

Nourishment for the Neshama

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More on submission, separation and sweetening - intellect and free will

Intellect does not have to be limited to the role of rationalizing our base instincts, subconscious programming or time and space bound objectives.

Intellect can make itself subservient to the values of Torah and the will of Hashem.

We are beings of light, light contained within the natural aspects of our existence, called immanent light, and light contained within the divine soul that reaches upwards, called transcendent light.

When with our free willed choice we submit our intellect to Hashem, we free ourselves from the terribly damaging consequences of the destructive beings we would make by rationalizing and serving something lowly, or something false. When we mistakenly follow our lower urges, we fall victim to the illusion, the very strong illusion, of autonomy that Hashem gives to us in order to see how we will use our free choice.

A human being is here to unify the two apparent ways Hashem presents His Will – the reality of our existence comes through the upper Yud of Hashem's name, the world of emanation, in which the soul of the Jewish people and Torah were created, and to which the soul of every Jew who ever lived is connected. The way we experience time and space in the creation comes through the upper Hei of Hashem's name, the world of creation. These two basic channels, nature and holy, descend into the world of formation, the lower vav of Hashem's Name, which is a world where the two urges through the sefiros of kindness, strength, balance, eternity, humility and bonding form more fully in our hearts. And from these attributes, a person has free choice to decide toward which urging to use the strength of these attributes, towards what appears as real and immediate in nature or towards holiness.

Submission is a choice to use intellect to connect to holiness. We pull back our desires and our strengths in order to the matter as from Hashem - this first step says we desire to unify the light within nature with the higher light. We ask Hashem to help us extract our intertwined intellect from its rationalizations and sometimes crafty plans to put into action the urgings of the apparently autonomous natural being. It is emunah that helps us remember to do this.

Separation requires the sorting necessary – where has the intellect connected rationalizations in the areas of kindness, discipline, balance, endurance, humility and bonding in order to fulfill the will of the lower soul? This can take a great deal of introspection over time in order to get clarity. With a commitment of the intellect to Hashem's attributes of mercy, the intellect can be freed from the grip of the lower soul and of the hidden deceptions embedded in the subconscious. By reaching upward toward emulating Hashem, by striving to bring the intellect to attach to tolerating insult, overlooking faults, bearing the burden of the confusion of mind that occurred when Adam ingested from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, or by forgiving and casting sins into the sea, the truth of our existence and our ultimate purpose in Hashem's eyes can be approximated.

Sweetening means that the truth of our existence is to bring Hashem's attributes of mercy into this world by use of our free willed choice. There is tremendous pleasure in reaching this because in any moment we succeed, we are a vessel through which passes a beautiful light that is the joy for which we are created.

Every situation in which we find ourselves is nothing more than an opportunity to expand our love of Hashem and our endurance in love and fear of Hashem into the matter to do His Will, or an opportunity to contract our deceptions and blockages that keep us from doing His will. When we are in balance and then have that balance bonded in our hearts, we are ready to then take action, an action that gives voice and expression to Hashem's attributes of tolerating insult, overlooking faults, bearing the burden of the confusion of mind we suffer from because of Adam's sin, and forgiveness and casting sins into the sea. These are the attributes that can constantly be occupying every moment of our lives, and when we choose this for our intellect, what we are telling Hashem is that our love of Him is so great that we desire to be His agents and that our awe of Him is so great that we desire never to be apart from fulfilling the purpose for which He creates us.

Most of the time, we are just realizing how confused we all are.

And this is really the reality of time and space. To our hearts come a constant flow of emotions, sometimes conflicting and dark, and usually subjective and not necessarily true. The intersection of our lives with each other can only be orchestrated by Hashem, Whose Omniscience and Wisdom is beyond what we can understand. We are to understand what His Name tells us, that He desires us to unify His Name, meaning that we take the emotions in our heart that seem conflicting, and using emunah and free will, bring our free