

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Perhaps we can try to end the golus of Esav during the summer Days of Esav ?

The days of Esav – Rabbi Nivin www.newchabura.com teaches from the Leshem that during the times of the year when there is extreme darkness (winter) and extreme light (summer), we must be mindful of the dangers pulling on us, drawing us into challenges where we have to be disciplined and controlled, saying no to despair and passions respectively to the seasons.

Esav could have established spiritual channels for the 365 negative commandments, which would have made our work much easier. But he did not care about the birthright enough to exercise the innate strength and discipline Hashem gave him in potential. As a result, those channels are for us to struggle with, in every generation, rectifying the soul of the Jewish people for his failure. The times when we are most challenged are when the darkness and light cycles affect our physical beings the most, the times when it is hardest to balance spiritual and physical goals.

We have been having a record-setting week of heat – and a power outage that lasted for about a week due to a high powered dangerous storm called a derecho. From Richmond to West Virginia, to Maryland and southern Jersey, households threw out all the food in their refrigerators and freezers and sweltered while over-extended utility workers worked around the clock to restore power.

People are hot. Tempers are pressed to their limits. Homes are near uninhabitable. Broiling on the outside, we are boiling on the inside. And what comes squeezing out?

Desire. We want. We expect. We hold the utility company accountable. We scream out to our elected officers. Help us! We want our power back. WE WANT POWER.

Hashem has all the power. How do we comprehend this environmental reality in the face of the days of Esav so that we can use it to serve Him?

The key is in the words we want....we want power, we want and we want. Does this sound like us in the desert with Moshe? I think so! We want water! We want quail! We want equity! And on and on. We are the same Jewish people, the same soul, then and now.

So what can we say we have learned from 2500 years of hindsight and Torah study? And how do we apply this to repairing what Esav did not care to do in establishing the birthright?

Perhaps we can take an honest peak at the things we are proud of and double check them to see if they are, in fact, serving Hashem's will first or our will first. Whose will is primarily being considered? Are we subduing our well-developed analytical minds finely attuned to helping us reach our material needs when the challenge is one of ruchnius? Are we applying our business values to our ruchnius tasks like davening? Or if we think we are bringing

our Torah values to our homes and work place, are we being honest about that, being truly altruistic and lishma?

These are tough questions, very idealistic questions.

All I can do is share with you my own struggles with these questions. Even though there have been times where I feel successful in transcending the analytical mind, I still have filters that render the transcendent experience inauthentic to a certain degree - I found a "garment" that I thought was a good garment and I see at its core is willfulness that is not aligned with Hashem's will, which makes it corrupted will.

And the cause of that is a faulty filter - foibeled by the fiend of wanting and ego again - although it was extremely well disguised as other people's best interests! But now I have that spotted, so perhaps that will help me transcend (which means experiencing the pain of suppressing the urges of the previously valued mindset in favor of simply being loving and giving in the way Hashem is), and may Hashem destroy all the destructive beings I previously created when fooled by the deceptive yetzer hara, and instead now help me to be aligned with His Will for the sake of the unification of His Name.

And may our insight weigh into resolving the golus of Esav!