

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Confessions of imperfection - how we choose is what matters

In today's world, it seems as though people are very comfortable sharing their distaste for things I think, feel, and do. Some if it is entirely their perception, some of it is totally my fault, and everywhere in between. But the bottom line for someone who can't stand it when people are upset with them is that it is absolutely numbing to the emotions. All day long I have a shield up – better behave this way or that because otherwise someone will shoot me.

Today I realized people will shoot at me no matter what because they aren't even looking at who I am, just at who they find me convenient to be to fit their perception or value to rant against. And that is human too, because it is natural for us to try to establish a sense of self based on shared values with a group, which means there is a certain amount of discerning and discriminating and bonding that is natural to human behavior. That is ultimately true.

Torah shows us, however, that our ancestors were not perfect. The Torah depicts their faults and mistakes quite clearly, as well as how they handled it in terms of teshuva and what happens to them. This starts with Adom and Chava! Nothing in the Torah tells us that we have to be without flaws. Rather, the real star of the Torah is a gift that is not mentioned directly in the Torah, and that is the gift of real free will, free will that makes it possible for us to be self-determining in a two world picture, free will that enables us to become great in the eyes of Hashem.

When we choose soul over body, we demonstrate our commitment to Hashem and to living His Will. And the more we make that choice, the more value we have for all eternity. And that is what makes it possible to face the fact that we are flawed, imperfect and mortal

On the brighter side, it is invigorating to remember that he flaws, imperfection and bodily mortality are not who we are essentially! These personality characteristics and circumstances are what our soul needs to choose between and we rise to high levels based on our determined choice to choose soul over body.

For great shiurim on this, please visit www.becomingdivine.com a site established by Rabbi Yaakov Zalman Labinsky for those interested in enabling themselves through shiurim and tools to make the choice of soul over body as often as possible.