

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Tuesday, April 10, 2012

Sefiras HaOmer, Week one - Chesed

Rabbi Leib Keleman on Simple To Remember shares in a clear way the Ramchal's Derech Hashem regarding the opportunity Hashem gives us with our lifetime to use free will to choose soul over body. He describes it in a simple to understand way. Basically Rabbi Keleman emphasizes that when we are like someone we are close to them.

Thus, emulating Hashem's lovingkindness is what brings us close to Him and should be the focus of our daily choices.

<http://www.simpletoremember.com/media/a/serving-with-all-our-blessings/>

We are in the first week of the Omer, the week of working on the midda of chesed, kindness. Truly, kindness is lovingkindness. We live in a world of intentions. If we do a kindness begrudgingly, have we accomplished in the midda of lovingkindness? Obviously it is better to have lovingkind intentions. Why it is better returns to what Rabbi Keleman brings out. Ultimately, we are here to conquer the natural inclinations of the body and ego and analytical mind, using free will to bring us into living closer to the Divine mind and bringing into this world the Thirteen Divine attributes of Mercy. In Rabbi Keleman's story about his newborn son's briss, the amazing intense tests and herculean efforts of those who saw themselves as vessels to bring to this world the thirteen Divine attributes of mercy speak for themselves. Who do we want to be? Listen to the story. It is obvious that Hashem is running the world and when people are committed to being His vessels, His light shines very brightly. Please listen to We Are Never Alone, the Unbelievable Story of a Child's Birth <http://www.simpletoremember.com/media/a/weareNeverAlone/>

The final song in the Hagadda is HadGadya. Rabbi Moshe Weinberger gives insight into the seder through this song. The entire Seder is to bring us to emunah where we can then recite Shiur HaShirim. The story of the HadGadya reveals that our limited analytical minds and our questionings and our logic have a place in showing Hashem that we are interested in learning about Him, but in the end, our logic and limited analytical minds must submit to the reality that we cannot approach the Divine Mind yet we must know it is there and accept it lovingly, willingly and with certainty. How does he explain it? In the song HadGadya, the little goat is eaten by the cat. We like the goat and therefore think the cat to be a rasha. The dog eats the cat, so we like the dog, because he gives a potch to the cat. Then the stick hits the dog, so we don't like the stick. Taking this logic all the way up, the Malach HaMavos comes out that we like him! The Malach HaMavos (good?!?) kills the shochet (bad) who slew the ox (good) that drank the water (bad) that doused the fire (good) that burned the stick (bad) that hit the dog (good) that ate the cat (bad) that ate the goat (good). But worse, according to our puny logical minds, HaKadosh Baruch Hu (Gd forbid bad?!?!?) slays the Malach HaMavos (good?!?!).

We have to comprehend our world in a far different manner, recognizing the built in limitations that we have. Our mind has many good uses, but when it comes to the spiritual realm, the Torah teaches us how to attach ourselves to the Divine mind (Tomer Devorah, the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy) and move to a place of emunah. Our intelligence can begin to sense Hashem's existence but if we try to squeeze it into our limited minds, it cannot fit there. An Infinite Divine mind cannot fit into the part of our mind that is analytic and limited. Yet there is a part of our mind that can receive awareness of the Divine Will much the way a toddler puts a whole basketball in his mouth to comprehend the basketball. It does not all fit, but the toddler can explore it a bit. Set aside analytical thinking's primary importance, for if not, we can only reach conclusions that the Yetzer Hara wishes for us to mistakenly reach.

We are in a battle for who rules our body, emotions, and analytical mind. Will our souls prevail? We have behira and instructions. The flow of challenge is intense, the consequences of our emunah or lack of it can determine if someone, like Rabbi Keleman's baby, will live because we choose well with our actions or whether Hashem will need someone else who knows how to choose and willingly and lovingly chooses to be His vessel for saving someone. Who do we want to be? Develop the insights on what we are to be mesiras nefesh with in our personalities and then choose your path. There is nothing but the simple unity of Hashem in all the world. That means His love is flowing through us and is within us and ready to be awakened. We ourselves are in the way! Let's each see what we can do about this! May we soon merit to see the geula shelama!