

## Nourishment for the Neshama

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#### **You Can Fight City Hall! But only by the way you think!**

My father, obm, used to say that you can't fight city hall! When people who are in power are setting the rules, you have to accept and go along. There are no options.

I think my father would have had a fit if he saw the world today and the evil and corruption seeping into previously honorable social systems. His cry that you can't fight city hall is turning into, in my mind, you can't escape human nature! When we devolve and then have devolved values in positions of power, not being able to fight city hall takes on a terrible exponential adversity!

Look at all the adversity in the world today! There is a common thread. The thread is that we can learn how to validate our cause, our ideology, our business in this world of deficiency by re-defining civilization and refinement as survival skills, creating a dependence on survival (which is relative to and dependent upon other people) for our self-esteem. This paves the road for us all to aspire to become bullies and thugs! When the bullies and thugs are in power, they dominate and control the people. As long as we know how to spar, we can stave off the bigger bullies and perhaps align ourselves so as to all be able take in concert with one another. We trap ourselves in the world of deficiency never realizing that we hold the key to true self-esteem that brings us pleasure, happiness and eternity – it is within our own ability because we have free willed choice.

Notice that I am not equating self-esteem with survival. Many people with self-esteem are destroyed by the evil in this world. We may not survive, but we have free will and we have the ability to choose our eternity, something no bully can take from us. I remember a story from the Holocaust where the Nazis held several Rabbis, forcing them to read certain passages of Torah that speak about the soul of a Jew and beating them for it, to death. How humiliating. How persuading a vision can that be, to learn of such an evil deed and feel how our bodies bend to it. We see the Rabbis as degraded and wonder if it is worth it. To our nature, it cannot be worth it! In our nature, we rather be the bullies than the victims receiving pain. Uniquivocally, and may we never be in a position to have to live through such a test or martyrdom, dying al Kedush Hashem in such circumstances is a testimony to their ingrained knowledge and wisdom of great pleasure of living in Gd's world.

Transcendental eyes are needed to survive in a two world picture, not skills to best each other in this world. Dear readers, I would like to introduce you to Perfection, The greatest Perfection there can be - Gd! Nothing is perfect except for Gd. We can try as we might, with all our might, to dominate, acquire wealth, pursue lusts, demand and take from now until the end of time, and we will never find the happiness and joy that GD intended that we find in this world. It is all counterfeit. The world is set up so that we can freely choose, but don't make the mistake of thinking that counterfeit pleasure stemming from a deficient world is all there is to acquire in Gd's Creation.

If as a race we do not seek the understanding that mankind's ability to connect with Gd is the ultimate pleasure a person may experience (and the only way we can own our choices and thereby earn pleasure for all eternity), and instead we establish societies where corruption, money, power, and passion set the standards, we foolishly make ourselves dependent upon other people instead of Gd. What a mistake! Why? Because all there is is Gd in this world. He is the King and the Creator. It would be like having a salary of \$10 million and choosing to live on \$100,000 a year. Yes \$100,000 is good! But \$10 million is far better, no?

The first step is to know that we have the \$10 million in the bank!

The second step is to get the account number and address of the bank.

The third step is to pay a visit to the bank so that you can start to enjoy the money

Gd is real. He is standing waiting for us to greet him at every moment of adversity and choice. Will we or will we not do what is good and right in His eyes? Will we or will we not bring out the likeness of Gd that is within us? Or will we choose a counterfeit connection, a gang or a clique or a political party or something along these lines where we gain status by how much we are able to control and effect other people (i.e. through wealth, bullying and the like.)

One big point of confusion can be our survival instincts. We learn that Yaakov Aveinu, whose midda of compassion is what we attach to, was able to wear the garment of Esau to get the blessing and he survived many long years in the house of Lavan, able in the end to not be tricked and to outsmart Lavan. Yet when he is re-united with Esau, he tells Esau "I lived in the house of Lavan and I did not forget our father," meaning that he utilized the time to learn and understand yet remained true to Gd's will and did not fall into his nature. Our boundaries must be set at not becoming TAKERS, tricksters, liars and the like. We have to be smart to outsmart by realizing where our openings to succeed lie, but if we succumb to acting like those we think we are outsmarting, our taking destroys our souls and our eternity. How do we prevent this fall into deficiency?

Yosef when he was tempted by Potiphar's wife remembered the face of his father, Yaakov Aveinu, who remained a righteous tzadik his entire life. Yaakov's midda of compassion and his love for Gd helped Yosef run out of the palace. Yosef chose connection to Gd, the Gd of his father over the most thrilling and seductive forces he could possibly feel. Why? And what does that mean to us today?

Yosef knew that there was a greater pleasure, the pleasure of being connected to perfection. By choosing to run out, he connected himself and made himself one with Gd. He acquired a level of improving himself by doing so.

We can do this every time we rise above our natural reactions. At every moment of adversity, we have a doorway to experience and choose in the manner of Yosef. We are not Yaakov Aveinu, able to remain pure all the while comprehending Esau and Lavan without becoming them. The litmus test is becoming a taker or a giver. Once we begin to take, or take advantage of people and misuse power and influence, we settle for the world of deficiency, chas v'shalom.

Gd is real. There is only Gd. We are not here to take but to create our eternity by choosing to find the doorway to pleasure that we can earn at every moment of adversity, may the need for the adversity soon disappear!

As we seek out Gd always, He has less reason to present us with challenge.

May we be zocheh to see the world with these transcendent eyes and meet our adversities with true self-esteem, trying to do the will of Gd in order to shine light and bring out His love and kindness so that it may be evident in this world. (see Tomer Devorah).