

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Quietening the limited analytical mind - a brief 5 step description

It doesn't take much to get us into a constricted state of consciousness. Primarily, we feel that have to defend ourselves, a built in natural instinct when faced with general life circumstances, navigating through our challenges be they medical, real estate, work related, family related and more. We are living in our emotions, and our emotions are coming from a conscious or subconscious thought. What we must accept is that despite how sophisticated we may be in the particular field, despite our proficiency in dealing in the matter, the entire train of thought is part of the animal soul. Societies, militaries, and governments develop from the understanding we have of what fairness is within the boundaries of human nature based on emotion and thought.

How do we quiet our mind without feeling that we are abandoning our adult responsibility to take good care of ourselves?

Step one is to contemplate and accept that our value, and what will happen to us, has to do with Hashem's Will and nothing else. There is no other way to accomplish what we want unless it is Hashem's will because Hashem is 100% in control 100% of the time. For those of us who accept this as truth, on a scale of 1 to 10, how strongly is that built into our daily thinking about what is in front of us on a moment by moment basis? I am guessing that it slips to the back burner 99% of the time, we believing that we are independent, autonomous beings who are fully capable of determining our own destiny unless Hashem interferes, as He sometimes does. If this is the case, it will be very hard to quiet the limited, judging analytical mind, for we will be listening to its good advice, which is really the life coach Yetzer Hara built into our subconscious.

Step two is to determine if what we want is something that is ratzon Hashem, is this Hashem's will or not? Hashem tells us what His will is in Torah –keep the mitzvahs, love Him, fear Him, and walk in His ways, emulating His thirteen attributes of mercy. Everything in the physical world is seeking connection back to the spiritual realm. We are here to do just that – make brachas and elevate our food, etc. In our challenges, we seek to make a Kiddush Hashem. We do the best we can, but usually we cannot tell until afterwards what ratzon Hashem was, for we only know this in hindsight. But in the moment, as long as we do our best to verbally introspect and take our next step in serving Hashem in the best way we know, we will have fulfilled our unique purpose regardless of the outcome.

Step 3 is to actively include step 2 in our daily life. Here is a basic template. We have a negative reaction or impulse, we have a charged situation. By definition these feelings are coming from the animal soul. The higher soul does not have negative reactions and remains at all times holy. We are given a higher soul so that with our free will, we can use our higher soul to elevate our animal soul. Thus, boiled down, every negative emotion is an opportunity for the higher soul to elevate the animal soul, thus doing ratzon Hashem. (see step 2 Everything in the physical world is seeking connection back to the spiritual realm. We are here to do just that – make brachas and elevate our food, etc.) Use the higher soul to bring ourselves to faith, to bitachon, in Hashem, that everything is good, for our ultimate growth and development. Realize that only Hashem has power, nothing else exists but Hashem, the Living Gd.

Step 4 is to be in relationship, in a pleasurable state of calmness, of connection and ask Hashem to please show us gently what is my next step in serving Him, what does He wish for me to do in this situation to bring His attributes into the world. Then pause. If we slip back into limited analytical thinking, just stop, say no to painful thoughts, remember there is only Hashem who is good and only does good, that no one but Hashem determines our destiny, and that by quieting our mind, we cease creating pain for ourselves and negative spiritual beings.

Step 5 is to await an illuminating insight. While waiting, daven to Hashem, give brachas that will help the situation and verbally introspect on what can be done to move it forward, taking 100% responsibility without blame, shame, condemnations or hurtful actions. The main focus here is that our higher soul should be actively creating benefit in the world and that the animal soul should be serving the higher soul in this regard rather than creating negative spiritual beings that cause us and others harm.

If there is a moment of clarity, it is a moment where the negativity will dissolve and possibly won't even be remembered! That experience, opens up the true reality of the world, that the world of limited, judgmental analytical experience is NOT the only existence and is, rather, a camouflage over our real existence as souls connected to Hashem here on a moment by moment mission to bring His light into this darkness. We are the flashlights that can light up this world! Our limited analytical minds are covers over the lens of the flashlights, trapping our souls in our bodies like a man thrown into a sack. Our free will is the way we take off the cover, the garment of the animal soul, to bring out our real and eternal existence, that of being a holy soul, sent here as an emissary to bring light to this darkness.

There is no guarantee that our situations will resolve in the manner we want. They will resolve in the manner that Hashem decrees. When we attach ourselves to Hashem, and devote ourselves to Him, and when we know with 100% certainty that everything He does is good, we find clarity in accepting what we can control, our thoughts, speech and deed, as our manner of service. Success is up to Him.