

## Nourishment for the Neshama

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### What is every second of thought and how can we grow closer to Adom before the sin by contemplating that question?

One of the ingredients that goes into our prayers is our thoughts. When we say the Shemona Esrai and we say Shema Koleinu, we think in our minds of our personal prayers.

What happens when we just say the words of davening and our thoughts are elsewhere? We are where our thoughts are, so we don't have good kavannah. But what else happens?

I don't claim to understand what happens but I do understand that something happens, and it may not be what we intend or think innocently will be properly understood or dismissed by Hashem out of His love for us. It seems that we may be under the illusion that our speech and thoughts don't really matter so much.

The entire book of Bamidbar and now Devarim emphasize in parsha after parsha that our speaking and our thoughts matter very much. Moshe, who said he was not a man of words at the burning bush, gives words of Torah in Devarim. And in Vaetchanan, we learn that Hashem had to tell Moshe "Enough!" because Moshe's words of prayer to go into Eretz Yisrael were like swords changing the heavens and his prayers would have had to be answered. Hashem tells Moshe that He has taken two vows, one that Moshe will not enter Eretz Yisrael and the other that He will never destroy Klal Yisrael, and that if he nullifies one, he has to nullify the other, meaning that if Moshe enters Eretz Yisrael, Hashem may destroy Klal Yisrael, heaven forbid.

Moshe answers that Hashem should not harm even one Jew. Hashem's tefillin, in the Shema, say "You shall love the Jewish People..." Moshe, loving Hashem, loves Who He loves and understood why Hashem created the world and the Jewish People. Do we?

Rabbi Yehezkeil Levenstein, upon tasting fish on Shabbos, asked his wife if she made the fish. She answered that she did not. And he said I know, when you make the fish, you have in mind that it should give me strength to learn and do mitzvahs and this fish does not have that same taste – those thoughts are missing from the taste of this fish.

We need to comprehend better what a moment of thought can really be. We need to comprehend better how Hashem created us as beings with a tzelem elokim that has free will to direct and influence the heavens and the earth in partnership with Him.

In one moment of thought, we can be bringing the best we offer as well as overcoming the worst that plagues us. And when we do this in the name of Hashem, His light shines through our thoughts and something happens – our thoughts are aligned with His Will and everything else becomes peripheral. We can live in an expanded consciousness – expanded in two ways – expanded to bring positive attributes of Hashem, and expanded to close the door on influences (jealousy, desire, and ambition) that would otherwise bring us to constricted consciousness and pain. By seeking expanded consciousness through both positive channels as well as saying no to thoughts that lead to painful despair, we acknowledge that all there is in the world is Hashem including us, that we love Him and love serving Him.

May Hashem see our efforts to leave behind constricted consciousness as love for Him and as effort to return to the level we were at Mount Sinai, the level of Adom before the sin – one of reaching an expanded consciousness of connection with Hashem, just saying NO to constricted consciousness – stop in our tracks when feeling negative – examine which door did I accidentally walk through (jealousy, desire or ambition) that took me away from the world of the neshama into disconnection and how do I reverse it and get back to connection.