

“WHAT IS YOUR SPIRITUAL TEMPERAMENT?”

A half century ago, a book by a Rabbi sold many millions of copies: *Peace of Mind* by Joshua Loth Liebman. In it Rabbi Liebman argued that the greatest good was to achieve Peace of Mind.

Yet there are some powerful voices that insist that lack of tranquility in this world is a sign of spiritual health. The great medieval philosopher, Saadiah Gaon, writes: “I know none of God’s creatures who feel entirely safe and secure in this world, even when they have reached the highest position of rulership. This insecurity is not natural to the soul; rather it is due to an instinctive sense that there is a dwelling greater in all ways than this world. That is why we yearn.” In other words, insecurity in this world is part of the yearning for another, greater world.

The Maggid of Dubno comments on the biblical term “strangers and residents” that we should feel a bit like strangers in this world, that the spiritual restlessness we feel is what leads us to grow, to improve, to move forward.

There is a serenity camp, and a restlessness camp. Are you tranquil, or happily dissatisfied?