

## Nourishment for the Neshama

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### Disconnecting Self-Esteem from Ego For Health of Each

By way of analogy to the Knee Joint which brings together two bones to work together

REVISED - also correlates to image of 

We need to tease apart ego and self-esteem. This is "the knee" between our lower self and our higher self. In actuality, the lower and higher selves are parts of one soul, but careful discernment is needed by us to make distinguishments. In essence, imagine a continuum with the higher soul rising up and the lower soul reaching downward, with free will at the meeting point. Our free will often gives us an illusion of two "independent" sides to us, let's use that illusion to build a way to learn to develop healthy ego as well as healthy self-esteem. To properly engage our free-willed choice, let's imagine that the lower and higher souls are two distinct spectrums, one belonging to this world only and another belonging to a higher world intended to affect this world. **Confusion is when we attribute self esteem to ego** (e.g, power, this is Amalek)

The lower self and the higher self are like separate bones - the shin and the thigh - who meet at the knee. What is the spiritual knee? I am suggesting it is our free will point, subjected to the ego from the lower self and the yearning for self esteem from the higher self. Why is it important and safe to rip self-esteem from being defined by the ego? The basic truth of the world is that Hashem is completely in charge. He is the only Power. The entire world has its place within Hashem. Anything that we are egotistically drawn to and label as feeling good about ourselves is at best a crutch or at worst a counterfeit stemming from a lack of comprehension that self-esteem is on a higher part of the continuum that is so qualitatively different from the lower part of the continuum that there is benefit it compartmentalizing its attributes, referring to it as a spectrum of emulating Hashem's attributes and using our free will to grow in emulating Hashem.



Healthy ego - top of lower self, belongs in same category as body parts. We need to understand ourselves and others in order to relate with people to accomplish what needs to be done.

Healthy self esteem—entry point to the higher self, bringing us onto an infinite path of closeness with Hashem. It is a constant awareness that we have an aspect of the Divine Image within us which we can bring out at every moment, bringing meaning through our free willed choices.

When we have healthy self esteem, we utilize our body and ego and resources to serve Hashem (this is emunah)

Ultimately what I am suggesting is that free will is the meeting place on the continuum of the upper and lower soul and is like a knee cap connecting two seemingly distinct spectrums (one leg but two

entirely separate bones). Perhaps the image of **נ** which is one but has different parts gives a hint with the upper Yud being the higher world and the lower yud being this world and the connective vav. We have to know which spectrum our emotions and ideas are coming from in order to choose truth from falsehood, good from evil, Gdcentered action from egocentered action. WHAT GETS IN THE WAY THE MOST IS CONFUSION OVER WHERE OUR SELF-ESTEEM COMES FROM. This would be an example of fallen emunah! **Confusion is when we attribute self esteem to the ego** and lower self spectrum because healthy self-esteem can only come from comprehension that we have an aspect of the Divine image within us that we can choose or not to bring out. Whether or not we bring it out, the very reality that we COULD bring it out is to be respected. The more we grow in choosing to bring out Hashem's attributes, the more we draw closer to Him, and the healthier our self-esteem and the healthier (and more humble) our ego becomes..