

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Sorting through disappointments with love of man vs comprehending the unconditional love of Hashem - aligning ourselves with His Will is good self-esteem

During the 9 days we lower our sense of self, in mourning, as we remember what we lost when the Temples were destroyed. During Adar we increase our joy and in Av we lower our joy.

Lowering our joy and mourning – without going into a disempowered state – brings to mind the understanding that when we walked into the Temple, we had visual proof of Hashem's existence. Emunah was not a concept, it was visually accessible, and we would receive an inoculation that we took home with us to help us counter-balance the negativity that every one of us is intended to struggle with. When we have visual and experiential understanding, it is far easier for the body, the lower self, to see its free willed choice to align our will with Hashem's will.

The understanding that we once had visual and experiential validation for emunah is crucial for us today, so beaten down by years of anti-semitism, years of hatred being thrust upon us. How far back do we have to go to remember a time when the Jewish people were beloved by the world? If you can recall a time, please submit a comment. The formation of the Jewish people through Yaakov came with the alienation of Esav through the whole story of the birthright. For all these years, the feeling of being loved by anyone other than Hashem is not in our history, although there may have been brief times of it when Yosef ruled Egypt and when King Solomon's temple stood.

Imagine a young child who feels only hatred and abuse. Is that child going to grow up with good self-esteem? A child develops self-esteem based on the messages they see in the eyes of the people raising them, parents, teachers, extended family and friends.

The Jewish nation has a Father Who is our Chosson, Who not only loves us at all times but continues at every moment to give to us and sustain us. It is an essential reality that explains our survival to this day. Yet as individuals, who has not heard of a self-hating Jew. Who has not seen a Jew who questions Hashem's existence and although follows the halachos impeccably may not know in the very center of one's being that Hashem truly exists, having never really felt their own soul and the pleasure of feeling the soul itself?

Often children who grow up without unconditional love develop low self-esteem. It is quite painful Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twersky has written many books on recovering from low self-esteem. It is about comprehending who we are in our essence. How can anyone with a tzelem elokim who has felt the soul have believable self-esteem?

The sorting out of the pleasures of the body versus the pleasure of feeling the soul are crucial.

How many people hide out of fear of other people's closeness? Who do we choose to allow close enough to our hearts who we trust would never hurt us, who strive to give unconditional love? Do we really believe that Hashem's love is unconditional when we see so much din in the world?

Hashem and all the din we see are total love. When we comprehend that the soul is covered by a body that needs to be corrected and shepherded back on path, to straighten us out, we come to understand how Hashem is all loving and all good.

And when we are afraid of people, or afraid that being vulnerable to those we love could hurt us, is this coming from baggage or from the actual circumstances? Are we cynically cutting ourselves off from each other and thereby NOT repairing the sin of sinas chinum that caused the destruction of the Temple?

We are the same soul of the Jewish people today that was the soul of the Jewish people then and always. There isn't another Jewish people in history or on the moon. It is we, and we are they. We are the appearance of the Jewish people in these times. And we have the power, the immense power, to put aside our hatreds of others, our self-doubts, our cynicism, our judgments, our disempowering feelings and more – just by remembering with a tear that there was a time when we had visual confirmation of the spiritual reality of the world, experiential emunah.

THAT is real. Our negativity (FEAR) is false evidence appearing real.

We are smart. Let's each one tell Hashem that we wish to divest ourselves of our negativity NOW and to redeem from within the golus of our subconscious the piece of tzelem elokim that we have trapped within our negativity. And may each of us redeem Him in this way.

And may we be zocheh to see a Yom Tov instead of a day of mourning!!!