

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Friday, August 30, 2013

24 Elul belongs to 5773 - please read before Shabbos and resolve to be included in the new creation 5774

Today is the 24th of Elul. Tonight is the 25th of elul, the first day of creation. Tonight belongs to a totally different time zone, that of a new creation, 5774. Every year Hashem re-creates the entire universe. It is its own time zone. What was decreed last year will have to be renewed on 1Tishrei, Rosh Hashana, the day that Adam was created.

Today let us reflect on what world we want because Hashem asks us for our input.

Human nature, just like all of nature, has the basic 103 atomical elements we find on the periodic chart. Those elements fall into four categories, solid liquid, gas and radioactive/unstable.

We are facing as we go into Shabbos not only the background threat of nuclear weapons but a more immediate threat of chemical weapons. Obviously this is the category of unstable/radioactive which is fire. To put out fire, we need water, which is reaching inwards to the source of all vitality, Hashem's love for us.

Inside of us is a wellspring beyond our imagination of love for Hashem even if we don't experience it. That wellspring is our very own tzelem elokim. We have a soul made in the image of Hashem that is in constant connection to Hashem and experiencing that delight at every moment. It is clothed in the garment of our body and the free will that Hashem gives to us with which to choose.

Have we ever had a moment of experiencing the pleasure of connection to Hashem through our higher soul? If we can recall it, is it fair to say that it is an otherworldly pleasure, not a pleasure of the senses or even of the ego. Whether or not we have experienced it, we know from Torah that we are designed to experience this pleasure. Through our free will, when we are mesiras nefesh for Hashem, doing mitzvahs, our soul delights in a pleasure. We will feel it with clarity in the world to come, after we experience the punishments for our aveiras that we are also numb to in this world. But it is true that we can derive pleasure from this connection in this world. That is a truth and with that truth, we can strengthen our emunah. And with emunah strengthened with that truth, we have the understanding we need to do battle with the voice of doubt, with the complaints against Hashem inherent in having a body in time and space, and we can become rock solid in bringing middos harachamim into time and space.

When we have an emotional experience of pleasure that Hashem grants us as part of the effort to do mitzvahs and be mesiras nefesh for His will, it is emes in our lives that we have integrated understanding of. That emes, that experiential reality, then folds into our emunah so that when we are at our next challenging moment, we have in our minds that truth to draw on to help us do battle with the logical arguments of the Yetzer Hara that tries to push us back into being just bodies in time and space.

With emotional experiential understanding that Hashem loves us, we create a new year that will be stable. We can be committed to doing battle with the inner forces of destruction and taking. We can ask Hashem to please help us succeed in overcoming the logical lies of the yetzer hara because we have personal experiential pleasurable memory of what is actually true.

If we do not yet have that personal experiential pleasurable memory of what is actually true, then perhaps we can tell Hashem that for 5774 we wish to rectify that. We have many opportunities a day to negate our will for His, many opportunities for us to ask Hashem to lead us in the path we wish to go, which is to bring His middos harachamim into time and space. Tomorrow night we begin selichos.

Today is still before the creation of the world. Let us resolve today, and ask Hashem to make it part of the new creation of 5774, to please lead us to finding a personal experiential pleasure of emes to fold into our emunah so that we can take our service of Hashem to the next level of negating our will for His.

And may we be zocheh to healing, forgiveness, renewal and redemption.