

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Reflections on where I pray for clarity

The lower (physical) self demands attention for its urgent and compelling arguments of negativity, a call to action appealing to outrage, a desire to chastise, a need for vindication, a love for blaming, a passion for power etc. This upsets the equilibrium so that my holy energy is distracted from activities that either recognize Hashem's kindnesses to me, that are mitzvahs, that are learning Torah, or that are acts of kindnesses or productivity that I can do. I have to realize and acquire a real choice in how I am going to utilize my energy

I have the choice and the ability to say to myself: that loud screaming - that nagging - that compelling negative urge demanding that I respond - is just my lower self. It is not my only choice. I have free will to create eternity for myself and bring shefa and light at this very moment. To do so, I faithfully remember that in this very moment there is nothing keeping me from feeling good except these low thoughts which I want to dismiss.

To dismiss, I must realize that I can cut these thoughts loose so that they can float away. I have no control over the circumstances and I have no basis to act that would not result in hurtfulness. I totally trust that Hashem can repair my situation as well as deal fairly with anyone I suspect of wrongdoing. Am I hesitating? Then perhaps it is because Hashem is wondering how I am going to judge others only because I must be guilty in my own way of the same infractions in some way that I am not recognizing. Therefore remembering that we are all one body with many limbs and organs is crucial - we are one people, one nation. With all of my faults I have more in common with the people I might blame than with Hashem. By striving to emulate Hashem's middos, I bring healing to my life and to the situation by my choice. The choice is to use my holy energy in ways that build and construct and return good to the universe and not to indulge lower self messages that cause harm and destruction to the universe, to people, to situations.

When I think about how a person sees me and how misunderstood that can be, I must also think that I also misunderstand others. Can I possibly truly understand how Hashem sees me? Rabbi Rietti has a series of lectures on hisbodidus, talking to Hashem, looking at ourselves in Hashem's presence. We can be totally open and honest because Hashem knows everything anyway. We can admit our private weaknesses and errors. We may find that Hashem may see me the way He is showing me certain characteristics in other people. By asking for mercy for all of us, I bring that mercy to myself and to everyone. Please Hashem have mercy on all of us, for we live in constant battle with the voice of negativity and are too often drawn so easily into actions that are lowly and far from You. Please help us to return to You, to be faithful to Torah, to love each other and to merit the redemption.

Mostly, please help me to enhance my ability to recognize the futility and unnecessary energy loss that the lower self constantly challenges me with. Please enhance my ability to find a point of clarity from which I can re-channel my energy back to positive pursuits. And even though I am writing this, I know that by myself I will not succeed, that I can only succeed with this understanding if You Hashem help me to succeed with it when I ask for Your Help, and please also give me a sense of joy and relief.

May I be able to remember that I am a container for the holy neshama that you gave me, and that I have this ability at my free will point, to love, emulate, cling to and fear Hashem, and Hashem please help me succeed in choosing to do so, to receive your unending kindness in helping me surmount the lower voice negativity

common to every person.