

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Yesod shebe Hod - Omer and Parshas Emor

Reflecting on the week of hod – of a week of yielding, of humility, of bowing to the honor of Hashem – perhaps we have more perspective on what we say in morning davening: “You are awesome, O Gd, from Your Sanctuaries, O Gd of Israel – it is He Who grants might and power to the people, blessed is Gd.”

Whatever qualities that we are happy to have the use of, whatever health we enjoy, it is incumbent upon us to thank Hashem for He is the Source of it. We are in possession of it for the 120 years we are here, but we cannot take credit for it. The honor is Hashem's.

From this basis do we love and appreciate each other. For in every Jew, we see goodness and therefore Hashem's kindness.

And when we are in distress, may we realize only that He is attempting to elicit from us an awakening of something good that He has implanted within us that we have yet to shine. For His vision for each of us is only to bring out within us His aspects so that we may merit the good He desires to give us after 120 year.

Each time we stop doing the things that keep us from recognizing His Kingship, we grow in hod and in unity with every Jew.

Parshas Emor – the word emor has the same letters as omer. The Parsha describes how the Kohanim are to maintain purity within themselves. The Kohanim are qualified to go into the kadosh hakadoshim to daven to Hashem on behalf of the Jewish people. Each person has an inner kadosh hakadoshim – our pure neshamas. We are to make our hearts, our ruach, into a vessel, a kli, to contain Hashem's attributes. The Hebrew word kli is composed of a Kof from the word Kohen, a Lamed from the word Levi, and a Yud from the word Yisroel. Every person can develop seichel, the mind, the neshama, and choose to bring out the aspect of the Divine image we can know because we are neshamas - we can move ourselves toward purity, like the Kohanim., by building in our hearts a kli to catch what is in our own neshamas.

What it takes is to examine our thoughts and truthfully analyze them compared to Hashem's will and attributes. Is what we are attached to the truth or have we improvised based on the world class life coach the Yetzer Hara? If we are honest, we see that mostly we are improvising, sometimes with patterns that have grown into tall trees with many branches and roots. When we are fortunate to see a glimmer of where our habit has grown from something less than what Hashem wants, that alone is a blessing. We need Hashem's help to really change ourselves, for our human nature is totally sourced in Him. The glimmer we get is a gift He gives us when we merit through our efforts to yearn to be more. Grab those glimmers and then beg! Beg Hashem to please accept our teshuva and help us lovingly and gently to detach from the root that is not emes and re-attach it to emes. We want to move toward purifying ourselves to build an inner vessel in our hearts strengthened with the insight, a vessel to hold what we know from our neshama is true, built out of the comprehension the glimmer shows us with the heartfelt strength of our misdoings.

May our constant yearnings bring us breakthroughs in our actions and relationships that bring peace, understanding and love amongst us.