

## Nourishment for the Neshama

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### Shelamos comes from knowing we are attached to Hashem

I have been trying to build a bridge, with a good deal of success, from the things I like to obsess about back to pursuit of closeness to Hashem. For me, being able to dissect these things and have a response at each step that is true helps a great deal in warding off the urge to go there. I am certain I am not the only one who dwells on pain and hurt. Nevertheless, without wanting to be callous about it, I would like to help myself and hopefully help others free themselves of following these destructive thoughts by seeing them, and the pursuit of them, as the enemy themselves rather than the external occurrences that generated them as the "enemy". Here is the bridge that I am building:

If we have a pain or a hurt, we feel damaged and feel the hurt and want to criticize, blame or correct or rebuke, ventilate, complain or do something.

What I have learned is that pursuit of these thoughts takes me down in and of itself, which is a much worse place than just moving forward with having had the distressing and bothersome thing happen to me for two reasons:

1. It reflects damage to my mental and spiritual wellness, which is totally in my control (now this is extremely hard because of the sense of outrage I feel, but this is just a product of ego which is only of this world and judgmentalism which is Hashem's job and not my job).
2. By entertaining the ideas and possible actions, my identity is now being defined by the hurt or damage, which means that my emotions are attaching to the lure of the yetzer hara's beckoning me to feel lack and toward actions that will put distance between myself and Hashem. As my higher energy is entwined with actions from hurt, I become concretized there and it will be harder to free up my higher energy and have it reconnect to Hashem.

But how can a person move forward if they feel pain and hurt? How does a person untrap themselves from such a common dark place? Tomer Devorah is a great resource for how to keep our souls from getting polluted by the horrifying actions of others. It teaches us to emulate Hashem and I recommend this resource.

The Ramchal tells us that pain can be lumped into the Ramchal's purposeful explanation for our existence here...that we have suffering to endure because we are here to grow and improve or to rectify something from a previous gilgul. Recognizing that these things are kaparah and inevitable and that it makes no difference who inflicted what because Hashem did it and would have found a different venue if these characters had not been the players, or, chas v'chalila, sent physical debilitation or sickness which could even have prevented me from doing mitzvahs and serving Him, requires acceptance, acceptance of what a lifetime is for and a change of expectations of people and this temporal reality. The times we lose this battle of acceptance are the times the yetzer hara succeeds in putting doubt in our minds about the truth that Hashem is real and He runs the world. This is the desire of the yetzer hara, to make us think that it is up to us, that there is Hashem and something else, but it is a fundamental lie. There is only Hashem and by remembering that He is one and sends only good, then we accept and increase our intentions to give Him nachas and daven that the need for the kaparahs be taken away.

To restore a sense of shelamos, we feel we have the ability to remain connected no matter what, that no matter if we are overlooked, neglected, shunned, lose our blessings, lied about, misunderstood, taken advantage of, etc, inside, we have the connection to have good intentions in what we do to continue building our connection to the Eternal one, which connections are crucial for our eternal reward, may He have no need to remove our blessings but rather send an angel, Moshiach, to redeem us. From Hashem's perspective, the matter that is causing us to feel so hurt in our reactions is either a kaparah or something sent to give us the opportunity to increase our bitachon. (I realize this sounds like religious hyperbole, but really it doesn't sound that way if you think of it as increase our bitachon so that we turn away from the

yetzer's temptations and develop inner peace and shelaim, because choosing to concentrate on the only truth there is, which is Hashem, and choosing to give Him nachas by doing mitzvahs is what He knows our neshamas need to truly feel filled.) If we realize the protection that is there, the beauty of the sense of shelaim that bitachon in Him affords, we can see that any idea to follow or concretize our negative feelings and urges is an egotistical lie that cannot possibly defend us.

Now, would it be better if everyone were nice little angels and never hurt anyone? In our own daled amos, we can create such a place, a little bit of Heaven on Earth. But that is not what the overall world of people is - for now, we have the opportunity to "just say no" to attaching our emotions or developing our identities as outcomes of the pain inflicted on us, which means, really, saying Yes to truly believing that there is Hashem, He is running things for our good, and that moving our focus back toward His mitzvahs and commandments builds a sense of shelaim because WE are the ultimate decision makers in how we conduct ourselves no matter what circumstances are placed before us. Once we experience this inner peace, this sense of shelaim, the pursuit of negative urges becomes a much inferior choice, because we know for certainty that a path following those negative urges is destructive to our mental wellbeing, our spiritual wellbeing, and puts a roadblock in our sense of shelaim, true shelaim, which can only come from attachment to truth, to Hashem, who created us in His image to emulate His Yud Gimmel middos. We can safely leave behind all revenge, judgment, criticism and negative feelings.