

## Nourishment for the Neshama

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### Being right is dangerous - understanding true power and free will is what matters

Surviving falls into the category of desire. How many of us can live truly with the belief that surviving is up to Hashem? Torah teaches us that we have to do hishtadlus, take responsibility, of course. But the emotional attachment to surviving – is it really a desire and something therefore tying us to the limited, judging analytical mind which is so easily pulled into the temptations displayed before our imaginations by the yetzer hara? And if so, what handle can we put on this in order to properly balance survival instincts and Gdconsciousness?

Before we approach the answer, it is urgent to comprehend that we do not really understand how powerful our tzelem elokim is. In order to get a handle on survival, it must first be understood that there is tremendous power that is loaned to us through the vehicle of our higher soul.

I wish to show you that powerfulness right now. It isn't hard to think of an upsetting situation where your feelings were overwhelming or strong enough that you were conscious of having to hold your tongue or perhaps got the better of you and an error in speech or action took place. Where did the strength of that negatively charged emotion come from? Is that the "real me?"

Rabbi Yaakov Zalman Labinsky ([www.becomingdivine.com](http://www.becomingdivine.com)) explains in his series on the Omer that we don't have ownership papers on any aspect of our personality or body. Everything is given to us, along with free will. However we are 100% responsible for it all!

If I have a strong negatively charged emotion, then that strength is coming from none other than Hashem, as is all power, for there is no other power in all the world. It is coming through the vehicle of the soul He enlivens with me. And I have responsibility for it, to protect it from spiritual damage and do my best to acquire merits, using my strength to elevate my physical being and natural human tendencies.

So, if I am so strong, why do I feel so ineffective? Or, if I am effective, has it been by inflicting damage or pain on someone else, in which case, did I really mean to do that? Is that what I wish to take responsibility for after 120 years?

And, if I am so strong, how do I use this strength in the manner that is most pleasing to Hashem?

Our survival is not in our hands. We have the erroneous illusion that we will be here every day. But the reality is that no one knows. People die suddenly without warning every day. It is an illusion to think that our survival is up to us alone. Obviously.

The handle we can put on avoiding being pulled into the unreality of desires on the basis of our survival instincts in order to properly balance survival instincts and Gdconsciousness is to ask ourselves a simple question. Am I attaching the strength of my soul to being right, or am I attaching the strength of my soul to praying that the matter hand be resolved through the parties yearning to bring Hashem's attributes of mercy into the world?

Let's take a closer look. Perhaps someone is emotionally or financially or verbally assaulting another. Repeatedly, over time, the person on the receiving end is feeling battered, pained, negative, reactive and victimized. The strength of that person's neshama is trapped in a negatively charged emotion, deep within the body. That same strength can be used to elevate the situation, if a person is willing to comprehend that there is no other power operating, that it is not a matter of who is right or who is wrong, but rather an opportunity to exercise the power of the tzelem elokim in calming the reactive body and human instincts. Believe it or not, the very same power that is causing us the grief can be channeled through emunah to sincerely tell Hashem that we know it is from Him for our ultimate growth and development. When we have clarity that there is no other power and that our difficulty will not go away until we draw closer to Hashem through emunah, we begin to empower ourselves in the manner for which the Ramchal tells us we were created – to touch Hashem's perfection and experience the greatest pleasure that there is in so doing, the spiritual pleasure of connection to Hashem and feeling a sense of shelamos.

In order to truly believe that the abusive situation will dissolve, there is one more crucial point to add. The crucial information is that Hashem is re-creating the world at every moment based on our choices! When the strength of our neshamas are hooked into negativity, we are actually strengthening our own challenges. When the strength of our neshamas is committed to emunah and positive imaging, sincerely, no matter what, Hashem may have no more need to create the matter for us. But if the situation continues, then we must know that it is 100% for our absolute good, either for a previous lifetime, for something we are not aware of. Crucial is maintaining 100% emunah and to continue to daven that all matters be resolved by everyone through bringing out the 13 attributes of Hashem's mercy. Every one of us is part of the soul of the Jewish people, and a piece of each of us is contained in each other as a result. Being right is part of an illusion of separateness along with an erroneous belief that we can effect what is just better than Hashem.

Our souls are tremendously powerful. To lock our souls into the limited analytical mind traps our power in the bowels of the animal self and natural instincts. The beauty of being Jewish is that we are taught how to pull down the veil covering over our tzelem elokim in order to permit Hashem's attributes of mercy to shine into this seemingly lit up but truly very dark world – dark because Hashem is concealed. When we pull down the veil and permit our tzelem elokim to attach in emunah to actions and words that reveal Hashem's attributes of mercy, we provide a means of bringing Hashem's light into this world. **THAT IS WHAT WE ARE HERE TO DO.** Nothing else. Success is up to Hashem.

May our efforts be given success by Hashem and at every moment may we choose to either positively magnify His name or choose to just say NO to forming destructive spiritual entities when our tzelem elokim is tempted to attach to negatively charged emotion. We have free will and we are strong. Let us choose well based on gratitude and strong simple emunah.