

Nourishment for the Neshama

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How to Love One's Self - A Jewish Guide to Real Self-Esteem

May these insights be a merit for a refuah shelama for Rabbi Aryeh Leib Dovid ben Esther:

Specifically, a person is his ratzon, Ultimately, we use our behira to bring out our ratzon. The material below shows that ratzon and behira are best aligned with emulating Hashem. **Doing so sanctifies His name and creates the ultimate self-esteem, being like Hashem.**

In our disempowered emotions lies a corrupted thought but since thought and heart are connected dissolving the negative experience is the first step but it still leaves the necessity to clean out the heart and correct the corrupted primal will revealed by our soul attaching itself to the corrupted thought. THIS WORK IS WHAT REUNITES US WITH HASHEM ECHAD because it requires us to do what the Tomer Devora tells us, to not flinch when it comes to bringing out an aspect of the Divine, and I believe that geula lies in our doing teshuva and accepting this avoda upon ourselves if we have not already. (and may I add that Rebbetzin Heller in her recent relationship workshop in the section on do not covet says negative thoughts as in the 10th commandment violate the first commandment, Hashem Echad).

The message is that our self-esteem is eternally self-determined through our choices, and we are 100% in control of our self-esteem no matter what happens in time and space where Hashem is 100% in control of success.

Whatever our individual yeud and tikun are, what I am thinking is that it MUST be within a context of sanctifying Hashem's name and bringing out the thirteen attributes of mercy within us - this is the primary context for our yeud. Our yeud is within this universal purpose for which Hashem created the world. Our yeud and tikkun provide our individual expression and opportunity to make these choices. But ultimately, we must "buy in" to submitting to sanctifying Hashem's name and serving our Creator with love and fear, choosing to build our self-esteem based on our choices to do so. Then we are shelamos and united!. And we can also fulfill our individual yeud and tikun.

Below in italics are the Torah sources for How to Love One's Self and below the sources is further discussion and insight.

Chofetz Chaim The Fortress of Faith, Out of Respect for the Almighty, p.33

"Our sages say: "Everything that the Holy One, Blessed Be He, created in His universe was created only for His honor, because it is written, 'Whatever is called in My Name, for My honor I created it...This is particularly true for the nation Gd chose as His portion, who are called by Him 'children' – 'You are the children of the Lord your Gd.'"

Mesillas Yesharim p. 263 Divisions of Saintliness

...the intention behind every mitzvah and act of Divine service be the magnificentation of the honor of the Presence, which derives from His creations' giving pleasure to Him, and the second that one feel pain for His honor, and long that it be perfectly magnified though the magnification of Israel's honor and through their well-being.

Nefesh HaChaim Section 3 Chapter 12 Ein Od Milvado:

Behold Hashem is the true G-d and that there is nothing else other than Him. Every force in the world and in all of the worlds is filled only with His simple unity.

And when a person subjugates and attaches the purity of his thoughts in the one Master only...then Hashem will provide for him that as a result of his resolve will be nullified all of the forces and powers in the world so that they won't have any power against him at all.

Let My Nation Live by Yosef Deutsch p. 209-210:

'Everyone must remember that the Almighty governs mankind with the principle of measure for measure. Therefore, when one's soul will eventually come before the Throne of Glory and seek to be honored in the presence of the heavenly hosts, what will he answer if the Lord asks him, "Why were you indifferent to My honor and the honor of My Torah which was profaned before your very eyes"...Behold it is an open passage "Those that honor Me

will I honor and those that belittle Me will be made light of."

Pele Yoetz on Love of Gd, p.29

"There is no greater insult than one who could earn a "great profit" and provide satisfaction to his Maker, and yet, just does not care...whoever abandons the service of his Creator, the study of Torah or any mitzvah opportunity, for some inconsequential reason, has demonstrated that he loves that thing more than Gd – great is his shame and the wrath upon him!...The message is that our true love, beyond all of Your kindnesses and rescuing us from evil, is that Your compassion has allowed us to serve You...Our sins withhold good from us, and we are not able to direct our thinking to the love and fear of the revered and awesome Gd"

Rabbi Dessler Strive for Truth p., 51 volume 2:

What induces a person to adopt a fallacious argument in order to cover up his deviation from the truth is the freely choosing person himself. Behira depends on the person alone. There is no outside cause involved. The prime cause is the person himself. The goal is to relinquish illusion and opt for truth. This gives the feeling of the utmost clarity.

Mesillas Yesharim Chapter XVII concerning the means of acquiring purity page 211

When a person considers and contemplates the inferior quality of worldly pleasures and worldly good, 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 ()

Rabbi Wolbe – Alei Shur Primal Will:

Primal Will is the basic primary semi-subconscious force that is the driving force behind all we do in our personality. When our Primal will is uncorrupted our positive mission will be expressed in an overwhelming powerful drive that will give us amazing power and drive.

Vilna Gaon. The power of primal will is hidden and secretly runs our life. It is hard to uncover but if we purify ourselves we can get it. The Gra in Mishlei 16:2 'All of the ways of the man are pulled after the primary will. And whatever goes up on his spirit in the primary will they are pure and straight in his eyes...that is to say his first will if there was no bias at all to this he would be pure and straight."

Chazon Ish – Emunah and Bitachon the fight for Primal Will and purity has to be total. It can't be half way. "In the root is just one good midda and one bad midda. The bad mida is letting the natural life go in their natural way ...the good midda is a total commitment to choose the ethical way over the desiring emotions. It is not possible that this decision can be halfway ...Don't ever say Gd is not giving me siata d'shmaya because this is a sign that he did not use that power that he alone brings to the execution of a good deed. That is will. ...Lack of success testifies always on a weakening of will – on the lack of use of will. (this is referring to middos – Reb Wolbe "This is all of our avoda – to continually strengthen our will to come to purity. You should fear and be scared lest there is a little root and desire to come to tumah. Chazon Ish – "How common is the oversight and the horrible distortion in ...calling a complaint on help from Gd and says there is none. He makes the Creator the guilty one that he is the one holding him back as if the person from his point of view did everything that is incumbent on him))

Amazing Power of Free Will Rabbi Kalonymus Kalman Shapira tells us "...free choice takes place in consciousness and will, so into them one can draw added energy." (Translation by Rabbi Aryeh Nivin). How do we draw this energy? Rabbi Shapira teaches us to contemplate deeply: "Somewhere there is the Infinite Source...the root of all that is holy and pure...greater than Creation, a light of absolute truth...the Source of true life beyond limitation... Why am I so distant from this Source?" This arouses a tremendous passion that will energize a yearning and that is what draws from this Infinite Source.

Rabbi Ezriel Tauber Mussar and Haskafa - Emuna

www.moment-of-prayer.com/lvracha/tauberemunah.mp3

see portion of transcript below

What is a Yid? A person is ratzon, having a clear definition what you want here, what is your purpose in being here. If a person doesn't have clarity in his ratzon, he is a lost person, going through the actions properly but he can never get it. If a business man doesn't know why he is in business, he can't succeed. He is in business to make money. Not for action. In order to make money you have to know the principles, buy cheap and sell expensive. Life is a business. You have to be clear in your mind, what is it you want to achieve? Ratzon. You have to know what do you want. Each of us is individualistic. No two people alike. Hashem is one and we are one in individuality. In our society we try to conform to fit in. Why did Hashem create Adam one single man? Not as a group? Everyone is

required to say to himself that the world is created for me. I am the purpose of creation. A person is required to say this. Simply put, this mishna in Sanhedrin means: Everything was made for you. You are the pinnacle, the center of attraction, the main star in the movie. There is a message to a movie. A person has to say I am the purpose of creation. That is the reason you have to respect yourself and everyone else. It is mesiras nefesh to believe this. If I do not shape up Gd lost the whole world. All the people are made for me, I have to shape up. Hashem creates the world for me and therefore I do chesed with Hashem. People need to believe in how important we are. When a person is not believing in himself – if he doesn't think he is important enough – it means we don't believe that Hashem invested in me! Hashem demands of me something. Do chesed with Hashem – give Hashem back the purpose of creation. Noah did what Gd wanted but he didn't believe in himself. Learn Torah in depth and understand Hashem speaks to us – then we see our self-esteem. Have ratzon, know you want to get to the level, a sense of responsibility to give nachas to Hashem or not. You have to want to be a partner in maintaining the world. Behira of choice is to believe in this concept. Most of us who don't understand this simple basic information don't even have behira. The idea that we are developing is the most important part – behira. The more we understand the consequences of this, you get the tools of behira – emunah, believing. Our life is eternal life. Your body belongs to Hashem, neshama belongs to Hashem. Hashem maintains the neshama in the body. Choose life.

Tomer Devorah

chapter 1: It is proper for man to emulate his Creator, for then he will attain the essence of the Supernal form in both image and likeness...it is porpoer that man emulate the functions of keser - which are the Thirteen supernal Attributes of Mercy - alluded to in the essence of the verses (Micah 7:18020): "who is Gd like You , Who pardons iniquity and removes transgression for the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His wrath eternally for He is desirous of kindness. He will again be merciful to us. He will suppress our iniquities, and You will cast into the depths of the sea of their sins. Grant truth to Yaakov, kindness to Avraham, as You have sword to our forefathers from days of old." Therefor it is proper that these one should contain in himself these thirteen Attributes...just as a person conducts himself in this world below, so will he be worthy of opening up the channel of the same Supernal Attribute Above. Exactly according to his conduct, so will he bestow above in the Supernal World the same and he will cause that Supernal attribute to shine here in this world. for this reason one should not divert his mind from these Thirteen Attributes or allow these verses to depart from his mouth; so that he sould remember them when a situation arises requiring the use of one of thes attributes. He should then remind himself and say: "Behold this action which is required in this situation is contingent on this particular attribute. I will not budge from it, lest this attribute become concealed or disappear from the world."

Below is man's duty for emulating - the thirteen attributes of mercy described in Tomer Devorah from Chapter 1

"It is proper for man to emulate his Creator, for then he will attain the essence of the Supernal Form in both image (tzelem) and likeness (demus). For if his physical form reflects the Supernal Form, while his actions do not, he falsifies his stature. They will then say of him, "a handsome form whose deeds are ugly." For the essential aspect of the Supernal image and likeness are His deeds. And what use will it be to him to reflect the Supernal Form physically with the likeness of the shape of his limbs, when his deeds do not emulate those of his Creator? Thus, it is proper that man emulate the functions of keser – which are the Thirteen Supernal Attributes of mercy – alluded to, in the essence of the verses (Michah 7:18-20): "Who is G-d like You, Who pardons iniquity and removes transgression for the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His wrath eternally for He is desirous of kindness. He will again be merciful to us, He will suppress our iniquities, and You will cast into the depths of the sea all of their sins. Grant truth to Yaakov, kindness to Avraham, as You have sworn to our forefathers from days of old." Therefore, it is proper that one should contain in himself these Thirteen Attributes. We will now explain the thirteen functions of these attributes.

1. Who is G-d like You? Thus, this attribute of being tolerant, is one that man should emulate. Even when he is insulted to such a degree (mentioned above0, he should still not withdraw his benevolence from the recipient.
2. Who pardons iniquity From this, man should learn to what extent he should be tolerant. He should tolerate the wrong of his fellow and his harm, even though he harmed him to such a degree, that the harm he caused him continues to exist. He should tolerate this until his fellow rectifies the wrong himself or it (the harm) disappears on its own. And the same applies to other situations.
3. And removes transgression A person should not say, "Why should I rectify what so and so corrupted or ruined?" This should not be said, for when man sins, the Holy One, Blessed is He, Himself, not by way of an emissary, rectifies his corruption and washes away the filth of his sins. From this, a person should understand to be ashamed to return to his sinful ways, for the King Himself cleanses the filth of his spiritual garments.
4. For the remnant (shei'ris) of His heritage A person should behave this same way towards his fellow, since all Bnei Yisroel are related to each other, being that all souls are united, and each soul contains a part of all others. This is why, nothing can compare to a multitude who do a mitzvah (Toras Kohanim 26:8). The reason being, because they are all united and complement one another. And thus, our Sages explain (Brachos 47b) regarding one who is counted among the first ten to arrive at the Bais Haknesses (synagogue) that even if one hundred come after

him, he receives a reward equivalent to them all. "One hundred" is to be understood literally, since the souls of each of the first ten are included in each other, thus there are ten times ten, which equals one hundred. And since each soul includes all of the others, every one of them is a combination of one hundred souls. Therefore, even if a hundred come after him, his reward equals all of the hundred. This is also why "Bnei Yisroel are guarantors thus responsible and liable for one another" (Shevuos 39a), since each Jewish soul actually contains a portion of all the others, and when an individual sins, he blemishes his own soul and also the portion of every other Jew that he possesses within himself. It is this portion that requires his friend to be a guarantor for him. Hence, all Jews are related to one another. Therefore, it is proper for man to desire the benefit of his fellow, view his neighbor's good fortune in a positive way, and cherish his friend's honor as his own – for he (his friend) is actually himself! And for this reason, we are commanded to "Love your fellow Jew as yourself" (Vayikra 19:18). Furthermore, it is proper that one should be pleased with the integrity of his fellow, and should never speak ill of him or be desirous of his disgrace, just as the Holy One, Blessed is He, desires neither our disgrace nor our suffering, because of our relationship; so too, a person should not be desirous of his fellow's disgrace, suffering or downfall. Rather, he should be pained by it as if he himself was actually suffering that same pain or rejoicing in the person's good fortune as if he were enjoying that same good fortune.

5. He does not retain His wrath eternally This is a fitting attribute with which a person should conduct himself towards his fellows. Even if one is permitted to reprimand his friend or his children severely, and they would accept the rebuke, this is no reason to intensify his reprimand and persist in his anger, though he was angered. Instead, he should nullify it (his anger) and not retain his wrath eternally, even if this is such a wrath that is permissible for man. This idea is comparable to our Sages' explanation of the verse "When you see the donkey of someone you hate lying under its burden," (Shemos 23:5). What is the cause of this hatred? He saw him transgress a sin, and being a lone witness, he cannot testify against him in court. Thus, he hates him because of that sin. Even so, the Torah demands, "You shall help along with him," meaning, abandon that anger which is in your heart. And on the contrary, it is a mitzvah to befriend him with love, for perhaps with this method you will succeed in causing him to repent. This is exactly the attribute of – "He does not retain His wrath eternally."

6. For He is desirous of kindness Hence it is proper for man to conduct himself with this attribute. Even if one is aware that another person is committing evil against him, and angers him, nevertheless if he has some good redeeming quality – e.g. he is benevolent to others or he possesses some other good trait with which he conducts himself righteously – this good side of him should be sufficient for one to nullify his anger against him and to have a positive feeling towards him and to desire his kindness and say "It is enough for me that he has this good quality." How much more so does all this apply to one's wife: as our Sages explained: "It is enough that they raise our children and save us from sin." So, too, one should say to himself with regard to every man, "It is enough that he has done for me or someone else such and such a favor, or that he has a such and such positive quality, and he should always be desirous of kindness.

7. He will again be merciful to us This is also how a person should behave towards his fellow. He should not nurture the hatred born of past anger. Rather, when he sees that his fellow desires his love, he should raise his level of mercy and love toward him much more than before, and say, "He is to me like the baale teshuvah, in whose company even the perfectly righteous cannot stand." And he should befriend him to the fullest extent, much more than he would befriend those who are perfectly righteous in their behavior towards him and have never wronged him.

8. He will suppress our iniquities A person should also conduct himself according to this attribute; he should not suppress his fellow's favor and remember the evil or harm he has done to him. On the contrary, he should suppress the evil, erasing it from his memory and abandoning it, so that no evil will dwell with him, and his favor should be constantly arranged before him. One should always remember the favor of his fellow, allowing it to prevail over all the evil actions he has done to him. He should not subtract from the favor he has done to him in his heart, and say, "Although he did me a favor, he also did me harm," thereby forgetting the favor. One should not do this! Rather, he should allow himself to be appeased in every possible way regarding the harm, and never overlook the favor. He should turn a blind eye to the harm he has done to him as much as possible, just as the Holy One, Blessed is He, does in suppressing our iniquities, as I have explained above.

9. And You will cast into the depths of the sea all of their sins This, too, is an attribute that man should use in his behavior toward his fellow. Even if the latter is wicked and crushed through afflictions, do not hate him, for 'after having been whipped, he is like your brother' (Makkos 23a). Befriend the rebellious and those who have been punished and have mercy on them. And on the contrary, save them from their enemies, and don't say – "His own sin caused his suffering." Rather, have mercy on them in accordance with this attribute, as I have explained above.

10. Grant truth to Yaakov So, too, a person should act towards his fellow in a way that is upright and true, never perverting the justice of his friend. He should have true mercy on him, just as the Holy One, Blessed is He, has mercy on His creatures of average stature, according to this quality of truthfulness, in order to perfect them.

11. Kindness to Avraham So too, man: Although he conducts himself with righteousness, uprightness and justice towards all men, towards those who are particularly good and pious, his conduct should go beyond the requirements

of the Law. If towards other people he is a bit tolerant, with these pious men he should be much more so. He should have mercy on them, going with them beyond the requirement of the Law in which he conducts himself towards others. They should be exceedingly precious to him and beloved, and they should be counted among his friends.

12. As You have sworn to our forefathers Man should also behave in this same manner. Even if he encounters wicked people, he should not behave cruelly towards them or taunt them and so on. Rather, he should have mercy on them, and say "Ultimately, they are the children of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. Though they may not be righteous, their forefathers were righteous and worthy. Hence one who despises the sons despises the fathers too. I do not wish their fathers to be despised because of me!" Thus he should conceal their disgrace and help to improve them, as much as is in his power.

13. From days of old Similarly, man should perfect his conduct towards other people. Even if he cannot find a reason for loving and having mercy on his fellows from amongst those already mentioned, he should say, "There was surely a previous time when they had not yet sinned, and in that time or in their days of old they were righteous." For their sake, he should recall the good which they did in their youth, and recall for their sake the love of infants who have just been weaned from their mother. This way, he will not find a single person unworthy of benefiting him, praying for his well-being and having mercy on him.

This completes our explanation of the Thirteen Attributes in which a person should emulate his Creator. These are the Supernal Attributes of Mercy, and their quality is, that just as a person conducts himself in this world below, so will he be worthy of opening up the channel of the same Supernal Attribute Above. Exactly according to his conduct, so will he bestow above in the Supernal World the same and he will cause that Supernal attribute to shine here in this world.

For this reason, one should not divert his mind from these Thirteen Attributes or allow these verse to depart from his mouth; so that he should remember them when a situation arises requiring the use of one of these attributes. He should then remind himself and say: "**Behold, this action which is required in this situation is contingent on this particular attribute. I will not budge from it, lest this attribute become concealed or disappear from the world.**" [my thought here, why I added emphasi - it is to this that we are directed to move our primal will]

See also my own Tomer Devorah Hisbodidus cards at /files/79085-69231/Tomer_Devora_hisbodidus_cards.pdf

Mesillas Yesharim Divisions of Saintliness p. 265

The Holy One Blessed be He does not desire the destruction of the wicked; it is rather a mitzvah devolving upon the Sain to benefit and atone for them. This intention must be contained in his Divine service and it must manifest itself in his prayers; that is, he must pray on behalf of his generation to seek atonement for him who needs atonement, to turn to repentance him who requires it, and to speak in defense of his entire generation.

Rabbi Yaakov Zalman Labinsky on Pirke Avos Summary of Fear www.becomingdivine.com based on Six Constant Mitzvahs (parentheses are editorial explanation based on discussion with Rabbi Labinsky and Rabbi Aryeh Nivin)

Rav Weinberg tells us about the 6 constant mitzvahs, the six mitzvahs that have a realm of pure divine consciousness, the first three are intellectual, know there is a Gd, not to believe in other powers other than Gd, and to know Gd is one, that rectifies all the realms of intellectual blemish the next two are love and fear, to love and fear, it is a constant commandment. We have to keep removing the blocked fear into the body and bring it back to the side of the soul constantly. It doesn't happen on its own and if you don't it will play out in all kinds of negative ways and this is why people have relationship challenges, because the emotion is blocked and is misdirected away from the soul to the body. By the realm of fear, we said the root of all fear is annulations and abandonment. When your existence is being threatened either you are going to be alone in your existence or you are going to disappear in your existence. those are the 2 core fears behind all fear, and the more we rectify our human fear and get to the core of the abandonment and annihilation we are actually fixing up the realm of fear to bring to the side of soul - fear of Hashem, that is our choice in this world healthy fear, to see and perceive Gd's reality if we don't do that we carry out all these conscious and unconscious fears, they come out as worries, distrust, insecurities and the like and they get projected onto realities and we reenact them from our past into our present, we are not living with Hashem, we are not living with a rectified heart and we are not living with a full heart that fully loves and fears the Almighty and that is the job of every person and Jew in this world in order to do this.

"When we have an obstruction around our heart, what we are really saying is that we have a certain amount of emotion that is blocked and if it is blocked then it is in the body and not in the soul. Just as there are 3 steps to circumcision, cutting the foreskin, drawing back the outer layer and prick on top. First step is removing the falsehood in the emotion. In every emotion there is a parallel intellect, where we can get into the intellectual

understanding of the emotion and we then remove the falsehood [say a kapittel tehillim to go above the thought and remember that everything Hashem sends is good – there should be an experience of some relief from the distress and then use truthful examination to find the corrupted thought generating the negative experience]. Stage 2 extract out the kernel of truth, that is underlying the falsehood that is embedded in that misdirected emotion [more separating of the actual circumstances can now take place. A good tool is hisbodidus – talking it out in Hashem's presence through His eyes. We may find a big emotional charge tied to something that is not a Torah idea – we may have given false meaning to the painful event. Here is where we may need to yearn for more will power because our emotional blockages and rationalizations may cling to the corrupted thought. Often this is because we think our self-esteem is dependent on our clinging to this wrong thought, which cannot be true but might be a message from the secular world or just a preference of the body that wants to feel good or the ego that wants to look good. It could be true that action needs to be taken but self-esteem must not be at stake in the outcome of the circumstances themselves but only in our manner of handling it, in doing what is good and right in Hashem's eyes]; stage 3 is once we pulled out the positive kernel of truth, the darkness gets transformed into higher light where the emotional level is that any fear or any expression of love on the body level gets redirected to the side of the soul [this is a straightening of our basic primal will, that subconscious energy is now freed from being involved with falsehood and flows in a channel to and from Hashem's light so that we can reflect that light into the world Primal will is as powerful to our individual world and its ripples in the spiritual world as nuclear energy is to the time and space world!] And our job is to ultimately do this every day. Obstruction prevents our heart from allowing the emotions to be fully directed to Hashem.

Tehillim 37: 7-8, 11-12, 26-29, 34, 39-40 Wait silently for the salvation of Hashem and wait longingly for Him; do not compete with him who prospers, with the man who executes malicious plans. Desist from anger and forsake wrath – do not compete, it brings but harm...But the humble shall inherit the earth, and delight in abundant peace. The wicked man plots against the righteous person and gnashes his teeth at him. All the days he is gracious and lends, and his children are a blessing. Turn from evil and do good, that you may dwell forever. For Hashem loves justice and does not forsake His devout ones-they will be eternally protected, but the children of the wicked are cut off. The righteous will inherit the earth and dwell forever upon it...Hope to Hashem and safeguard His way, and He will raise you high to inherit the earth; you will witness the excision of the wicked...but the salvation of the righteous is from Hashem, their might in time of distress. Hashem helped them and caused them to escape; He will cause them to escape from the wicked and He will save them, for they took refuge in Him.

It is a Divine promise that Torah is pure and restores the soul. If we are feeling disempowered or negative, it is because we are having a thought that is not a Torah thought! We are having a corrupted thought of some kind.

Where do corrupted thoughts come from? They enter our mind and if we attribute attention and/or meaning to them, we bring them inside of us. We mistakenly allow our soulful energy to become buried under something that is not a Torah thought. How do we get ourselves out of it?

Because we know that everything comes from Hashem, that there is nothing except Hashem in all of the world, we first talk to Hashem. "Dear Hashem I know this is from you for my good, for my ultimate training and development. It hurts very much! "Then we apply a Torah principle to think well of other Jewish people and bless them, "Dear Hashem Please accept this charity to create spiritual energy to lead me in the path I wish to go, to handle this matter in harmony with Torah and please send clarity to Plonit and may my efforts be pleasing to You such that You attach success in resolving whatever misunderstandings there are." Now that we have the spiritual reality aligned properly, we can begin to examine what our actions should be.

The first step whenever we have an upsetting emotion is to sort out what is true and what meaning we have attributed to the matter that might not be true. For example, we might think that someone said something hurtful (true) and that we really are worthless (untrue). Then, in our mind, seeing that it is not true, we can dissolve the negative experience by replacing that erroneous thought or belief with a Torah principle. A universal Torah thought is that everything Hashem sends is for our ultimate growth and development, for our very best. When we shift our mood, we see how the feelings dissolve or at least could become dissolved, we get a glimpse at how false our first reactions can sometimes be.

Sometimes we have only a glimpse and we don't really know. When that happens, we can ask Hashem for clarity in helping us refine ourselves. When we say brachas or in our davening, we can ask Hashem to lead us in the path that we wish to go, to be able to correct what we need to and ask Him to please show this to us gently.

What is likely to happen is that the matter we are struggling with will come up in our lives and Hashem will give us opportunities to put our prayers into action. He wants us to earn our growth – He isn't going to just give it to us. We will begin to see things more clearly than we would have before we asked for His help in fixing up what is at the root of our pattern of painful experiences.

There is a huge secret to success here.

The secret to success is to truly comprehend that our self-esteem is based on our free willed choice to do what is good and right in Hashem's eyes. Now that may seem simple, but in reality, we often find our self-esteem in how we look to others or how satisfied we are with our physical needs being met. Because we are souls that are covered by a body and placed in a physical world, it can be confusing. The soul wants only one thing, and that is the opportunity to connect to Hashem through doing mitzvahs and by emulating His attributes, thereby bringing honor and nachas to Hashem our Father.

Why is this the secret to success? Our painful feelings that we experience, the negative reactions, are generally deepened and made even more painful in the meaning we ascribe to the experience, which is very often a feeling a lack – a lack of what we want, a jealousy, or a lack of honor. These are the main stumbling blocks that the yetzer hara gains entrance into our minds – our egos and our bodies argue for what they feel is lacking and the soul's tiny yearning is drowned out by the weak perceptions of ego and body. But if we can comprehend that our self-esteem cannot be diminished by anything outside of us, we begin on a healthy path.

Hashem does not create anything worthless. And everyone has deficiencies. That is the point. With free will, we can choose the goals of the soul over the goals of the body and the ego. Sometimes it is hard and we have to yearn for more will power. But will power is free and in unlimited supply because it comes from Hashem Who wants to give us success when we choose what is good and right in His eyes.

The beauty of free willed choice is that all we have to do is choose! Hashem grants success or not! So if we see that we are getting a rotten idea in our mind because of something painful that happens, we can stop giving it emotional meaning, increase our will power by knowing we have choice and ask Hashem to shift our energy to loving and fearing Hashem so that we can respond appropriately. Each time we do this and watch the negativity dissolve, we see that we have control over the meaning we give things which brings control over our feelings, even if we don't have control over the original thoughts that come into our mind. We are not puppets to our feelings!

Sometimes feelings are complicated and confusing. That is ok. It is usually a confusion of ego/body desires. It is good to understand our nature lovingly. When we have feelings that come from our ego and body, it is because we are not clear at that moment about what is truly for our ultimate good. And when we see our own moments without clarity that cause us upset feelings, well – doesn't that make it easier to understand how sometimes other people might say and do things that are offensive and hurtful? They just don't have clarity at that moment! And maybe no one ever told them that their self-esteem doesn't come from their ego or body! Maybe they believe that IS where there self-esteem comes from and therefore their focus is diverted from bringing honor to Hashem to bringing honor or something that they want to themselves. Plenty of people are like that. Without learning otherwise, we would be like that too. That is our natural condition!

When we comprehend that painful and good things happen to us but that they don't affect our self-esteem, they only present an opportunity to use free will to bring Hashem's light into the matter, the situations become more manageable. Why? Because we are not fighting for our very lives, struggling to take back something we think another took away – our self esteem! No one can take that from us! Yes, it can hurt. But it is our handling of the matter that determines our self-esteem, even if the outcome does not provide our wish. All success is in Hashem's hands, and the outward appearance has nothing to do with our inner victories. We try to pull back into ourselves self-esteem because that is the ego, the part of us that wants to look good or feel good. In reality, this requires our free willed choice to straighten out our primary will. It is lifelong journey but it is the reason that we are here, use our free will to bring Hashem's light into the world. We all want comfort (body) and respect (ego) naturally, but at what cost? Ultimately feeling good about comforts and respect will not fundamentally grow us spiritually. We are here for 120 years with an opportunity to love Hashem and bring His light into the world. /although it can look successful in the behavioral time and space measurements of this world, basing our self-esteem on the body or ego causes us to miss our mission entirely!

Talking to Hashem every day and sharing our tough problems gives us great insights in directing our primal will. In this way, a person develops a love for oneself based on real self-esteem, while also following Torah principles to guard both body and soul. Loving one's self and comprehending real self-esteem emanates from love of Hashem, one of the six constant mitzvahs. Building a relationship with Hashem, speaking to Him in the same way we speak to our friends, knowing He is really there listening, is the best way to develop love of Hashem. Everything that Hashem does is good, for our ultimate training and development. He wants us to be like Him!

Here is a structure for talking to Hashem from Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller:

Silence

Praise

Humility,

Nullify – I want to be what You want me to be

Ask -Daven to Hashem that He help you find the right words to ask Him with

Tell Hashem that Torah is your heartline. Discuss friends, family.

Confess and ask for mercy

Tell Him what you are working on and what you want more control over

Regarding certain traits that are chronic, discuss it for a significant period of time – look at yourself in His loving presence – He is your loving Father in Heaven and He already knows everything you are going to share with Him because He put it into you for you to grow and develop into His beautiful ideal Vision for you!

Tell Him what is happening in your day, what is special

Thank Him for times of closeness

End with praise

Here is my personal toolbox:

Daily Hisbodidus

Thank you Hashem for the flow of thought, emotion, and consciousness to this otherwise inanimate body that houses it, may Your name be praised, and for the ability to perceive, experience and learn, for the gift of free willed choice, and for the capacity to discern and integrate. Please flow through me unlimited will power to direct the recipe of personality, circumstance and emotional flow You send through my heart each day so that through the use of conscious choice which You bestow upon me, I can release the innate natural gift of strong subconscious deep emotional bonding from imperfection (unreality, basic human nature) to perfection (reality of the Divine mind, connection to by reflection of Divine attributes), with the desiring result being that all of my emotions are directed first to loving and fearing and emulating You,. May Your Will and Attributes as expressed in Torah be fully conscious within me and grant me success in bringing Your Attributes and Will to visibility in my actions, my relationships, my thoughts, and my emotions. May I be strengthened with unlimited conscious free will to approach my day from loving awareness of choosing what is pleasing to You

Occupy Our Emotions Process

"I recognize that I am emotionally bonded to this pattern/thought/experience/programming/ nature and I see that it is unpleasant. Hashem please grant success to the choice I declare to shift my emotional bonding from imperfection to love and fear of You. Please see my determination and give me the will power, to the very depths of this emotion, and help me to match the emotion with will power to calm my subconscious clinging to this self-destructive connection. (I am awaiting the will power), I sincerely want to no longer be emotionally bonded with this thought/experience/memory. [once the emotion is calm and the feeling of will power there, say:]

"Hashem I choose that the consciousness that is bonding the emotions You send through me shift (Please shift consciousness given by You which is subconsciously keeping those emotions above my behira and out of my ability to control). Right now this consciousness is emotionally bonding me to a pattern/thought/experience /programming/ nature that is unpleasant. I recognize that this piece of consciousness and emotional bonding have been above my behira and You have shepherded me and guided me to take accountability for my actions(through suffering consequences of the emotional pain of separation of consciousness from You). Please give direction of this orphaned consciousness into my hand. I beseech You to listen to my free willed choice. I direct this consciousness and emotional bonding affecting my actions to detach from pattern/thought/experience /programming/ nature and re-attach to love and fear and emulation of Hashem alone. Please lead me in the path that I wish to go, for the unification and sanctification of Your name, for now I realize that this has been sent for me to responsibly bring the consciousness You give me back into harmony with Your Will. That is my sincere choice and desire, for there is nothing but Your simple unity in all the world. Please grant success to my free willed choice to direct this consciousness and emotional bonding to love and fear and emulating Hashem and please destroy all negative spiritual entities which I may have created by misuse in the past of this consciousness and emotion. I regret it and ask that this negativity be taken out of the world and that my teshuva be a zechus and benefit for all Klal Yisrael."

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