

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Sympathy is no solution for spiritual challenge - only truth is

Sympathy is important and a comfort and crucial for survival, but it is NOT a substitute for doing what we need to do in order to grow spiritually.

We are all fortunate to have close friends in whom we confide, with whom we share what we are going through. Our good friends know our strengths and weaknesses, and they are people whose solutions we respect and whose advice we seek. Nothing feels as comforting as feeling heard by a loving and understanding ear. One of the biggest mitzvahs of the Torah is to give our attention in such a way to others, may our unselfish love for each other in this regard be a shining merit for all Klal Yisrael.

But there is a limit to what one person can do for another. Rabbi Rietti, in his tape series on hisbodidus, explains how open we can be when talking to Hashem. Even with the most trusted therapist, we may still hide a little piece of the story because we wish to save our selves embarrassment, or wish to evoke sympathy and love and a sense of worth. But when we speak about ourselves in the presence of Hashem, with absolutely no one else there, we have no worry about Him finding out every single ugly detail of our psyche and personality – HE created it! HE gave it to us! And He has been waiting patiently all these years for us to dig it out of the pile of To Do's and let Him know that we are trying to figure out what He wants us to do with it in order to turn it into service of Hashem, to elevate it, or to uproot it.

If a person is totally open to understanding what Rabbi Yaakov Zalman Labinsky refers to in his series of shiurim on the omer – that we don't have ownership papers on ANYTHING - even though we are TOTALLY responsible for what is put in us and before us. Our responsibility in serving Hashem is the choice we make regarding what is before us and within us. We DO own the consequence of our choice – and hopefully it will be a zechus for us and for all Klal Yisrael.

Recently I experienced the power of this. I had identified something within me that is part of my personality from long ago, although not something that is visible because of all the work that I have done. Nevertheless, circumstances began showing me every day that I was having a reaction to something someone else was doing, and this programming started coming to the surface. I tried to share it with someone I trusted, someone wise, educated and open and instead of being able to bear it and share it, I ran for the sympathy. The desire to feel good and safe and not have to be embarrassed or admit and to receive attention and caring was simply too much. But I immediately recognized it and confessed that, hung up, and did hisbodidus with the process I have been sharing here on the blog. My goal at all times was to uproot the emotional bonding that exists to this programming because when it comes up, it causes me to feel disempowered and negative and upset and I recognize those emotions as being stuck tied to something that is not Torah, something false and made of nothingness. Intellectually I know that my emotions must all be directed to love and fear of Hashem, in order to be able to then bring healthy aspects of the Divine image to the matter.

Here again is the **On the spot occupy our emotions process:**

"I recognize that I am emotionally bonded to this pattern/thought/experience/programming and I see that it is unpleasant. Hashem I need Your help to shift my emotions. Please give me the will power, to the very depths of this emotion, help me to match the emotion with will power to calm my subconscious clinging to this self-destructive connection. I am awaiting the will power, I sincerely want to no longer be emotionally bonded with this thought/experience/memory. [once the emotion is calm and the feeling of will power there, say:] Hashem I choose that the powerful emotional bonding instead be directed to love and fear of Hashem alone, please lead me in the path that I wish to go, for the unification and sanctification of Your name, for now I realize that this has been sent for me to responsibly bring the consciousness You give me back into harmony with Your Will. That is my sincere choice and desire."

Why is this so important? It is what we are here to do. If we are soothed by our friends, comforted by belonging to a group who share and support each other, and we neglect to forge ahead in uprooting what we came here to uproot from within ourselves because we have a group of people helping us feel connected and whole INSTEAD of a group of people helping us connect to Hashem to be whole, we will not have much to say after 120 years when we cannot explain why we did not accomplish what we were sent here to do. The embarrassment at that time will be very great and painful, may Hashem have mercy on us.

But even more important is that while we are here, by uprooting our emotional bond to our negative traits, we begin to comprehend that we are far more than our lower selves and the desires and needs of physical and temporal existence. And

with that realization comes the beginning of moving our emotions closer to love and fear of Hashem and to emulating Hashem. And with that comes recognition that all there is in this world is the simple unity of Hashem and that we are part of Him, contained within His Mind and Will at all times. And with that comes the possibility of redemption, may we be zocheh to light the true menorah this Chanukah.

Why do I say this? If matters are taken into one's own hand in a manner that is not consistent with Hashem's will, there is reason to be afraid. We learn this from Rachel Imeinu, who could see that Hashem was giving Yaakov Aveinu to her sister Leah. Rachel Imeinu was at a behira point. She had a choice. She could stand by as her sister's blood is shed in humiliation taking matters into her own hand to assure that she married Yaakov as she wished (causing pain for Leah that would be on Rachel's cheshbon) or she could teach her sister how to respond to the questions so that she would marry Yaakov (Leah did not know that they were secret signals to prevent this occurrence.) Rachel did not know that she too would be able to marry Yaakov. She choose to do what is good and right in the eyes of Hashem – not cause her sister embarrassment – over taking Yaakov for herself apparently in conflict with Hashem's will. To those who love Hashem, doing what is His Will and His Will alone is paramount, not our own neediness, desires and rights. This is why Rachel's argument with Hashem "So You are right, so what? Be compassionate anyway and return my children to Yerushalayim" was heard. Rachel chose to love Hashem and His Will and gave to Leah what was necessary so that she would not be embarrassed. Gd orchestrated the events, and Gd was at the center of Rachel's concerns. Not her passion not Leah's neediness, not Yaakov's disappointment, not her father's deception. It was her concern with the mitzvah of loving and fearing Hashem, putting Hashem in the center, that makes it possible for us to await redemption, may it come speedily. Thus may any progress I make on emotions and corrupted thoughts related to neediness be added to Rachel's example and be a zechus to Klal Yisrael so that Hashem finds us meritorious and brings to fruition His promise to Rachel.

Comfort is great. Sympathy crucial. But the adversity – bring our misdirected emotional bonds to Hashem with searching for what He wants us to do, sincerely, with Him at the center (and not a set of values less than His) and we step onto the escalator of teshuva that carries is toward perfection and brings redemption a little closer. And He has infinite ways of helping everything to work out for the good.

The Toolbox:

Daily Hisbodidus

"Please help me rise above my bodily (Avon) mental (pesha) and emotional (chait) limitations so that my emotional relationship with those time and space circumstances is one where You are King, meaning that I choose to bring Your will, Your mitzvahs, or Your attributes into my thoughts to generate emotion and an experience that will shine my love for You into the world and make Your name known.

I ask and beg for Your assistance because I strive to live as having no separate existence from You, choosing to remove as much as possible the false sense of independent existence that Your wonderful creation free will is intended to blind us with (free will allows us to fall fathes away from You, victimizing our selves with downward pulls from self-interest related to body, mind and emotion - ESP from corrupted will) and I beg You to allow me to draw down unlimited will power to match the emotions generated by the false sense of independent existence so that I may choose to direct the emotions to love and fear of Hashem.

The goal of this striving is to develop day by day an ever-closer relationship with You (loving, fearing You), connection with You (emulating You) such that my control center (i.e. My self-esteem) is fully rooted in the intrinsic reality of Torah, mitzvahs, middos and constant consciousness that my consciousness is from You so that I keep it in harmony with Your Will and use it and my physical self to sanctify Your name.

May I be zocheh to use the talents and gifts that You bestow upon me every day in relationship with You that reflects my total love and dread of You for a year that is also sweet to me, and if my efforts are pleasing may they be a merit for all Klal Yisrael that You should forgive us, have mercy on us and redeem us.

On the spot occupy our emotions process:

"I recognize that I am emotionally bonded to this pattern/thought/experience/programming and I see that it is unpleasant. Hashem I need Your help to shift my emotions. Please give me the will power, to the very depths of this emotion, help me to match the emotion with will power to calm my subconscious clinging to this self-destructive connection. I am awaiting the will power, I sincerely want to no longer be emotionally bonded with this thought/experience/memory. [once the emotion is calm and the feeling of will power there, say:] Hashem I choose that the powerful emotional bonding instead be directed to love and fear of Hashem alone, please lead me in the path that I wish to go, for the unification and sanctification of Your name, for now I realize that this has been sent for me to responsibly bring the consciousness You give me back into harmony with Your Will. That is my sincere choice and desire."

Many thanks for the teachings of Rabbi Yaakov Zalman Labinsky www.becomingdivine.com Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller www.dutiesoftheheart.net Rabbi Aryeh Nivin www.newchabura.com and Rebbetzin Tzipora Harris

www.clarityseminar.com