

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Torah sources directing us to choose soul over body and how to do it, with a podcast example and updated tool kit

Mesillas Yesharim by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto (Ramchal) brings us along a spiritual journey from being watchful that we do not breach the negative commandments, to zeal in doing the positive commandments, to learning how to “clean” ourselves of bad traits and of sins, including those that are rationalized because of the heart’s being still partially afflicted by what the Ramchal labels as lusts that then lead us to relax our standards. When we succeed in removing from our hearts whatever desires might sway us toward bad traits and sins, we move upward from watchfulness to being a clean person.

The description above reveals that it is within our ability to bring our subconscious upwards to consciousness so that we “will recognize as evil, and withdraw from every sin that he had committed, though it were the slightest of the slight.” (p.107, Chapter 10, Concerning the Trait of Cleanliness)

“You will now note the distinction between the watchful and the clean man (although they are closely related). The first is watchful of his deeds and sees to it that he does not sin in relation to what he knows, and what is universally acknowledged to be sinful; however, he is still not so much master of himself as to keep his heart from being pulled along by natural lust and inclining him to rationalize in relation to things whose evil is not thus acknowledged. For even though he exerts himself to conquer his evil inclination and to subdue his desires, he will not, because of this, change his nature; He will not remove bodily lust from his heart. All he will be able to do is overcome it and be governed, not by it, but by reason. The darkness of earthiness, however, will still persist in its work of persuasion and deception. But when a person habituates himself to watchfulness to the point where he completely cleanses himself of the acknowledged sins, and accustoms himself to zealous Divine service so that love and yearning for his Creator grow strong within him, then the force of this habituation will draw him farther from the realm of earthiness and direct his mind towards spiritual perfection. Eventually he will attain to perfect cleanliness, a state in which physical desire is extinguished from his heart through the strengthening within him of the longing for Gd. His vision will then possess the purity and clarity that I spoke of above. He will not be deceived, he will not be reached by the darkness of earthiness, and his deeds will be absolutely clean.” (pp. 107-109)

With the above excerpt in mind, when we use our free will to choose soul over body in order to show Hashem our love and fear of Him and our desire to emulate Him, slowly we grow in the feeling of calmness that is the result of yearning for connection and attachment. When we are ready to do battle with our more subconscious

rationalizations, what I am finding is that we can have breakthroughs in areas that before might have been life-long enigmas of negativity that we may have accepted as who we are! Perhaps when we sincerely yearn to serve Hashem, then Hashem, Who is behind our nature 100%, and Who only does good, is standing there ready willing and able to give us breakthroughs because it is now good for us to have that breakthrough as He sees that we will re-direct ourselves truly to grow to be more like Him, to bring out the aspect of Him within us!

May we all grow in clarity that we are here to sanctify Hashem's Name and lovingly embrace the challenges we face to make ourselves in His Image, as the Tomer Devorah teaches us. May we create unity by submitting our subjective realities to the sweetness of Torah, mitzvahs and middos and may Hashem Yisborach help us in our journey and redeem us speedily!

Please listen to this 7 minute podcast example of how the internal process described below is used on the spot, in an every day example that can happen many times a day.
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Below is the toolbox and Torah basis that is reflected in the above podcast.

Daily Hisbodidus – Torah Basis

(Concept of the Baal Shem Tov: Submission – breaking what grips us to our bad traits, along with Rav Dessler's terminology, nullification of the lower world due to emunah in Hashem and His goodness)

Thank you Hashem for the flow of thought, emotion, and consciousness to this otherwise inanimate body that houses it, may Your name be praised,

(Concept of the Baal Shem Tov: Separation – the use of daas to discern - along with Rav Dessler's terminology, total just and good Divine Providence and control of nature)

and for the ability to perceive, experience and learn, for the gift of free willed choice, and for the capacity to discern and integrate.

(Deeper with the work of breaking the hold that our attachment to negativity has on us by applying behira, free willed choice – uses Rabbi Shapira's method to access unlimited free will)

Please flow through me unlimited will power to direct the recipe of personality, circumstance and emotional flow You send through my heart each day so that through the use of conscious choice which You bestow upon me, I can release the innate natural gift of strong subconscious deep emotional bonding from imperfection (unreality, basic human nature) to perfection (reality of the Divine mind, connection to Divine attributes),

(Concept of Rabbi Dessler to sanctify Hashem's name by attaching our hearts in loving service to a place that our limited self cannot go, expressing emunah and strengthening Yiras Shemayim)

with the desiring result being that all of my emotions are directed first to loving and fearing and emulating You,.

(Concept of Baal Shem Tov – Sweetening – seeing oneself as a pure good neshama and a healthier relationship between soul and body - see

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May Your Will and Attributes as expressed in Torah be fully conscious within me and grant me success in bringing Your Attributes and Will to visibility in my actions, my relationships, my thoughts, and my emotions. May I be strengthened with unlimited conscious free will to approach my day from loving awareness of choosing what is pleasing to You

Occupy our Emotions - the Process

"I recognize that I am emotionally bonded to this pattern/thought/experience/programming/ nature and I see that it is unpleasant. Hashem please grant success to the choice I declare to shift my emotional bonding from imperfection to love and fear of You. Please see my determination and give me the will power, to the very depths of this emotion, and help me to match the emotion with will power to calm my subconscious clinging to this self-destructive connection. (I am awaiting the will power), I sincerely want to no longer be emotionally bonded with this thought/experience /memory. [once the emotion is calm and the feeling of will power there, say:]

"Hashem I choose that the consciousness that is bonding the emotions You send through me shift (Please shift consciousness given by You which is subconsciously keeping those emotions above my behira and out of my ability to control). Right now this consciousness is emotionally bonding me to a pattern/thought/experience/programming/ nature that is unpleasant. I recognize that this piece of consciousness and emotional bonding have been above my behira and You have shepherded me and guided me to take accountability for my actions(through suffering consequences of the emotional pain of separation of consciousness from You). Please give direction of this orphaned consciousness into my hand. I beseech You to listen to my free willed choice. I direct this consciousness and emotional bonding affecting my actions to detach from pattern/thought/experience/programming/ nature and re-attach to love and fear and emulation of Hashem alone. Please lead me in the path that I wish to go, for the unification and sanctification of Your name, for now I realize that this has been sent for me to responsibly bring the consciousness You give me back into harmony with Your Will. That is my sincere choice and desire, for there is nothing but Your simple unity in all the world. Please grant success to my free willed choice to direct this consciousness and emotional bonding to love and fear and emulating Hashem and please destroy all negative spiritual entities which I may have created by misuse in the past of this consciousness and emotion. I regret it and ask that this negativity be taken out of the world and that my teshuva be a zechus and benefit for all Klal Yisrael."