been suggested that if each Jew (in addition to regular observance of all the commandments) takes upon himself or herself one particular mitzvah-commandment, and perfects its observance day after day, with love and with all the right intentions – in other words, one fulfills every aspect of that commandment – then that person will not only achieve the World to Come, but also draw very close to G-d on a daily basis, and feels that ongoing relationship.

Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin, the chief disciple of the Vilna Gaon, has another formula for developing the close, personal relationship with G-d. He says that before one learns Torah or before performing any mitzvah-commandment, a person should simply stop and just think. He or she should think about what he or she is about to do, about his or her relationship with G-d and how to purify his or her thoughts and actions. This will help connect the Torah learning or any commandment to the desired relationship with G-d, and connect the person to G-d in a way that is not normally experienced. And even in the middle of the Torah learning, or the middle of the mitzvah, it is perfectly legitimate to stop for a few moments and think and reconnect to G-d. Then Rabbi Chaim asks if this isn't stealing time away from the commandment, from Torah learning? He answers that this is compared to the person who mixes in “humton” into the wheat which he sells. What is *humton*? It is a sandy soil with salt in it that is mixed into the wheat to serve as a preservative. The Talmud debates whether or not this is a false sale,<sup>39</sup> and concludes that the sale of a *kor* of wheat with one *kab* of *humton* is considered a legitimate sale of a *kor* of wheat. Thus, even though the buyer does not receive a complete *kor* (a *kab* is 1/180<sup>th</sup> of a *kor*), it is considered a valid sale nonetheless, since the “missing” *kab* is used to preserve the wheat. The Talmud compares fear of G-d to this *humton*. And Rabbi Chaim says that these few minutes of thought not only do not “steal” time from the mitzvah or Torah learning, but preserve it and make it better, like the *humton*.

Thus, there are many suggestions or specific ways to help develop a personal, ongoing relationship with G-d. Each person has to choose which ideas and actions suit his or her personality and disposition. Still, the daily connection to G-d requires work, perseverance and the ups and downs of any relationship in life. But, we can be assured that if we make the effort and reach out to G-d, then He, in turn, will reach out to us.

---

*Rabbi Dr. Nachum Amsel currently works with Rabbi Berel Wein and the Destiny Foundation as the Director of Education, whose mission is “to bring Jewish history to life in an exciting, entertaining and interactive way.” Rabbi Amsel has also served as a teacher, a school principal, and an adjunct professor. He has also taught over 2000 educators how to teach more effectively. Rabbi Amsel has worked in all areas of formal and informal Jewish education and has developed numerous curricula including a methodology how to teach Jewish Values using mass media. Recently, he founded the STARS Program (Student Torah Alliance for Russian Speakers), where more than 3000 students in 12 Russian speaking countries learn about their Jewish heritage for five hours weekly. Rabbi Amsel previously served as the Educational Director of Hillel in the*

---

<sup>38</sup> Mishna, Makkot 3:16 and commentary of Maimonides on the Mishna

<sup>39</sup> Shabbat 31a



*Former Soviet Union. He lives in Jerusalem with his wife and has four children and four grandchildren.*