

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Netzach 5772 - a Week of Expansion to conquer what is holding us back in becoming givers

Netzach – the week of enduring, a week to expand and conquer what is holding us back from emulating Hashem's eternal and constant giving

Da es Atmecha teaches bilvavi.net/content/view/186/57/ us

"When a person is with other people, and he senses negative feelings toward them for whatever reason, he must bring forth the power of the soul through which one can live with himself, and disengage from what is occurring around him. Even if an opponent has caused him distress and harm, and he does not feel he is participating in sinat chinam (baseless hatred), but "required hatred," he must nonetheless find in himself the world called "alone." This exists from the time of our initial formation, and did not disappear after Chavah's creation, but was hidden deep in the heart. One must know how to use it in the proper times and places. But if, chas veshalom, one uses this power in the wrong place and time, he will live in an environment and care only about himself, and this is a negative kind of "alone." It is egotism, where one lives only for himself. Hashem gave us the power of "alone," and gave us the ability to decide how to use it. Will we use it in the proper place and time, disengaging inwardly from whom we should, or will we, chas veshalom, use it when we should relate to others, yet choose to live with only ourselves?

Inherently, the power of "alone" is a positive force. There is no power in a person that is inherently negative. The only question is: where do we use the power? If used in the proper place, it is constructive. If used in the wrong place, it is destructive. The power of "alone" should be employed in situations where one senses negative feelings toward another person. That is the time to activate the sense of "alone" and sever the emotional attachment.

Don't think that the final goal is to be emotionally detached from others. We mentioned earlier that there are three stages: hachna'ah, havdalah, and hamtakah. The first two cause separation; the third brings unity. The separation is only a temporary means for reaching the ultimate unity. The goal must always be to unify and not to separate, but in the process, there must also be a separation. If so, when we mention that one must use the inner power of detachment, it is not the goal. Obviously, the goal is to attain love for the other person, but it is impossible to switch from hatred to love. There must be the intermediary process known as havdalah. From the hatred, one goes to the world of "alone." Then, when cleansed of the hatred, one can develop love even toward a person who had harmed him. As we said, that will occur in the stage of hamtakah, but we are now dealing with havdalah."

The world of "alone" that is pure within us is the aspect of the Divine image. It is our highest self, cannot be diminished. It exists pure in each of us. This part of us which is, in its very essence, our truest and eternal self, our soul has come to Olam HaZeh for a mission, a mission that we, with our free will, must choose. We know the answer. Hashem creates the world for us to sanctify His name by making ourselves into givers, like He is. Getting to that point is the focus of every mitzvah, midda, and Torah study.

Rabb Schwartz teaches us that the soul has movements, series of expansions and contractions. Rabbi Aryeh Nivin, in teaching about the omer, describes this time in those terms. First we expand, then contract, then find balance, and that is weeks 1 to3, repeated 4 to 6 for the next set of middos. What is this all about? Why does it matter?

Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller in her Omer Workshop describes day by day what we are to do practically to help ourselves to reach the level of Adom before the sin, as we did when we all stood at Mount Sinai. Do the middos seem esoteric? How do they actually help us get anywhere?

When we comprehend that the aspect of the Divine within us can be built up and become a vessel for His light, we begin to comprehend the answer. Our truest selves, our souls, are who we are for all eternity! But we can find out who we are and who we can be in this world! When we choose to discover within ourselves the capacity to touch these aspects and then sweeten our this world experience with a new way of viewing the matter – from the perspective of unifying with the Divine mind and emulating Him and bringing THAT to the situation rather than our subjective reality, we find our true identity. Instead of feeling hatred, jealousy, desire or legitimate anger, we can be like Him and cast sins into the sea, comprehending that our own attraction to those lower impulses are mere

garments not different from the garments of the person who triggered our lower emotions. We are all one. Cast all our sins into the sea, for we are all pure neshamas with garments that need to be cleaned! We are not victors or victims, we are here to conquer the battle between the urges that attract our focus. Shall we invest time in thoughts, speech and deeds that ultimately benefit our self-interests first or Hashem's interests first? Hashem wants us to be happy but He wants to do it for us. And He will do it for us, when we selflessly seek to bring out the Divine within us. That is where emunah comes in. What we take and the harm He may attach to our efforts may seem distant and in Hashem's hands but it is time that we come to divest ourselves of cultural norms and invest ourselves in Hashem's Torah, lovingly living as He wishes.

We are in the 72 days of chesed on our way to Mount Sinai. We must ask ourselves continually if what we are doing is what Hashem would do and even if we feel our efforts are within a normal range and permissible by Torah, ask ourselves if it is lovingkind, if it were done to us, would we see it as good?

Rabbi Walerstein points out that the first day of the omer is chesed shebe chesed and that is what eventually brings us to malchut shebe malchut. While we begin the fourth week of the omer, Netzach, endurance, let us not forget that this week of expansion, like the first week of expansion in chesed, is to strengthen our inner being and make ourselves into a fitting vessel to access the Boreh Olam.

May our journey to Mount Sinai bring us back to the level of Adom before the sin and may we merit redemption.