

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Yosef and his brothers - yesod, the bond back to Yaakov

In reading the exciting parshas of Yosef and his brothers, and doing research, certain points strike me because they emphasize in my mind the toolbox that I use and recommend (see below). Please understand that my research is just that, and I don't hold what I write here to be without error – there is no haskama on what I write- but I am sharing it for those who find it of interest. And if there is something here that is NOT Torah, please submit a comment, for that would be greatly appreciated.

Esav failed to rise above his inborn nature and therefore failed to build the spiritual channels for the Jewish people to connect via the 365 negative prohibitions. Esav had free will and the intelligence to comprehend what his task was. However, it was not an easy one, for the "don't do" list involves many downward earthly pulls – body, ego, desires, lusts, negative emotions such as jealousy, cynicism and more. Yet Esav was given a soul that had the potential to rise above the downward pulls. He had the intellect and the Torah knowledge to comprehend it, but he had free will and he chose to not care about the birthright or establishing what he came here to do for the future of the Jewish people.

Free choice is a Divine creation, a Divine shield that gives us true free will. Without free choice, there would be no place to exhibit the use of the mind, the neshama, over the heart, the ruach. And the choice to exert the mind over the ruach is a choice that we make for which we build our eternity and build spiritual structures in Shemayim, in the world of everlasting emotion.

How hard is it to uproot something eternal that we create

? Imagine that our emotions that we create for others and within ourselves are eternal. Would we not think more carefully about it? Is that flash in the pan anger or that moment of looking with desire worth it? We know that Yosef looked for one second with desire at Potiphar's wife and for that one second, he had to come back in a gilgul to die as a martyr and have his face peeled off of him and stuffed for the enjoyment of the gilgul of Potiphar's wife. THAT is how we uproot something eternal that we create. Better to not create it, don't you think?

But how? We are born into a world where we have free choice, downward pulls, a ruach and possibly not enough information to comprehend the consequences. Is ignorance of the spiritual laws an excuse? This brings us to Yosef and his brothers. Esav could have "paved the way" for the 12 tribes. Had he risen to his task, the channels would have been opened and genetically instilled within the tribes to be able to resist the downward pulls, to see them as they are, to comprehend the illusory nature of the yeitzer hara and to have the ability to bring the kernel of truth within those downward pulls into emes, to attach to Hashem and build and add onto the spiritual structures that Yaakov created with his devotion to the 248 positive commandments. Instead, the work of rising above the downward pulls was made more difficult for the tribes because they had to discover by error and had to open for the first time the channels by correcting their errors. The brothers "suffered" from this missing infrastructure..e.g. Shimon "stole" from Esav murder as a tool for which he is chastised by Yaakov at the end of Bereishis, and for which he and the tribe of Levi are told to keep separate. Reuvain didn't resist his personal interest and moved the bed, not realizing that the Shechina was with Yaakov and that he was interfering against the Divine will. Yehuda conducted himself with Tamar, but did teshuva and admitted it...all of these represent teshuvot that had to be done to build what Esav COULD have done had he used his intellect to rise above his heart.

The brothers were tzaddikim, who fall and get up. They did their work. Yet how would these become connected back to the truth of Yaakov?

Who could tie these back? Yosef, who had the Torah learning that Yaakov gave him from Shem and Ever, applied the commandments of do not bear a grudge and do not take revenge and nullified the pain inflicted upon him by his brothers, thus becoming the needed bond to bring the brothers to connection with Yaakov. Through Yosef's internal work, of laboring through with the guiding principle of "Give the entire man the benefit of the doubt," he came to see what the brothers were struggling with, how they came to make an error (they thought that just like Ishmael had been sent away and Esav failed and Yaakov had to separate from him, that Yosef was in that category and they needed to follow these examples in order to establish the Jewish people).

Yosef had the ability to connect the "channels" that the brothers had to open to Yaakov, who was above nature and the fire, but who could not bring it to this world because he was a tzaddik and his emotions were already above nature, there was no behira that actions here could still be effective in the world of eternal emotions. He had made his choices successfully and conquered his yetzer hara. There was no emotional test that he could pass involving his sons that could emotionally bond the

channels that his sons had to open to Yaakov's truth. He was the fire, but he needed a flame, something in this world of action that could be done to create emotion properly to make up for what Esav did not do. When Yosef was born, Yaakov understood that the answer lay with Yosef..

The flame of Yosef and his ability to connect the tribes came in his process of forgiving them, of giving the benefit of the doubt - by his using intellect to go inside himself and repair the pain that he suffered, he perfected these attributes not only within himself, but he made it possible for the brothers work to perfect themselves to be joined with the spiritual structures that Yaakov established.

Each one of us has challenges every day, negative reactions and thoughts that Hashem flows to us. May we merit to comprehend that we are merely inert matter and that Hashem is flowing everything through our hearts so that while we have minds, we can use free will to ask Hashem "what do You want me to do with this? I don't want this negativity!" And, in the areas where we are emotionally bonded to a downward pull, to specifically circle the wagons around the deepest roots of those emotions and direct Hashem to yank it out of our hearts and being and recycle that tremendously powerful emotional bond to love and fear of Hashem instead. And in the process of doing this, somehow we also repair something in the world that extends and heals and changes the ones whose actions triggered the negativity within us. The Jewish people are one soul, one body, with many different parts, and we are all each other's guarantors, we are responsible for each other!.

What is our motivation? REMEMBER that what we create emotionally is eternal! Uprooting our negative emotions and characteristics is what we are here to do!

And when we do use our minds to rule our hearts, we repair what Esav did not.

Daily Hisbodidus

Thank you Hashem for the flow of thought, emotion, and consciousness to this otherwise inanimate body that houses it, may Your name be praised, and for the ability to perceive, experience and learn, for the gift of free willed choice, and for the capacity to discern and integrate. Please flow through me unlimited will power to direct the recipe of personality, circumstance and emotional flow You send through my heart each day so that through the use of conscious choice which You bestow upon me, I can release the innate natural gift of strong subconscious deep emotional bonding from imperfection (unreality, basic human nature) to perfection (reality of the Divine mind, connection to Divine attributes), with the desiring result being that all of my emotions are directed first to loving and fearing and emulating You,. May Your Will and Attributes as expressed in Torah be fully conscious within me and grant me success in bringing Your Attributes and Will to visibility in my actions, my relationships, my thoughts, and my emotions

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 please grant success to the choice I declare to shift my emotional bonding from imperfection to love and fear of You. 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, for there is nothing but Your simple unity in all the world."