

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Stop attaching emotions to hurtful thoughts just because we are in the right - it is an addictive counterfeit way of trying to protect, validate and soothe ourselves. Instead, elevate fallen yiras Hashem.

We live in a world where our thoughts participate in the circumstances that confront us! Hashem has given our thoughts, speech and deeds creative strength in affecting His Influence in the world, to a point. Nothing that is not His Will happens here; however, He "makes Himself dependent" upon our free willed choices to do what is good in His eyes or the opposite. There is abundance coming to us, but if we, through our garments of thought, speech and deed, do things that are willfully opposite to Hashem's Will or counter to His thirteen attributes of Mercy, in His love for us, He enclothes our own errors into our lives in order to give us an opportunity to "work it through."

The Torah teaches us to have a relationship with Hashem. Our ability to have a relationship with Hashem based on our five senses ended with the destruction of the First Temple, when the Shechina went into golus. Now, to approach a relationship with Hashem, we must go through prayer, hisbodidus, hisboninus (contemplation of Hashem), and emulation of His Thirteen Attributes of mercy. This way of approaching a relationship with Hashem is purposeful. When we had the perceptual comfort of relating to Hashem, we did not develop the internal one that we needed to inoculate ourselves from committing the aveiras for which we lost the First temple, murder, adultery and idol worship. We have until this very day not succeeded entirely as a people creating a relationship with Hashem that would unify us and restore the Shechina to the temple, may we be able to do so very speedily. And we can't blame our plight on not having prophets. Nor can we get away with grasshopper mentality - both of which can easily throw us off the trail of seeking obtainable clarity and relationship. We have the Torah that tells us that the matter is close to our heart and within our ability to do.

Why is it so hard? What is keeping us from just beginning and growing a relationship with Hashem that incrementally could bring us to the desired redemption? We feel we are right without realizing that being right brings us into a harmful thought pattern - being right becomes a counterfeit way to soothe whatever bothered us in the first place and we quickly become addicted sub-consciously and our minds loop as we stew and mistakenly think this soothes us- it is nothing more than a false sense of superiority over the matter or other person that we take as a counterfeit for genuine calmness.

Each person probably has their own set of reasons for why they do not verbally introspect or speak in hisbodidus to Hashem when matters upset us. Yet I suggest a common denominator that might exist that would be common to all the reasons, and that is a question. Do we sincerely, with all our heart, and all our soul, and all our might love Hashem and believe that He alone is the true Gd and that there is nothing but His simple unity in all the world? Do we sincerely believe He is there to talk to and that He can help, and is, in fact, the only One Who can help?

If we truly believed that, then when we get warped ideas, negative thoughts, angry moments, disappointments and the full range of human emotions that we experience throughout the day, we would judge those thoughts and feelings as not precious to Hashem and that recognition alone would be an acknowledgment to Hashem that we know He is behind the strength of every mood, every occurrence and every word spoken. Once we recognize that the strength behind every thought, word or action, whether coming from us or another, is Hashem, then judging the thought as precious or not precious in Hashem's eyes constantly re-frames whatever the issue is in a manner that brings our focus and emotional connection back into alignment with Hashem's Will or attributes because the next question after "is this precious in Hashem's eyes?" if the answer is "no" is "Hashem please show me gently how to do what IS precious in Your eyes."

1. I judge this thought or feeling as precious/not precious to Hashem: Sometimes we have negative

feelings that are dark, threatening, suggestive of emotional conduct that would inflict conflict or harm or insult or abuse or ill-will upon another person. For example, we might feel insecure in a relationship. This might cause us to seek validation in odd ways. Ask ourselves, is feeling insecure precious in Hashem's eyes? When we remember that Hashem loves us at all times and is interested in sending to us abundance, the simple answer when we are angry or afraid or in temper of any kind, "NO! I judge this painful internal fear/anxiety/stress/anger is NOT precious to Hashem! It is obvious that the thought or feeling is NOT precious to Hashem, Who loves to Give and to create abundance for us. It is WE, PEOPLE, who block the abundance by diverting the amazing neshama that Hashem gives us from what the Torah tells us is good and right to what the yetzer hara rationalizes for our egos and body as respectable, self-actualizing, pleasurable, powerful, and other.

2. Please Hashem show me gently how to apply Torah and knowledge of Your Middos to this matter so that what I do I know from Torah IS precious in Your eyes. The goal is to change our relationship with our negative fearful/angry/temperamental responses natural to a person that exist within or daily struggles. The relationship that we seek is for the emotional strength to be re-directed to fear of Hashem alone – we want to stop having our emotions captured by fear or worry or anger or insecurity or any of the range of negative disempowering thoughts that might present themselves as magnets for our emotional attachment to darken our lives. By telling Hashem that we wish to attach our Gd given emotions to what is precious in His eyes, we apply the effort of "calling out to Hashem." Hashem lifts us from the place of darkness, the darkness dissipates and we feel relief and calm.

Once a person has this experiential understanding, the ability for a thought to magnetically attract our emotions towards darkness is less. Once we see our unhappiness as optional, we become empowered.

And this is an internal struggle we may be faced with many times a day, or even many times an hour. Each victory in elevating our fallen fear of Hashem is there to strengthen and quicken us the next time we are faced with a similar choice. And as we begin to shift the mountain of negativity, hour by hour, day by day, incrementally, we begin to experience how fear of Hashem brings not only calmness and clarity, but also deeper emunah and bitachon and relationship.

In today's world, we CAN have an intimate relationship with Hashem. It takes US CHOOSING at our free will point to elevate our fallen fear of Hashem rather than reactively dancing to the song of the yetzer hara like juke boxes, repeating in our minds negative thoughts that we think will soothe us from feeling violated but which are really addictive attempts to feel superior based on what we judge as our being in the right and that create destructive spiritual influences in the world blocking the abundance that Hashem is sending to us. Hashem is waiting patiently for us.

May each small incremental step we take help us be zocheh to redemption.