

Nourishment for the Neshama

<http://lvracha.com>

Friday, July 12, 2013

Hashem is One, Our Sword and Shield that is all Love

Every day we say the Shema, that Hashem Echad, Hashem is One. Our soul within us is an utterance of Hashem, made in His Image. Are we choosing to bring that reality to affect our every moment? And if not, is it out of choice or merely out of a lack of understanding? Let's take a closer look.

The mitzvah of Hashem Echad is the third of the six constant mitzvahs. It is the resolution of Know there is Hashem with there is No Other Power. It means in essence that we have done battle with the fears, the angers, the distractions and desires that pull upon us because we are in the physical world and have successfully reigned in human nature so that we use free will to take our next step in serving the One True Hashem. Living Hashem Echad is a moment by moment victory. We are at the battlefield of free will fighting this war all day.

Yet we are not utilizing a metal sword. The Hebrew word for sword is chereb, the same letters as chavera, friend. When we understand how to resolve conflict at our free will point, we are able to see that the appearance of conflict is nothing more than an opportunity to unify Hashem's Name.

It is when we do not even see that there is a thought or a thought habit within us that has a conflict that we succumb unwittingly to the subconscious and human tendencies involved with the physical powers of nature and of human nature. And our subconscious is enormous, there is always another door to open in this regard. What is the process?

It is by the negative feelings that result, and possibly the disastrous consequences of our acting on those negative feelings that we begin to introspect, to examine our emotions and hopefully identify the thought that we mistakenly followed with emotion, speech and deed.

The sword we use to dissect that thought is the emunah we have that Hashem Echad. When we are certain of this essential truth, we can then begin to take what at first we felt compelled to defend with stabbing and hurtfulness and place that dagger in the loving and protective sheath of a set of choices that are all contained within Hashem's attributes of mercy. At the time we take our mental dagger thinking of words and deeds to defend ourselves, let us instead reign that same thinking desiring to defend us and correctly align the options from within Hashem's attributes of mercy alone.

It is only human to feel that this is a bitterly hard task. And that is the point. When something happens to us for which we are reacting with hurtful emotions and daggers, to ask someone to emulate Hashem's mercy could cause a reaction feeling blamed for being upset! We have been pulled into the kelipas and we need to rescue ourselves from its grip. There is no other power. The negative emotions that result from our physical realities have supervision from the physical world that is controlled by the yetzer hara and internally, we are doing battle with the El Zar, the strange gd within. Let us understand this plainly from Tehillim 51 verse 8 and 9:

"Behold the truth which You desire is I the concealed parts, and in the covered part is the wisdom which You teach me.

We are day laborers. Hashem gives us every moment a soul and it is contained within a body in a beautiful world for us to uplift and give to Hashem what He asks of us, to do His Will and bring His mitzvahs and middos to the world. With emunah, we head toward Hashem echad, there is nothing in the world but the simple unity of Hashem, and everything He does is good. We must understand that we are receiving the greatest love imaginable even when we are encrusted with negative circumstances and emotions. How we heighten our awareness of this love that is coming to us helps us create the emunah we need to be happy in His service, which often requires the basic understanding that we are called upon to unify His name and sanctify His Name.

It may seem like a catch 22 – how can I feel the love from Hashem when my life is so bitter? How is this good?

Hashem shows us through the construct of sword with the same letters as chaver to trust in His constant presence and involvement in our lives with love. We are Knesses Yisrael, Nishmas Am Yisrael, branches of the soul that Hashem thinks of lovingly at every moment, His partners in creating influence, the nation He looks to see what our response is and then considers that response in how He orchestrates events.

This understanding is crucial for us to answer the nachash, the yetzer hara, who tries to waylay our imagination towards the goals of physicality based on its deceptions. If we are unaware of the construct of the soul being covered by a kelipa under the domain of the yetzer hara, how can we ever expect to summon the strength to utilize our free will point to emulate Hashem's attributes of mercy?

The attributes of mercy are from the level of the crown, of keser, that is never able to be damaged and that connects us upward without a blemish. When we freely choose to align ourselves with the attributes of mercy, we are placing ourselves on the path of Hashem's utterances and are fully protected with Hashem Echad at those moments. This is the Magen Avraham that we say in the Shemona Esrai.

Thus as counterintuitive as it may seem, when we feel bitter, instead of finding it bitter to do something loving, let us understand deeply that the matter has been given to us because Hashem is asking us, "How will the Jews handle this?" When we cry out and say

"Hashem, this feels bitter but if it is from You, then it is only for us to realize that You, from Whom it comes, wish to give us an opportunity to emulate You, and thus it must be that this bitterness comes "for – giving" to you to unify Your Name the part of my soul and the Shechina in golus with it. With the same strength of these feelings, may I be magnetically drawn to emulate your attribute of lovingkindness, forgiveness, patience, overlooking, bearing insult or casting sins into the sea, and may my service in emulating You be pleasing and please utilize the nature that is being chosen over to emulate You instead, please re-direct that energy toward maintaining the world in a positive way. Please sweeten it for us."

May our doing so consistently bring nachas to Hashem and may the mesiras nefesh help create spiritual forces to bring the redemption very soon.