

Nourishment for the Neshama

<http://lvracha.com>

Thursday, January 12, 2012

Choices and Watchfulness - and updated toolbox

The first step to moving our consciousness away from our bodies, our thoughts and our emotions is to recognize that NOT doing so is a great danger, as the Mesillas Yesharim states p. 31 Chapter 2 Concerning the Trait of Watchfulness:

"One who walks this world without considering whether his way of life is good or bad is like a blind man walking along the seashore, who is in very great danger, and whose chances of being lost are far greater than those of his being saved. For there is no difference between natural blindness and self-inflicted blindness, the shutting of one's eyes as an act of will and desire...the running on the impetus of their habits and their ways without leaving themselves time to evaluate their actions and ways, and, as a result, falling into evil without noticing it. ...this is one of the clever devices of the evil inclination – to mount pressure unrelentingly against the hearts of men so as to leave them no leisure to consider and observe the type of life they are leading. For it realizes that if they were to devote even a slight degree of attention to their ways, there is no question but that they would immediately begin to repent of their deeds and that regret would wax in them until they would leave off sinning altogether...the evil inclination...is a warrior and well versed in deception. One cannot escape it without great wisdom and a broad outlook...If a man looks to himself the Holy One Blessed be He helps him, and he is saved from the evil inclination. But if he gives no heed to himself, Hashem will certainly not superintend him; for if he does not pity himself, who should pity him? "If I am not for myself [for my soul spiritually] who will be for me?"

The second step is to approach the matter of watchfulness. Rebbetzin Heller in day 135 of Duties of the Heart teaches us (paraphrased below) more of the details of being watchful in the choices we make and why:

"Choices change us. Good choices change how others see us and indirectly based on how others treat us how we see ourselves, for the better. But what about when we make bad choices (and these can be subtly bad choices).

There is a heavenly scribe that writes down all the inner emotions that might generate conflict within us that are practiced in our inner life. Once the scribes have written in the book, it brings other things into the picture. Like moods. The moods relate to our inner climate.

If I think "Life is good because I can make choices," my moods are going to differ from if I think "Life has no meaning unless I have pleasure."

We CAN change some of our moods – those moods that result from the message that has been inscribed by previous [bad] choices can sound so credible that [Gd-forbid] the [previous choices and subsequent related moods]can't be erased. Learn we CAN question what was inscribed already and ask "Is this what I want my narrative to be forever, is this what I want to decide my mood, shall I let this bring me to anxiety? What do I really want?"

Step 3 is to keep a cheshbon hanefesh, to daily speak to Hashem and ask Him to help lift us above our natural reactions and to help us move from emotional reaction to conscious choice to serve Hashem [and thereby receive the greatest pleasure, the purpose of our existence].

Below is the updated toolbox that I use:

Daily Hisbodidus

Thank you Hashem for the flow of thought, emotion, and consciousness to this otherwise inanimate body that houses it, may Your name be praised, and for the ability to perceive, experience and learn, for the gift of free willed choice, and for the capacity to discern and integrate. 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), with the desiring result being that all of my emotions are directed first to loving and fearing and emulating You, . 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 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."