

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Thursday, May 31, 2012

Digging wells clogged with negativity to our inner penimius - may Hashem find us meritorious for redemption!

"King David forewarned Solomon in I Chronicles 28:9 "For Gd searches all hearts and understands the inclination of all thoughts," and as our Sages of blessed memory have said (Sanhedrin 106b) "The Merciful One desires the heart." What is of paramount importance to Him is that one's heart be pure for dedication to true Divine service. The heart is the king and mover of all the parts of the body. If it does not bring itself to serve the Blessed One, then the service of the other organs is meaningless, for they function as the heart directs them. And as Scripture explicitly states (proverbs 23:26) "Give your heart to me my son." ...when [a person] will consider and contemplate the inferior quality of worldly pleasures and worldly goods, he will come to despise them and to regard them as evils and as defects of earthy, dark, gross nature. When the truth of this understanding impresses itself upon him, there is no question that he will find it easy to separate himself from them and remove them from his heart. The more time one devotes to thinking deeply into the matter in order to recognize the lowly nature of earthiness and of its pleasures, the easier he will find it to purify his thoughts and his heart so that they have no recourse to the evil inclination in any deed whatsoever; and his role in any earthy activities that he does perform will be one of compulsion only...to purify one's thoughts in relation to one's bodily actions, a p person must engage in constant observation of the inferior nature of the world and of its pleasures and to purify his thoughts in relation to Divine service, he must give much thought to the falseness of pride and its deceits, and train himself to flee from pride. If he does so, he will be clean during the time of his Divine service of any strivings for the praises and encomiums of men, and his mind will be directed solely to our Lord, who is our praise, and all our good and our perfection and beside whom there is nothing as it says in Deuteronomy 10:21 "He is your praise and he is your Gd."(Mesillas Yesharim p. 209 – 210)

What happens when we are in tormenting situations over which we have no control? We see evil in it and our lower selves experience injustice and wrong-doing. The complicating factor is when our soul grips it too, subconsciously rubber-necking what we find to be unfair or incomprehensible. We then spin there, trying to process, looping through to get a deeper understanding of the evil so that we can figure out what to do. The pathway to our clarity and connection to Hashem has been clogged. We are faced with a seemingly overwhelming set of emotions and obstacles. But worse, our thoughts join in the evil and our own souls are feeding what we object to.

What is clogging the pathway back to clarity and connection to Hashem is our very own corrupted primal will. Uncorrupting our primal will is the tikkun that each of us comes to this world to complete, to find our way through difficulties to sanctify Hashem's name and exhibit love for Hashem no matter what, as Rabbi Akiva did in his martyrdom.

We can dig a well to our inner penimius (as Avraham Aveinu and Yitzchak Aveinu dug wells) by navigating each negative thought and emotion back to sanctifying Hashem's name. All negative thoughts and emotions are subjective reality, they have NO intrinsic reality, because everything Hashem does is GOOD, for our ultimate good so that we can bring out the thirteen attributes of mercy within us that He placed in us by giving us a neshama.

Experiencing the pain is one thing but attaching to it fails to re-direct our soul to sanctifying Hashem's name. Experiencing the pain and drawing down the will power to plead with Hashem that our soul should be attracted only to loving, fearing and emulating Hashem is the key. How? How can we do that when it is human nature?

WE BY OURSELVES CANNOT. But we can choose and ask Hashem to do it for us. Hashem controls our nature.

We can tell Hashem our desire. "Hashem I direct the part of my soul that is inclined to attach to this negative experience to let go and attach instead to loving, fearing and emulating You. That is my choice and my sincere desire. Please create loving kind, gentle, positive spiritual beings to lead me in the path that I choose so that my soul is attached to loving, fearing and emulating You alone." This choice acknowledges to Hashem that we know we are here to sanctify His name and that we choose to do so but we need His help.

A good tool is to memorize a line of tehillim (like the pasuk that is dedicated for us in Shemona Esrai that represents our name). Hashem answers us with opportunity to accomplish what we ask for - he gives us more consciousness in the emotional negative subjective matter, and that is success!

When Hashem then begins to grant us understanding of our sub consciousness and we catch ourselves in the act of floating toward

the negative matter, we now have behira, free will, over something that was just operating in our subconscious before. Because we want to cling to Hashem, one thing to think instead of the negative thought is that pasuk to help transition back to loving, fearing and emulating Hashem. In those few moments, we again re-direct more consciously, building more ability to free ourselves from gripping the negativity and latching on instead to loving, fearing and emulating Hashem. During this, we may get great insights into where our primal will had been corrupted, and we can then choose an action with the intention to emulate Hashem's attributes out of love instead of continuing our pattern based on human nature.

May we approach the time between now and Tisha b'Av in this manner, developing emotional love and appreciation for the Creator Who gives us EVERYTHING each day and may He lovingly and gently find us redeemable, and send the Moshiach speedily.