

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Why say please and thank you and negotiate when we can just grab what we want and kick in the shins?

Anyone observing two year olds can see that the first line of approach to playing with a toy is to take it from someone and then struggle for who can grab it, which usually results in the one taking it being very happy and the one losing it crying. To the victor, it would be totally unclear why anything was wrong! She wanted something, she took it and she got it. End of story. Until the parent or the teacher comes along and points out the crying of the other child and the attempt to explain that it was not okay to take something that someone else has first. How do we raise our lower selves to appreciate this position? To the covering over our neshama, to our bodies, the other child is totally separate and their unhappiness has seemingly absolutely nothing to do with us.

The matter goes far beyond the parenting issues for toddlers. Added to the inner struggles we each have between taking and giving are influential visible examples often strengthening the strategies and effective outcomes of taking in better ways – with more force, with more emotional charge, and with personal bias that demands respect regardless of previous moral standards. It seems sometimes as though moral standards are set by emotional conviction rather than by any absolute. Thus if a person wants to assert their value to the public, either for legislative purposes or for political purposes, coming from a place of sincere outrage that appeals to something in the hearts of all begins to set a new standard, a standard that shifts us off of the value that we originally thought was important. The more we see strong personal bias as successful, the part of the lower self that has desire quickly adapts to the new boundary in order to be successful and the societal standards shift, resulting in declining civilization.

Here are the spiritual dynamics of this. There is within each person a primal will that is the driving force behind all of our emotions and yearnings. When we direct this towards avodas Hashem, we are in sync with how Hashem intended us to live according to Torah. Yet it is very easy for our primal will to become corrupted. Any time someone stands in front of us with an emotional argument, our imagination kidnaps our intelligence based on our own imperfections and our energy can easily become diverted to a corrupted primal will without our even realizing it! For this reason it becomes imperative for us to understand that we have not only an obligation to integrate our understanding towards the outside world, but that we also have an obligation to integrate our understanding from a place deep within ourselves, an inner place where the inception of thought into our being comes in. And that inner place, to assure that our primal will not become corrupted, needs to be firmly rooted with emunah to know that the place of the world is Hashem's mind and that we are bodies here with the gift of speech to produce positive influence in the world that will benefit this world as well as rectify our souls for all eternity.

At the very root of everything is understanding that our entire being is solely for the purpose of using speech to form beings that will positively or negatively affect the world by which we will determine our eternity. We are not here for the beautiful world this is. We are here for the opportunity to walk through this beautiful world to rectify our soul by issuing words and actions that will have a positive influence on the way Hashem manages the world. Yet in a world where Hashem is hidden, many have come to settle for trying to figure out life from as moral a place as we can based on living trapped within the kelipa, the body, itself. The use of emotional outrage to steer others away from the path of circumcising the heart – of opening it a pinhole so that Hashem can open it more – may seem like a practical way to make sure that a person's kelipa is "healthy" and that we can succeed within a world that is made up of imperfect beings. Yet there is a downside, and that is the potential oversight of redeeming the elokus in our kelipa, of bringing to the world a new light that we, the souls hewn from the heel of Adom, are uniquely in Jewish history designed to bring. Within the strength of the generation of the heel of Adom is the ability to redeem G.dliness trapped in our subconscious.

Anytime someone is demanding in an emotional way their position, please remember to inside our heads shout louder "there is nothing but Hashem in the world and He is before me at all times!" By so doing, our inner composition will remain calm and connected to the values Hashem intends us to uphold, the morals of the Torah – not out of an outrage of being right, but out of love for doing what is precious in the eyes of Hashem. The simcha from doing so is the greatest pleasure regardless of the outcomes in this world. Outcomes are up to Hashem. The effort is ours alone, to serve Hashem with love. And may each person's effort to do so be a zechus for Klal Yisrael whose light Hashem should find meritorious for a new light in the world and redemption.