

The RYS Daily 6/10/07 Mussar Doctrine IX

From The Mussar Movement, Volume 1, Part 2, page 21 - 22.

This situation obtains in worldly affairs as well. A person may be fully aware of the harmful nature of certain habits, yet does not abandon them. "Because he is weak-willed, the foolish and especially the sick person, loves to snatch and eat whatever is pleasing to his palate. He forgets that it will cause him malignant disease."² A drunkard or an excessive smoker knows very well that he is shortening his life, yet he cannot give up his drink or his cigarettes. Now if this applies to the material world of the senses, how much more is it true of matters pertaining to the fear of G-d, which are not sense-experiences. With all man's conviction and realization, he simply does not possess the strength to withstand the onslaught of his desires and lusts.

R. Israel explained this phenomenon in conformity with modern philosophical terms later discovered and formulated by psychologists in the last century. The human personality is composed of "clear and luminous forces" and "dull (obscure) forces", or to use modern scientific terminology, man possesses conscious and sub-conscious drives. His essential nature is subconscious, since this element is rooted in his inner self, in the innermost recesses of his personality, while the conscious is superficial and external. All man's desires and bodily cravings are "dull", subconscious, and react on his personality and control him. These drives are not sensed; they seem to lie dormant — but when aroused, they reveal themselves and break out.

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