

Last month, Rabbi Pont and I participated in a conference about Jewish spirituality led by Rabbi Jonathan Slater from Institute for Jewish Spirituality.

One of the core concepts we discussed was the idea of spirituality in general. It's a word that is frequently thrown around in our society, but what is it really? What we learned is that spirituality is not about right or wrong, spirituality is not about God or heaven — spirituality is about exploring the ultimate limits of who you are. It's about experiencing the full spectrum of emotion and connection that make up what it means to be human.

This simple but elegant teaching spoke to me. If there is a possibility that every moment of our lives -- regardless of the situations we find ourselves in -- we could feel fulfilled and full of ecstasy, wouldn't we want it? If our answer to that question is yes, then that means we are seeking spirituality.

In fact, I believe that every single person on this planet has a desire to be spiritual. Everybody is striving for happiness; everybody is striving to be free. The vast majority of people are seeking spirituality unconsciously. But I know and believe that it is better to seek it consciously, using whatever methods work best for you. What is important to remember when seeking is that there is no one way to be spiritual -- every person must find what works for them. Spirituality is not one size fits all!

Your experience is within you and is yours alone. Whether you pray and try to connect in traditional Jewish ways, seek meaning in nature, meditation, or something else entirely, it is all up to you. Personally, to me it is clear that prayer is just as important to us and our mental well-being as it is to God. Prayer can be a way to disconnect from the frantic pace of the world we live in, pause, breathe, and remember that there is a higher power. Even non-believers can find value in that!

I'm curious to know what you think; How should we practice spirituality? Should we all practice it the same way? What does it even mean? Do you ever stop and think about it? How can we connect with God spiritually? How do we do so in a Jewish way? Please share your thoughts with me!

Let us all strive to increase our Jewish spirituality and connect to God in our daily lives.

Shabbat Shalom and greetings from Israel  
Rabbi Koas