

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Sunday, May 20, 2012

Chesed Shebe Malchus - Being Servants to Serve only Hashem

We have entered the first day of the week of Malchus – a week of simply being with being servants to serve only Hashem. For six weeks we have been struggling each day to improve a facet of one of the Divine attributes. In this week leading up to Shavuot, we are to experience really being with the pleasures of different facets of kingship – of what it means to be and love serving Hashem alone. If for some reason, the feeling of pleasure does not overwhelm us, it is not too late.

In the tangible world, we work very hard to earn money to pay our mortgage and buy food and necessities and tuitions and everything else. It is quite exhausting. Hashem made a world where if we are hungry, we have to earn the money to buy food and cook it and lift the fork and feed ourselves. If I were in my kitchen and I were hungry and I had all the ingredients but I did not feel like cooking anything I would not resolve my hunger. If there were prepared foods on the table and I am hungry and I do not put food on my plate and lift my fork to eat it, I do not resolve my hunger.

Our souls are hungry. Our souls are starving for connection to Hashem, for the joy and pleasure of giving in this world so that our souls actualize connection with Hashem. But our souls are covered over by our bodies, and our bodies don't necessarily feel that hunger, the hunger of the soul to connect with Hashem. The hunger of spiritual longing is not detectable by the body, the emotions or the limited analytical mind.

Hashem has given us the Torah, the wedding ring between Hashem and the Jewish people, a marriage between the body and the soul. It is incumbent upon us to look at our wedding ring and remember with our limited analytical minds that we are, in fact, not just bodies with emotions related to our desires.

How do we comprehend the pleasure to the body and emotions that is waiting for us to experience when no one can describe the pleasure and the work it takes is enormous?

Perhaps that is the moshel for the hard work it takes to make a living to satisfy the stomach. In order to stay alive, we need food. Look at all we go through, the stress, the distress, the running, the education and more, just to stay alive! Parallel to our physical existence is our spiritual striving.

The arena for our spiritual striving is to conquer the human subconscious. Naturally, all our thoughts, emotions and energy are dedicated to our goals. Is one of our goals to bring out the aspect of the Divine image within us, as the Tomer Devorah teaches us? We are here specifically to fulfill a positive spiritual mission of bringing out certain positive qualities and to fulfill a fixing spiritual mission to repair a certain negative quality by straddling the human side of our emotions with the role modeling of Hashem when faced with a moral situation. The Torah tells us morally what Hashem expects. It can be very high. It can seem completely unrealistic based on human calculations toward goodness. We can choose within human nature to behave in a very goodly way given the behaviors and conduct of those around us. But the challenge to satisfy the hunger of the soul, the challenge to enter into the inner penitence of the person and connect the soul in unity and Gd-consciousness to the Creator of the world, that challenge is a different order of magnitude and requires not just a moment's thought but an entire lifetime of dedication in order to develop our souls toward the potential that is placed by Hashem inside every person.

We are standing in the kitchen with a smorgasbord of food and we don't pick up the fork. Inside every one of us is a place of calmness, of clarity and joy and peace, a place of appreciation for the life we have and the container we are in, the vessel called the body. Without the body, we have no existence, but without the soul's being able to actualize itself, we are but living corpses. There are moments of pleasure that no amount of money can buy, no amount of social connection, intimate relations or any other pleasures of this world. To be able in this world to have a moment of touching something implanted within us by Hashem that is His attribute surrounds us with bath of heavenly bliss. All it takes is to give up who we think we are, suspend it even in the face of logic and reason, and choose instead to take actions that demonstrate love of Hashem alone based on His Torah. Forgive, overlook, cast sins into the sea.

Imagine our negative thoughts like cannonballs of gumdrops, all hard and firm, being thrust at the ones stimulating our upset feelings. How strong are our thoughts! How they pelt – we think they are pelting someone else, but each thought is really creating a destructive spiritual being that then pelts US all day and is completely sustained by our own continuing emotions. WE are causing our own pain. Yet we are gripping it, subconsciously clinging. Isn't it amazing how strongly our emotions grip that negativity, how even if we suspend it for a moment we are attracted back to it magnetically? It seems out of our control.

We just discovered a gold mine! Look at that strength! Imagine if we could take that same magnetic clinging strength and have it bring to us inner peace, calm and joy. Would you like that? Let me provide a visual for what I am suggesting - to bend our negativity into a kli to capture Divine attributes and then shine those forward.

Imagine a piece of aluminum foil and taking those cannonballs of gumdrops and chewing them so they stick flat to the aluminum, and now take another piece of aluminum and put it over, so the sticky gum is sandwiched between the aluminum. Now shape the aluminum foil into a vessel, a cup. The gum provides support and strengthens the vessel!

This is what we need to do in our hearts. Just as the Egyptians put the Jewish babies in the walls instead of bricks, we can re-direct the strength flowing from our negative ideas into a kli in our hearts that with a desire to love Hashem no matter what make our hearts a mikvah for our errors and the errors of others. We can do this because we love Hashem, fear Hashem and wish to emulate Him. And we wish to love and fear and emulate Hashem so that our souls don't starve to death in a room filled with prepared foods.

Hashem is sending us challenges –the prepared foods- continually. May we use the six constant mitzvahs and the knowledge that there is nothing in this world but the simple unity of Hashem to help us return and to pray that we all return and merit redemption.

SHORT PRAYER TO ACCOMPLISH:

Dear Hashem please with this prayer/tzedakah/ tehilim form lovingkind, gentle, positive spiritual beings to lead me to the highest vision that You have for me and may I grip onto loving Hashem, fearing Hashem and emulating Hashem Who is the only Power with my strong subconscious desires instead of subconsciously gripping negativity, falsehoods and any fears other than Yiras Hashem.

BELOW IS A TOOL TO ACCOMPLISH THE ABOVE:

(Concept of the Baal Shem Tov: Submission – breaking what grips us to our bad traits, along with Rav Dessler's terminology, nullification of the lower world due to emunah in Hashem and His goodness)

Thank you Hashem for the flow of thought, emotion, and consciousness to this otherwise inanimate body that houses it, may Your name be praised,

(Concept of the Baal Shem Tov: Separation – the use of daas to discern - along with Rav Dessler's terminology, total just and good Divine Providence and control of nature)

and for the ability to perceive, experience and learn, for the gift of free willed choice, and for the capacity to discern and integrate.

(Deeper with the work of breaking the hold that our attachment to negativity has on us by applying behira, free willed choice – uses Rabbi Shapira's method to access unlimited free will)

Please flow through me unlimited will power to direct the recipe of personality, circumstance and emotional flow You send through my heart each day so that through the use of conscious choice which You bestow upon me, I can release the innate natural gift of strong subconscious deep emotional bonding from imperfection (unreality, basic human nature) to perfection (reality of the Divine mind, connection to Divine attributes),

(Concept of Rabbi Dessler to sanctify Hashem's name by attaching our hearts in loving service to a place that our limited self cannot go, expressing emunah and strengthening Yiras Shemayim)

with the desiring result being that all of my emotions are directed first to loving and fearing and emulating You,.

(Concept of Baal Shem Tov – Sweetening – seeing oneself as a pure good neshama and a healthier relationship between soul and body - see www.bilvavi.org)

May Your Will and Attributes as expressed in Torah be fully conscious within me and grant me success in bringing Your Attributes and Will to visibility in my actions, my relationships, my thoughts, and my emotions. May I be strengthened with unlimited conscious free will to approach my day from loving awareness of choosing what is pleasing to You

Occupy our Emotions - the Process

"I recognize that I am emotionally bonded to this pattern/thought/experience/programming/ nature and I see that it is unpleasant. Hashem please grant success to the choice I declare to shift my emotional bonding from imperfection to love and fear of You. Please see my determination and give me the will power, to the very depths of this emotion, and help me to match the emotion with will power to calm my subconscious clinging to this self-destructive connection. (I am awaiting the will power), I sincerely want to no longer be emotionally bonded with this thought/experience/memory. [once the emotion is calm and the feeling of will power there, say:]

“Hashem I choose that the consciousness that is bonding the emotions You send through me shift (Please shift consciousness given by You which is subconsciously keeping those emotions above my behira and out of my ability to control). Right now this consciousness is emotionally bonding me to a pattern/thought/experience/programming/ nature that is unpleasant. I recognize that this piece of consciousness and emotional bonding have been above my behira and You have shepherded me and guided me to take accountability for my actions(through suffering consequences of the emotional pain of separation of consciousness from You). Please give direction of this orphaned consciousness into my hand. I beseech You to listen to my free willed choice. I direct this consciousness and emotional bonding affecting my actions to detach from pattern/thought/experience/programming/ nature and re-attach to love and fear and emulation of Hashem alone. Please lead me in the path that I wish to go, for the unification and sanctification of Your name, for now I realize that this has been sent for me to responsibly bring the consciousness You give me back into harmony with Your Will. That is my sincere choice and desire, for there is nothing but Your simple unity in all the world. Please grant success to my free willed choice to direct this consciousness and emotional bonding to love and fear and emulating Hashem and please destroy all negative spiritual entities which I may have created by misuse in the past of this consciousness and emotion. I regret it and ask that this negativity be taken out of the world and that my teshuva be a zechus and benefit for all Klal Yisrael.”