

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Choosing love and mercy reveals we support the Divine

The word outrage appears everywhere now, in the newspapers, movies, and on our faces.



If we are honest, are we not feeling we are expressing our truest selves when we are sharing our inner most feelings of why we are upset with something? Why are we so upset? Usually, because we are outraged at the moral conduct that we see and we believe we would never do such a thing, what we are feeling is what is the world coming to anyway? And we shake our heads.

That recognition, those feelings of upset, are intended to be a knock on the door from the Creator saying, "Hi dear one! I know if I show this to you that I can count on you to do something about it that will be pleasing to me." And this is, in fact, what happens. We see a lack and that generates will, and the will places us at a point of choice, what are we going to do.

Now we have internal conflict. "Why I ought to knock his block off!" is what our first reactions might be. We see that in kids all the time. It is the stuff of the Three Stooges and slapstick, for it satisfies a basic reaction. But think again. If it is being shown to us, and we react so, have we improved matters or made them worse?

What if, knowing that He can count on us to support His morals, we are shown these things because we can do something immensely more powerful than knocking his block off? When your spouse comes to you with a family issue, how to handle something, is your spouse coming to get the benefit of your wisdom, of your experience and good heartedness? What is the best way for us to proceed? We learn from Moshe Rebbeinu when the Jews sinned with the Golden Calf, Hashem let Moshe know that if Moshe davened, it could help. What did Moshe do? He immediately began praying for everyone. Using this as a role model, when Hashem shows us something that we feel outrage for, perhaps He is coming to us out of respect for us, for our support NOT to render justice, but to beg for mercy and pray for forgiveness. Justice is not our realm, Hashem carries out Divine Justice every day. But mercy! Moshe shows us that we have to ask for mercy. And when we need it the most, Hashem knocks on our door and says "ask for mercy now!!!". And I am suggesting that when we feel outrage and condemnation that we should translate that to Hashem knocking on our door and saying "Please ask for mercy now!" for everyone, for we are all one body with many limbs and organs and if part of us is doing something outrageous perhaps we are being shown it because Hashem knows He can count on us to plead for mercy and for a new light and for a leader to show us more and more how to do this.

Thus, if we are hurt or wronged by anyone, we have a choice to respond in kind or think that Hashem is knocking on our door, to ask us to pray to Hashem that no harm come to us or the world because of this person's poor choices and that Hashem should send us a leader and a new light so that we can all improve. Why do the latter? Doesn't it seem passively ineffective? On the contrary. What greater sense of joy could there be to know that when there is something not right that Hashem comes to knock on my door asking for me to please bring His mercy and light into the world? No act of mine toward the situation could possibly bring a greater sense of joy or self-esteem or importance than that.

Thus, if we truly are His servants, we will refrain from acts that do harm and instead emulate His mercy,

showing HIm support and bringing His qualities to the world. May we all be invigorated to bring humanity to the world and rise above human nature!



Addendum: As I re-read this, I am aware that the idea here could be "dismissed" because it sounds like doing nothing. I wish to emphasize that the "I am doing nothing, I am not doing hishtadlus" sensational reality of "praying and asking for mercy" is not real. In fact, when we are able to comprehend that we have no separate reality and we choose relationship by emulating Hashem's characteristics (lovingkind, merciful, forgiving) we are creating spiritual forces that continue to lead us closer and closer to Hashem, who in turn can effect the situation at hand far better than anything we might otherwise think of. Hashem will lead us toward the actions we need to take along the path we choose to go. We will have the opportunity to do hishtadlus in action. Prayer and asking for mercy ARE hishtadlus, important in setting us on the path we choose in order to bring humanity into the world.