

# Nourishment for the Neshama

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**Monday, June 28, 2010**

## Golus

Rabbi Frand in his 9/11 shiur said that the Moshiach will come when we are able to overcome the golus of Ishmael, the final stage of the golus of Edom. When he said that 8 years ago, in May 2002 to a group of women in Lakewood, I did not understand what that meant.

Nevertheless I have been thinking about it and have what may be a beginning of a thought for myself to pursue.

Anyone who has been reading my blog knows that I hold myself to a standard of no hurtfulness. I am told that my standard is extreme, beyond reasonableness because it can immobilize or cripple a person from handling interpersonal matters for success within otherwise moral standards of the Torah. Surely I have no intention of going beyond what the Torah requires. That is also not permitted and my view would be in need of correction and I appreciate being told so.

However, let's assume for this essay that, while it is not required by Torah, it could still be very beneficial to follow the standard of creating positivity and not negativity in the world. What if I center my thoughts around emulating Hashem's Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, no matter what? What if whenever I see something I object to in another person I find where in my life I am doing it, do teshuva on it, beg forgiveness for myself and for all Klal Yisrael because it is so easy to make such an error? What if in so doing, which requires introspection and hisbodidus, I build a relationship with Hashem that is so meaningful to me that I seek it out all day whenever possible? What if over the course of time I become sensitive to seeing that most of the negative emotions that I have – which come from my will being frustrated or ego defeats - are not productive and take me away from this wondrous relationship and are therefore unimportant – and irrelevant? Would this be consistent with Torah values? Would it be objectionable? Is what I have done foster my own spiritual growth or have I by sharing this standard created negativity in others toward me?

Here is my line of thinking: Along come some thugs who rig a flotilla and start beating soldiers with iron pipes. And some more thugs who throw bombs onto a road in Lakewood. And a huge thug who wants to blow up Israel. Where is the energy for these people coming from I fear? What if I, in taking so long to realize that my processing negative reactions when placed at behira, generates energy that is sustaining these thugs? Could it be that I, in my ignorance about my own human emotional construct and choices of where to focus my energy, unintentionally fuel the negative forces threatening us at this very moment? And if so, could it be that each moment I am successful in neutralizing and nullifying the amount of time I spend in negativity (thinking that it is productive to process there) that I have the power to neuter the forces that appear to be heading our way? Is there a Torah basis for thinking so? Is this what the Ramchal teaches us?

If so, then if "no hurting allowed" neuters and cripples those who want to harm us by depriving them of a source of energy, then I plan to cling to it in my philosophy. Then, I will not feel neutered or crippled in the least, but empowered and close to Hashem. And perhaps this would be a way to find ourselves out of the golus of Ishmael – to neuter the fear and power of his terror campaign.

If my thoughts here are correct, I pray that I be granted the insight from above to continue to do teshuva – that is, neuter my inner negativity -- and hopefully neuter the flow of energy to our enemies.

Comments welcome!