

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Friday, July 02, 2010

The crux of chosenness

Below is a draft of a dialogue I am trying to make to help us out of negativity once again. To print, click tiny printer icon at the bottom of the essay. Comments welcome as this is a developing work.

Inspiration for the challenge of doing this can be taken from Tehillim 123 Verse 4:

"Our soul is fully sated with the mockery of the complacent ones, with the contempt of the arrogant."

The Artscroll version offers this comment on verse 4 above:

"Israel's attempt at spiritual fulfillment and its effort to teach that life must have a spiritual goal are greeted with derision by those who are content with and proud of their material and hedonistic successes."

May this essay help to overcome this internally, where we have the potential ability to do so!

Upset happens. Let's say it is a real threat, not just a negative fear. A threat, where someone is taking action. I feel I have to "do something" to respond (when we feel lack, it generates will to do something - it puts us at our free will point, are we going to choose to bring something constructive or destructive to the world?), yet because I have limited political power, what I "do" might likely be used against me - because I have no political power in the situation, my word against the word of someone more credible in the circles that are trying to be influenced. How do we decide how to respond constructively? Are we able to find the high road if we don't first know there is a low road? A young person, idealistic, may be somewhat naive or inexperienced...then when put to the test, we develop our actions to conform to the moral standards we hold. What morality shall we go by? Will we meet our own standards for ourselves? Will we settle? Will we become cynical?

Lower self: "I want to be right, I want to protect myself, I don't want to be dominated. I am not being unreasonable..." (these are adult concerns that can and do seem to run our lives.)

Higher self : I am going to tell you something...these are secondary concerns (because we have a primary concern of Avodas Hashem.)

Lower self " I think I should go stick up for myself, go talk to them and try to get to the bottom of it"

Higher self " They will deny it and take a small grain of what you say and build a profile that makes YOU look like the bad guy – just look at the Flotilla for what I mean. They will react to your statements as accusations and will further alienate others to you by saying what you did. That is the skill of politics because of the shallow view most people use to make moral assessments

Lower self "I am so frustrated. Do you expect me to just take it? I feel lack and I have will to do something"

Higher self "Everything that happens is for our ultimate growth and development!"

Lower self "What - I am supposed to become a gibbor in humiliation?"

Higher self "Humiliation is actually very good for the soul. It humbles us and purifies us. But there is another step. Everything that happens is for our ultimate growth and development in becoming more like Hashem, more merciful, more loving.

Lower self "You mean what I am supposed to do is love these people?!?!?"

Higher self "Actually yes. Because Hashem is counting on YOU to pray for them, to love them, to forgive them. It is a great honor and privilege to do so."

Lower self "That is out of this world. No one does that..I have never seen it. I think you are crazy. You must be out of your mind. Who would do that???"

Higher self "Moshe Rebbeinu. Levi Yitzchak of Berditchiv. And many more, like in the story of Yerabum where the prophet davened for the king who wanted to kill the prophet when the king's hand shriveled."

Lower self "I am not on that level. You must be kidding me. How can I be sincere about that? It is too hard."

Higher self "Are you interested in primary concerns (spiritual goals) for yourself or secondary concerns? Are the secondary concerns going to keep you from approaching what you are sent here to do?"

Lower self "what do you mean? I am here to survive, take responsibility, do acts of kindness, keep mitzvahs, etc. These are my hishtadlus and my concerns."

Higher self "Well, there is one piece of Jewish wisdom that seems to be getting lost here....all of that may be true with the physical Higher self of the world but you are not here for a smooth ride..you are here to repair something and to grow into a being that is similar to Hashem so that when you get to the next world your reward will be enjoyable for you. How enjoyable will it be to be part of Hashem when you don't have that much in common with Him? He is the kindest, most patient, most merciful, most generous, most loving, most everythingest being. If you can't even love some of his creatures just because they insult you, want to control you, overpower you and want to harm you when Hashem is all day long feeding and sustaining them and other creatures who ignore, insult, cause damage to the heavenly spheres (including YOU at times) and more, you aren't going to be much use to Him, now are you???. Let Him know He can count on you here...feel His love every time you might otherwise feel outrage and blame them for doing ridiculous evil deeds and cry out to Him to forgive us, to have mercy on us, to send a new light into the world and a leader to teach us how to rise above what we have all come to do...focus on secondary concerns as primary. Do it because we all suffer from the condition of human nature and we are one body with many limbs and organs. They are YOU."

Lower self, "But how will that help me out of my predicament?"

Higher self "Hashem can do anything. Let Him know He can count on YOU to shine His characteristics in difficult situations He will take care of the rest."

Lower self: "But what about complaining and crying out?"

Higher self "Cry out to Hashem Who has the power"

Lower self "But doesn't that let the bullies take over? Don't we have to stand up to their lies and power plays?"

Higher self "You can't stop them. They even taunt you by saying that to your face. The charge they feel because of it, perhaps that is their reward. Perhaps they are being rewarded here with that. Do you want that for a reward? Only Hashem can stop them and He will or will not, when He is ready."

Lower self "and in the meanwhile, they rule?"

Higher self "You rule. Who is mighty? He who overcomes his nature. You can be like Hashem. Think two world picture."

Lower self "This is a democracy. The underdog gets heard and the society makes room for him, that is how it works in America. I want to scream!"

Higher self "so scream. Are you really going to rely on people though?"

Lower self "Well that matters, doesn't it?"

Higher self "what tactics you use and rely on matters more than success."

Lower self "Getting myself all worked up and screaming at the top of my lungs - no one will care?"

Higher self "take it a step further...look how the world responds with sympathy to the plight of those blowing themselves up. Sure they may listen and have sympathy. But look at your tactics. Are you willing to go down that road?"

Lower self "That is what people do. We live in a democracy. If I am upset I go to complain and I get heard."

Higher self "that makes sense, but only if it is done within limits."

Lower self "Rules at a knife fight?"

Higher self "once the door is open to screaming, people don't have good barometers. If someone blows themselves up, it may feel at a glance like the ultimate in screaming. This speaks to the part of us that cares about the underdog. But the intensity level of it reveals something else.?"

Lower self "what do you mean? "

Higher self "The intensity level of it screams I want to kill Jews. It does not scream anything about wanting compromise."

Lower self "How does this relate to my situation?"

Higher self "do you want revenge? Do you want to be right? Do you want to be protected? Or do you want their destruction and removal from power, do you want them to be nullified? All of these things are truly not up to you. This is Hashem's business. Your screaming is for things that are too intense. Yes, they may need to do teshuva. But you are just looking at the harm and it is filling you with hate and lowly responses. Screaming in your case is not bound by kosher boundaries. So no screaming allowed. It is too hard to dole out in proper proportions and will only escalate

Lower self "Oh come on! People complain and go to beis din and get heard"

Higher self "trust me, scream out to Hashem for forgiveness, mercy and to help you become more like He, be His partner in asking for forgiveness for all the Jewish people because this is our nature. Let Him know He can count on YOU and He will take care of your issues, you know He can in a second. You do believe Hashem can juggle all these free will points to make them come out according to His will, don't you?"

Lower self "I want to go there but won't I look like a wimp?"

Higher self "In whose eyes? And for how long? A lifetime? For eternity you will not look like a wimp."

Lower self "but how will that protect my family? "

Higher self "what exactly is wrong? How do you have the gall to think that it is not all for everyone's growth and development in becoming more like Hashem? Isn't that what is happening? Are you complaining that the primary concern is that we should strive to become like Hashem? Be muvater. Shine light. Address things that come up with honesty, kindness, responsibility and with proper boundaries on hurtfulness in place – no hurtful talk, no hurtful actions." Would you really rather that it was just all about secondary concerns?

Lower self "no, I don't think so. Can I really do it though? Won't I slip back and get caught up again in my hatefulness and desire for fairness and justice?"

Higher self " We all do. That is human nature. But humanity is counting on you to rise above that. Yes there is pain, but uprooting hatred and vengeance and hurtfulness that is carnivorous and destructive is crucial to the human soul. Even when there is pain that is not on that level, use this dialogue. Just read through it again. And let it take you where you really want to go, to the primary concern we all have, to make ourselves in the image of Hashem, merciful, lovingkind, patient, overlooking and more. And the world is hungry for connection to Hashem. If the Jews don't do it, who will? We surely do not want these

attributes to disappear from the world. This is Jewish wisdom that we need today. Can we count on YOU to shine Hashem's light into this world, so that all the nations of the world can see His Attributes??