

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Ridding ourselves of inner chometz and schechting our "idols"

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Hashem has awakened the trees and flowers early this year!

It is the season of our redemption from Mitzrayim. It is the time of year when we are cleaning our homes and ridding ourselves of our inner puffiness and our subconscious enslavements. Let's use this early spring to awaken ourselves fully so that we are completely ready this Passover should this be the year of the final redemption!

But how?

On the Bilvavi website, in the section "Getting to Know Yourself" <http://bilvavi.net/content/category/8/48/32/> it teaches that we should change our perspective

From: I see myself as a body. When I feel emptiness inside myself, I fill myself with material items and/or busy myself with other things to distract self from the discomfort of emptiness = pleasure for a few days at the most

To: I am converting to a new identity. I am no longer a body, I am a soul in a garment called a body. I am changing through a gradual internal process based on a plan of daily action (one brick at a time)

Next time you feel negative emotions building up, try this

Step One:

Remember one of the Six Constant Mitzvahs - "There is no other power other than G-d"

The powerful wind of emotion is coming from Hashem and is for our ultimate spiritual good. Ask Hashem to lead you in the path you want to go, to serve Him.

Step Two:

Ein Od Milvado

Because it is from Hashem and all there is in the world is the simple unity of Hashem, the negativity is a cover, coming from the body/ego/limited analytical mind. The negativity is a cover that my heart is sticking to the matter. We need will power (free and in unlimited supply) and choice (behira) to gather together the emotion in our heart that is causing these untrue labels to stick. Scrub off the labels. **JUST AS WHEN WE TOIVEL METAL OR GLASS BEFORE BRINGING IT INTO OUR JEWISH HOMES**, before we bring these confusing emotions into our actions or words, try separating what is true and what is false. What false idea is in my heart that this negative emotion is giving me a chance to reveal to myself, if I can be sincerely honest and look at it in the presence of Hashem, from a place of integrity and truth? What does Hashem want me to correct? What lesson does G-d want me to learn from this situation? Look at your situation as a growth opportunity to act in harmony with the Divine mind rather than as a way to feel sorry for yourself or a way to get angry about things.

Step Three:

Chofetz Chaim states, "Everything that Hashem created in His universe was created only for His honor – Whatever is called in My Name, for my Honor. "

While separating what is true from what is false, keep in mind that we are here to bring honor to Hashem as our first priority, that our efforts should be directed to honoring Hashem first and fulfilling Hashem's will. This will help separate out the painful emotions. We will see our objections and where we are trying to "take" our self-esteem from.

Know that our self-esteem comes from choosing to be soul driven, to choose to follow Hashem's design of the world, that His creations are here to sanctify Hashem's name and bring out the aspect of the Divine within us. Otherwise, our self-esteem is vulnerable to the words and actions of others. We are not the stock market. We have value because we are made in Hashem's image. No matter what happens, our self-esteem is totally within our own hands when we base it on choosing to bring Honor and nachas to Him. Instead of feeling sorry for yourself or justified in your anger, ask instead how can we take what just happened to us, our situation and use it for what Hashem wants or to honor Hashem (G-d). Now hold the emotion in our "hand" and bless it and tell Hashem that we wish to direct this basic and strong energy towards serving Him and to please gently show us our next step in serving Him..

Hashem does the rest. We choose. Success is up to Hashem.

Summary

Our self-esteem can be moved from how we look and feel to our choice to be soul driven, choosing soul and Hashem's way over the desiring emotions - especially jealousy, anger and feelings of being disrespected. **By becoming soul-driven, WE control our self-esteem by choosing to identify with the aspect of the Divine within us. Feeling good about ourselves based on a choice to bring out an aspect of Hashem's mercy or a commandment** sanctifies His name, which is the purpose of Creation. Shifting our emotions lovingly to do this establishes our will as in harmony with Hashem's will. When each Jew makes this shift of self-esteem and chooses to live to sanctify Hashem's name, we become united with Him and with each other. **May we be soon see peace throughout the world with the coming of the final redemption**

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