

Nourishment for the Neshama

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From rubbernecking misconduct to emulating Hashem, from taking to giving – don't write your own gezeira!

In order to comprehend the value of embarking on becoming a giver, it is important to internalize that no one can take from us anything that Hashem desires for us to have. If it is Hashem's will that we have it, then it is good for us. And if it is not good for us, Hashem has infinite ways of keeping it from us. The apparent way that it is kept out of our reach is not ultimately the Source for why it was kept out of reach. The means Hashem uses have no intrinsic power. Rather, the means trigger emotion within us that becomes a challenge, the successful resolution being to recognize and submit to Hashem's Will.

Unless we know the above, we might experience a lack that triggers emotion and usually form judgments and negative thoughts about the means Hashem delivered the lack. We begin to analyze the matter with our limited minds and search for exactly what is bothering us about it, how it is unfair, unjust, undeserved and more. We form accusing thoughts in our minds about the people involved, how much evil is in them, how sick or misguided and more. The consciousness that Hashem bestows upon us is finding the way the person departed from Torah and we are shaking our heads in dismay. But what we don't realize is that we are, by devoting emotion and focus to this, placing OUR consciousness in support of the perceived wrongdoing. Worse, we might be totally wrong and are devoting emotion and focus to a wrongdoing and thereby creating an attachment to something totally false, a perception that now becomes a trauma to us, that is not based on fact but rather on emotion alone. We have just created something bad out of nothing.

Why do we do this?

In our mind, we perceive that someone is trying to take from us something that we want or think we deserve. And with our thoughts, we are "taking it back" from them, mentally retaliating. All of this takes place because of the instincts from the lowest part of our lower brain, our animalistic side. It isn't hard to comprehend this – we see it in the struggle of two year olds fighting over a toy, the physical combat, the tears, the anger, the inability to re-direct.

As we mature, it is for us to realize that no one takes anything from us without it having been decided in Heaven that it is good for us to not have something. This can cause us pause, because we all see ourselves as basically good and deserving. Yet Hashem desires to elicit from us an improvement in our character. When we squeeze a tube of toothpaste, out comes the toothpaste. When Hashem wants to see what is inside of us, He gives us a good squeeze. If what emotions and attributes come out are not coming from our inner penimius, which is the neshama, which is the mirror of Hashem's thirteen attributes of mercy, then we can begin to see why Hashem has placed us in this position of lack. Hashem desires that we become givers like He is and emulate His attributes of mercy.

Who shall we listen to? The life coach yetzer hara who is whispering in our ear all the logical reasons we need to defend and protect ourselves, to stand up for ourselves, to take upon ourselves the adult responsibility to bring this matter to justice? Or instead, can we pause and see through to the Source of this matter, Hashem Himself and realize that we are writing our own gezeira on how someone who does such and such to someone should be treated, should be brought to justice. Very likely, Hashem is asking us what He should do to US, for He shows us in others what we ourselves are guilty of and, if we give the benefit of the doubt or just try to be like Hashem, overlooking, then that is how we are treated in shemayim for the infraction we are guilty of, the midda keneged midda reason this is happening to us in the first place.

The soul just wants to be in a state of being one with Hashem. The inner penimius of a person wants quiet, not noise, not negative thoughts, not plans to take or take back.

When we give in for the intention of submitting to Hashem, we are not giving in to the person that it appears has harmed us, nor are we losing anything. We can bless the negative emotions, declare the goodness of Hashem, and commit to sanctifying Hashem's name by radiating into the matter an attribute of mercy or a mitzvah of the Torah.

Do we ever wish to be the stick in Hashem's hand to strike another – to stop them, to teach them a lesson? We have no way to calculate what we are doing. If we want something, talk to Hashem about it, in hisbodidus. Confess to Hashem where we have conflict and ask Him to show us our next step in serving Him, that we wish to fulfill the highest vision that He has for us. Think of His attributes of mercy and emulate Him.

The matter that triggered us can now be experienced as peripheral at best to the great joy of feeling a sense of Oneness with Hashem's Will. And He will show us our next step in sanctifying His name. Our bodies are here to serve the neshama, which is here to sanctify Hashem's name. Hashem does not need us to willingly inflict justice on each other. He has infinite ways of accomplishing din. But we have free choice on where we place our consciousness, thoughts, speech and deeds.

May we all sincerely pray for each other, that each of us is able to shift our subconscious grip from falsehood to emes, from negativity to loving Hashem, fearing Hashem and emulating Hashem. For the soul of the Jewish people is one soul, and when we direct our thoughts and emotions to Hashem in this way, we create positive beings that benefit even those people who have no interest or affinity for these spiritual truths.

Let us turn our hearts into mikvahs to wash the dirty garments of ourselves and our people, as Hashem does for us each Yom Kipur, and may we be zocheh to see Moshiach speedily.