

Some thoughts of Giving

Posted by KiviYVY - 06 Jun 2011 19:40

Here's 2 things I sent to R' Duvid Chaim recently. Maybe they'll be helpful to others

Just thought I'd share some quick A&W giving not taking. I was on the call with you and was listening intently to what you were saying about giving not taking and I just then got a call from my wife that she would be home late and that I might have to watch the kids. While I would usually feel somewhat frustrated I tried really hard to think in giving mode and to say words that gave across the feeling of giving. Honestly, the words did not come out. I couldn't think of any giving words at the time, but I'm certain the feeling of giving came across because I noticed a shift in my wife's attitude in the middle of the call as she sensed (over the phone!) my shift in attitude and her tone transformed into one of gratefulness to me as opposed to her own frustration and disappointment. Even if the words don't come to us, the feelings come across and make a world of a difference!

Another instance of giving not taking came to me this past Shabbos as I was walking home from Shul. 3 attractive girls were crossing my path and as much as I tried at the time to switch off my lust it was difficult since these girls were quite bubbly and ever-present --hard to ignore! So I went for plan B and shifted into giving mode. I immediately thought of them as real people instead of thinking about what their attractiveness does for me. Three PEOPLE were now about to cross my path and, with H's help, the event was soon behind me.

This reminds me of a famous Zen story I heard recently that I keep coming back to. I'll replace

A Rebbe and his Chassid were traveling together. At one point, they came to a river with a strong current. As the men were preparing to cross the river, they saw a very young and beautiful woman also attempting to cross. The young woman asked if they could help her.

The Rebbe carried this woman on his shoulder, forded the river and let her down on the other bank. The Chassid was very disturbed, but said nothing.

They both were walking and the Rebbe noticed that his Chassid was suddenly silent and enquired "Is something the matter, you seem very upset?"

The Chassid replied, "As Yidden, we are not permitted to touch a woman, how could you then carry that woman on your shoulders?"

The Rebbe replied, "I left the woman a long time ago at the bank, however, you seem to be carrying her still."

It's in the mind. It's all about our perceptions and motives. This time around, with Hashems help, I'm really understanding this and becoming quite aware of when I'm leading myself astray.

Great call today!

All the Best, Kivi

If I'm all by myself how can I be hurting anyone? I'm hurting others BECAUSE I'm all by myself.

As we have said many times, lusting is a state of isolation. I'll add that subconsciously that has often been my justification for my indulgence. I wouldn't do this in public and ruin my standing among those I want to impress, but I'm alone and I have full control of my surroundings. It doesn't effect anyone. Hashem? I'll block Him out. Plus, He'll understand. I decide what He'll forgive.

My experience has been that the more isolated I make myself, the harder it is to shake afterwards. Did I hurt anyone with what I did alone? Perhaps when I was involved in my lusting I wasn't hurting anyone, assuming I wasn't supposed to be somewhere else or be doing

something else. But when the lusting spree is over don't I carry that isolation around with me? Is it not occupying space in mind? Am I not shying away from others? Why does my wife notice something is wrong? She always seems to know when I've just emerged from a spree? "Are you feeling OK?" I'm still there. I'm radiating isolation. Can't just walk out of isolation.

Now that I think of it, it's not just a spree of acting out that puts me in that isolation. Any form of lusting, even not in a sexual way -- innocent surfing on the internet, raiding the junk food shelf, day dreaming -- how easy is that to shake? Perhaps, at times, its more subtle and perhaps it's more excusable because it's common even among "normal" people, but the fact remains that it's a self-serving spree and those around me can tell I'm either in the midst of it or recovering from it.

I hurt others alright, and it's the "all by myself" excuse which hurts them the most. I can't give to them my attention, presence, and certainly my active assistance is more reserved.

Reminding myself to live in giver mode is so powerful. It keeps me out of isolation even while I'm in my own mind, while I'm among other people, while working, learning, doing anything. My presence is there for them, my attention. When I'm learning Torah I'm giving Hashem my attention; isn't learning a conversation with Hashem about what matters to HIM? I've been trying to train myself to think of that whenever my mind wanders from the Gemara, and from my Chavrusa. This matters to Him. This is what my loving father, life sustainer, King of Kings who I have the opportunity to converse with wants to talk about! If I listen and give Him my attention it just might be really Geshmak (and I discover that it usually is...).

What an essential attitude! I could go on and on, but I have some giving to do...

I hope you have a wonderful Yom Tov!. It's Zman MATAN Toroseinu - the time of the GIVING of the Torah. What did He give to us? His mind, as it were. He gave us, and continues to give us ever year on Shavuos, His attention. In fact it's every day, perhaps in a lesser form - ??? ???
???? ?????? ??????, Rashi Devarim 26:16.

This has been a real gift Duvid Chaim. Thanks for giving it to us!

All the Best, Kivi

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