

Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 01 Dec 2011 14:34

i have been getting these for a long time and today i thought i should share with the board.

i hope this is beneficial to all.

kol tuv,

chaimyakov

L'zecher nishamos Rav Yochanon Motel ben Rav Ephraim and Moras Esther Leah
bas Rav Yehudah Yoseph B"H

The Salant Center

Mussar - A Healing Spirit for the Heart and Soul

THE FAITH AND TRUST OF PSALMS_____119:176_____

"I have strayed like a lost sheep - Seek, your servant, for I have not forgotten Your Mitzvoth."

Under the blazing desert sun, a lost sheep searches for his flock. As the sheep wanders over the endless sands, the scorching heat quickly depletes his strength. Lacking the knowledge to find his flock, his only hope is for his shepherd to rescue him.

King David compared his spiritual situation to the lost sheep, "Just as the sheep lost his way, so too, I have lost the way and do not know the proper path that I should take. My situation is as hapless as a lost sheep in the desert. Just as the sheep thirsts for water to drink, so too, I have no water for my soul to drink."

Therefore, he cried out to HaShem, his Shepherd, "Seek, your servant, Meaning, I have lost the trail. Since I am your servant, please show me the way, "for I have not forgotten Your Mitzvoth."

Yet, if he has "not forgotten the Mitzvoth," why did he say that he lost his way?

Even though King David was a great and holy tzadik, nevertheless, he knew that at times the negative impulse influenced him in thought or deed. He felt that since he was missing total perfection, he was distant from the shade of Torah and the cool waters of its wells.

In his humility, he likened his situation to a lost sheep. He called out to his "Shepherd" to seek him out and return him to the correct path. May we observe the Mitzvoth and pray to HaShem to save us from the machinations of the yetzer hora. Consequently, He will purify our hearts and lead us to the upright path.

[Based on the commentary of the Metzudas David to Tehillim]

TODAY: Ask HaShem to illuminate for you the path of goodness.

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Re: Salant Center d'var
Posted by chaimyakov - 05 Dec 2011 13:36

Here is another d'var. i hope you grow from it.

chaimyakov

Monday, December 5, 2011 2:50 AM

L'zecher nishamos Rav Yochanon Motel ben Rav Ephraim and Moras Esther Leah
bas Rav Yehudah Yoseph B"H

The Salant Center

Mussar - A Healing Spirit for the Heart and Soul

AROUND THE SHABBOS TABLE

Later in life, Eisev married Machalas, the daughter of Yishmael. The name Machalas means "forgiveness." Our Sages derive a wondrous teaching from this verse. Specifically, on the day of marriage, HaShem forgives, i.e., Machalas, a person for all of their sins. Similarly, when a person "ascends to greatness, all of his sins are forgiven."

Classically, the Torah prescribes the process of repentance in order to rectify our past misdeeds. Therefore, the question arises: Why does marriage 'automatically' render forgiveness?

When a person marries, he crosses the threshold to new opportunities and options. The awareness of these possibilities inspires him with the desire to improve and uplift himself. However, as much as he wants to change, the weight of his "past baggage" is difficult for him to unload.

Therefore, HaShem shows him compassion and forgives all of his past misdeeds. This wonderful kindness of HaShem allows the person to unload the burden of his past mistakes; giving him the freedom to actualize his feelings and transform himself into a new person.

The same phenomenon occurs when a person ascends to greatness. Since he has access to new opportunities, HaShem forgives his sins in order to give him the confidence needed to forge a new path.

Perhaps we can apply the same principle to Shabbos. That is, Shabbos is a "marriage between HaShem and the People of Israel," as we sing: "Come my beloved and meet your bride; Let us welcome the Shabbos Presence." Therefore, the new opportunities of holiness, light, and joy that come with Shabbos inspire us to elevate ourselves. Accordingly, the blessings of the Shabbos day bring us forgiveness, kindness, and mercy of HaShem.

[Based on Lev Shalom of Rav Shalom Shvadron]

TODAY: Rejoice in the holiness of Shabbos and know that HaShem will show you forgiveness and compassion.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 07 Dec 2011 20:27

Another uplifting thought from Rabbi Miller.

Hatzlacha in all things GOOD!

chaimyakov

L'zecher nishamos Rav Yochanon Motel ben Rav Ephraim and Moras Esther Leah bas Rav Yehudah Yoseph B"H

The Salant Center

Mussar - A Healing Spirit for the Heart and Soul

THE FAITH AND TRUST OF PSALMS_____26:1-3_____

"Of David, a Psalm. Judge me HaShem; for I have walked sincerely, and in HaShem I trusted, I will not fall. For Your kindness is before my eyes."

Most people would be quite apprehensive if HaShem looked inside their heart and examined their thoughts and feelings. Whereas King David asked, "Judge me HaShem," that is, judge me according to the status of my heart; Look into my heart to see whether or not my heart is directly focused on You.

King David worked on his inner-spirit, cleaning, refining, and dedicating his every thought to HaShem. He was confident that his heart's devotion to HaShem was perfect and absolute. Moreover, he declared, "For I have walked sincerely," meaning, in every situation and in every occurrence - I trusted in You, HaShem.

What was the factor that motivated King David to be so wholeheartedly committed to HaShem? Even more, that encouraged him to willfully submit himself to HaShem's judgment? In addition, to be confident that, "I will not fall." The answer is found in the verse, "For Your Kindness is before my eyes."

King David constantly and continuously reflected on the wondrous, loving-kindness that HaShem, unabatedly, bestowed upon him. From his first breath in the morning - as he awakened to the gift of a new day, until the glorious evening sunset - followed by the appearance of the moon and the sparkling array of stars, King David counted all of his blessings. His awareness and appreciation of the amazing goodness that HaShem showered upon him filled his heart with joy and delight.

We learn a valuable lesson from King David. The more a person takes note of HaShem's kindness, the happier he will be and the more he will sincerely devote his entire heart to HaShem. In turn, HaShem will answer his prayers and protect him from all troubles. May we be aware and grateful for the great kindness of HaShem that forever surrounds us. Then we will be inspired to faithfully devote ourselves to Him - and He will eternally protect us. [Based on the commentary of the Radak to Tehillim]

TODAY: Focus continuously on the kindness of HaShem - and know that this awareness will purify your heart and be worthy of HaShem's protection.

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Re: Salant Center d'var
Posted by chaimyakov - 13 Dec 2011 15:11

L'zecher nishamos Rav Yochanon Motel ben Rav Ephraim and Moras Esther Leah bas Rav Yehudah Yoseph B"H

The Salant Center

Mussar - A Healing Spirit for the Heart and Soul

PIRKEI AVOS\THE ETHICS OF OUR FATHERS 2:10

Rabbi Eliezer said, "Perform repentance one day before you leave this world.

HaShem, our merciful Father, overflows with goodness, compassion, and kindness for mankind; and His "arms" are always open to receive us. In light of this, the Mishneh teaches, "Perform repentance one day before you leave this world." Meaning, even if a person lives his entire life in opposition to Torah values, he should not despair of finding favor in the eyes of HaShem. Rather, he should know that HaShem will not rebuff his sincere desire to return to Him.

If an individual is moved to repent, HaShem will show him mercy, forgiveness, and acceptance - regardless of his past misdeeds. What's more, even if he does not open his heart to repent till the very last moment of his life, nevertheless, HaShem will compassionately accept him!

If HaShem shows mercy to a person who lived his entire life in conflict of HaShem's will, how much more will HaShem show mercy to a person who did not intentionally breach HaShem's will and returns to HaShem, well before the last moment of his life.

Yet, despite this great revelation of HaShem's abundant mercy, an inner voice attempts to dissuade us of our freedom to change and our wondrous opportunity to redeem ourselves.

Our challenge is too detach from the false claims of the negative impulse, and embrace the truth of the Holy Torah, which reveals the infinite mercy of HaShem, Who patiently waits for us to return. Even more, He waits for us our entire lifetime and on the day we open our hearts to return to Him - He immediately accepts us, forgives us, cleanses us, and loves us as if we had never strayed.

[Based on the commentary of the Chidah and the Rambam]

TODAY: Ask HaShem for forgiveness and feel the joy of knowing that He will surround you with

compassion and kindness.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 15 Dec 2011 15:21

L'zecher nishamos Rav Yochanon Motel ben Rav Ephraim and Moras Esther Leah bas Rav
Yehudah Yoseph B"H

The Salant Center

Mussar - A Healing Spirit for the Heart and Soul

THE FAITH AND TRUST OF PSALMS_____28:7_____

HaShem is my strength and my shield, my heart trusts in Him and therefore I was helped; and my heart rejoiced, and I will thank Him with my song.

King David reveals that steadfast faith requires a strong and unyielding focus on HaShem. In this light, the verse states: "HaShem is my strength and my shield, my heart trusts in Him and therefore I was helped." Whenever HaShem delivered King David, he was deeply aware of HaShem's kindness.

At the times that HaShem sends His assistance through a messenger, human nature tends to dismiss HaShem. The excitement of the moment temporarily blinds one to the true cause of his rescue. Yet, the dynamics of faith require us to trust in Him, alone. If we place our belief in another, then we detach ourselves from the powerful goodness of HaShem and place ourselves under the uncertain and frail supervision of a human agency.

Conversely, King David kept his heart centered on HaShem. He knew the merit of his trust in HaShem awakened mercy in Heaven for Divine intervention. HaShem often sent His help to King David through the king's various friends and allies. Notwithstanding, he recognized that the many people that saved him were 'sent by HaShem' to come to his rescue.

Accordingly, after King David was delivered from hardship, He expressed praise to HaShem, i.e., "and my heart rejoiced, and I will thank Him with my song." In order not to lose sight of HaShem, he clarified and verbalized that HaShem, alone, rescued him. Even more, he sang a song of thanks and praise to HaShem for His kindness.

The methods of clarifying, verbalizing, and singing are classic Mussar techniques. May we trust in HaShem with our full hearts and souls. And when He sends us deliverance, may we recognize His compassion and sing to Him with joyous praise.

[Based on the commentary of the Even Ezra to Tehillim]

TODAY: When someone does you a favor, remind yourself that HaShem sent him to help you.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 21 Dec 2011 15:09

L'zecher nishamos Rav Yochanon Motel ben Rav Ephraim and Moras Esther Leah
bas Rav Yehudah Yoseph B"H

The Salant Center

Mussar - A Healing Spirit for the Heart and Soul

CHANUKAH LIGHT

We live in a world of cause and effect. The deeds of man, in particular, profoundly affect both the material and spiritual dimensions. In that light, what was the "cause," i.e., merit that awakened the phenomenal miracles of Chanukah?

The story of the Exodus from Egypt sheds light on our question. HaShem instructed Moshe to tell the Jewish people, who were enslaved in Egypt, that HaShem would soon redeem them. Moshe asked HaShem, "Who should I say sent me to take them out?" HaShem responded, "Tell them that 'I Will Be' sent you."

That is, "I Will Be" with the Jewish people in the time of their hardship. Let them pray to me and I will redeem them!"

We would assume that times of trouble are an indication that HaShem has forsaken them; and that He is far away. However, just the opposite is true! The more trouble they endure, the closer HaShem is to them, i.e., "I Will Be" with them during their hardship.

There is no greater test of faith than affliction. However, if we hold our faith that HaShem is with us and pray to Him, He will reveal Himself. Accordingly, the heartfelt prayers of our enslaved brethren in Egypt awakened the awesome miracles of the Exodus.

So too, the People of Israel suffered greatly under the Greek oppression. However, they trusted that "HASHEM WAS WITH THEM," Their sincere prayers and courageous actions awakened the miracles of Chanukah. He was close and revealed His love, kindness, mercy, and holiness.

[Based on Ha'arus HaTefilah citing the Ramban]

TODAY: If you are in a tight spot, know that the HaShem is close to you - pray to Him and He will rescue you.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 23 Dec 2011 15:16

L'zecher nishamos Rav Yochanon Motel ben Rav Ephraim and Moras Esther Leah bas Rav Yehudah Yoseph B"H

The Salant Center

Mussar - A Healing Spirit for the Heart and Soul

CHANUKAH: THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

The prayer of thanksgiving that we say at Chanukah states: "We thank HaShem for the miracles, for the salvation, for the mighty deeds, for the deliverance, and for the wars which You performed for our forefathers in those days at this time."

The phraseology of this prayer requires an explanation. It makes sense to thank HaShem for the miracles and deliverance, but why do we express thanks for "the wars?" It seems a better choice of words would have been to thank HaShem for "our victory?" Meaning, the time of thanking HaShem was not the beginning of the crisis, i.e., when the Greeks forced war upon us, but rather the time for gratitude was at the end of the predicament when HaShem granted us the victory over our enemies.

The Greeks were a powerful nation. They easily occupied Israel and imposed their evil decrees banning Torah study and Mitzvah observance. They did not expect much resistance from the people of Israel, who were not prepared militarily to stand up to the Greeks.

Notwithstanding, Mattisyahu and his sons rallied an army and defeated the Greeks. "On paper"

they were no match for the professional super-power armed force that threatened to crush them. Mattisyahu and his sons formed an army and fought a war that was "impossible" to win. They were outnumbered and inferior in every way, as we say, "You delivered the strong into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few."

Therefore, the very fact, that Mattisyahu and his sons rose to the occasion and made war against the Greeks was the greatest miracle. Even though they were weak and few, they stood up to fight for their spiritual ideals. Mattisyahu was willing to give his life for the survival of the Torah and its holy ways.

Clearly, he inspired himself to do something. Consequently, HaShem encouraged him and granted him the inner strength to make a war - to fight against all odds. Therefore, we thank HaShem for "the wars." That is, we thank HaShem for giving us strength to fight a war that we could not win. He raised our spirits and gave us hope, confidence, and triumph, as we say, "For Yourself You made a great and holy name in the world, and for Your people you made a great victory."

TODAY: Fight for your spiritual values no matter what the odds - and know that HaShem will help you.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 26 Dec 2011 14:23

L'zecher nishamos Rav Yochanon Motel ben Rav Ephraim and Moras Esther Leah
bas Rav Yehudah Yoseph B"H

The Salant Center

Mussar - A Healing Spirit for the Heart and Soul

PARSHA INSIGHTS\THE SAGES OF MUSSAR

Imagine that you are Joseph. Your brothers turned against you and sold you off as a slave - tearing you away from your beloved father, Jacob. You are brought to Egypt, a country of idol worshippers, where there is no trace of fellow Jews or of Jewish values. You are thrown in a prison for a long period of time. Then, miraculously you are saved and Pharaoh appoints you as the ruler over Egypt. Ultimately you are reunited with your brothers, who come to Egypt in search of sustenance.

Your brother's have tremendous guilt for the ruthless way they mistreated you. The critical question is: how should you feel towards them? Should you forgive them? What behavior does the Torah advocate in such a dramatic situation?

In the delicate area of human relations hurt feelings is a common occurrence. When someone apologizes for hurting someone, one of the most typical responses is, "No problem, it's okay." However, the sages of Mussar teach that such a response could be masking inner resentment. Usually the real message that they are saying is, "Do you really think I could forgive you so easily? You hurt me and saying your sorry doesn't take away my pain. As far as I am concerned, I do not forgive you and I hope you will continue to feel bad for the difficulties that you caused me."

Conversely, instead of adding fuel to his brothers' already very guilty conscience, Joseph did everything in his power to relieve them of their shame and self-reproach. He said to them, "Don't be distraught...HaShem sent me to Egypt in advance so that I could sustain you during the famine....It wasn't you that sent me here, rather it was HaShem; and He has made me a mentor to Pharaoh and master of his household, and ruler over the entire land of Egypt."

Joseph reversed the situation. Instead of blaming his brothers for their indiscretion, he comforted them. Even more, he made it seem as if he owed them a great debt of thanks! He converted their mistreatment of him to a positive and beneficial development. Indeed, he almost made it seem as if he was eternally indebted to them for the great favor that they did for him! Let us learn and practice the wonderful trait of true forgiveness - and the transformation of guilt to merit - from Joseph.

[Based on Da'as Torah of Rav Yerucham of Mir]

TODAY: Think of one good thing that emerged from something that someone did to you that was hurtful.

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Re: Salant Center d'var
Posted by chaimyakov - 03 Jan 2012 15:10

L'zecher nishamos Rav Yochanon Motel ben Rav Ephraim and Moras Esther Leah
bas Rav Yehudah Yoseph B"H

The Salant Center

Mussar - A Healing Spirit for the Heart and Soul

PIRKEI AVOS/ETHICS OF THE FATHERS _____5:26

Ben Hei Hei says: The reward is proportional to the exertion.

Our Sages tell us that the generation that received the Torah at Mount Sinai attained the highest level of holiness. Therefore, the spirituality of each successive generation diminishes because they are further from the great light of Sinai. Notwithstanding, the revelation of

HaShem during the Messianic era will surpass the Sinaic age, elevating the entire nation with holiness and purity.

In light of this, a deep question arises: The eternal delight that HaShem grants in Gan Eden is commensurate with our deeds. Yet, the level of Torah, good deeds, and purity of character traits of the earlier generations far exceeds our level. If so, it would seem that our share in the World to Come will be far less than the share received by the righteous people who preceded us.

However, our deeds are less qualitative than the earlier generations not because of our deficiency but rather because we are plagued with far more spiritual deterrents. Although we are on a lower rung of the ladder than our ancestors, nevertheless, our dedication might be just as great.

Accordingly, the Mishneh teaches: "The reward is proportional to the effort." Yes, there is a great difference between our holy Patriarchs and us. Nevertheless, HaShem in his great compassion, does not judge us according to our accomplishments but rather according to our devotion.

HaShem takes into consideration the context of our lives and computes our reward correspondingly. He sees the great environmental difficulties that interfere with our desire to fulfill the Torah. Therefore, a person from the later generations, who knows far less than the earlier Sages, is allotted the same opportunity of reward of our saintly ancestors. May we be encouraged by the Mitzvoth that we do perform, knowing that HaShem values them as if they were done by the greatest of our Sages. (Based on the commentary of the Chidah to Pirkei Avos)

TODAY: When you do a Mitzvah remember that HaShem values your effort as if you performed the highest Mitzvah

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 04 Jan 2012 20:36

L'zecher nishamos Rav Yochanon Motel ben Rav Ephraim and Moras Esther Leah bas Rav Yehudah Yoseph B"H

The Salant Center

Mussar - A Healing Spirit for the Heart and Soul

THE FAITH AND TRUST OF PSALMS_____26:1-3_____

Of David, a Psalm. Judge me HaShem; for I have walked sincerely, and in HaShem I trusted, I will not fall. For Your kindness is before my eyes.

Most people would be quite apprehensive if HaShem looked inside their heart and examined their thoughts and feelings. Whereas King David asked, "Judge me HaShem," that is, judge me according to the status of my heart; Look into my heart to see whether or not my heart is directly focused on You.

King David worked on his inner-spirit, cleaning, refining, and dedicating his every thought to HaShem. He was confident that his heart's devotion to HaShem was perfect and absolute. Moreover, he declared, "For I have walked sincerely," meaning, in every situation and in every occurrence - I trusted in You, HaShem.

What was the factor that motivated King David to be so wholeheartedly committed to HaShem? Even more, that encouraged him to willfully submit himself to HaShem's judgment? In addition, to be confident that, "I will not fall." The answer is found in the verse, "For Your Kindness is before my eyes."

King David constantly and continuously reflected on the wondrous, loving-kindness that HaShem, unabatedly, bestowed upon him. From his first breath in the morning - as he

awakened to the gift of a new day, until the glorious evening sunset - followed by the appearance of the moon and the sparkling array of stars - King David counted all of his blessings. His awareness and appreciation of the amazing goodness that HaShem showered upon him filled his heart with joy and delight.

We learn a valuable lesson from King David. The more a person takes note of HaShem's kindness, the happier he will be and the more he will sincerely devote his entire heart to HaShem. In turn, HaShem will answer his prayers and protect him from all troubles. May we be aware and grateful for the great kindness of HaShem that forever surrounds us. Then we will be inspired to faithfully devote ourselves to Him - and He will eternally protect us. [Based on the commentary of the Radak to Tehillim]

TODAY: Focus continuously on the kindness of HaShem - and know that this awareness will purify your heart.

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Re: Salant Center d'var
Posted by chaimyakov - 06 Jan 2012 14:36

L'zecher nishamos Rav Yochanon Motel ben Rav Ephraim and Moras Esther Leah bas Rav Yehudah Yoseph B"H

The Salant Center

Mussar - A Healing Spirit for the Heart and Soul

AROUND THE SHABBOS TABLE\PARSHAS VAYECHEI

At the time of his departing from the world, Yaacov summoned his sons to gather around his bed in order to receive his parting words. He turned to Shimon and Levi, he said, "Shimon and Levi are brothers; their weapon is a stolen craft. Into their conspiracy, may my soul not enter; with their congregation, do not join. For in their rage they murdered people and at their whim they maimed an ox."

Yaacov was referring to the incident of Dina, in which she was molested by Shechem. In response to this outrage, Shimon and Levi killed the entire male population of the city.

Chazal (Bereishis Raba 99:6) explain the phrase: "'Their weapon is a stolen craft.' This craft of murder is something 'stolen' in their hands. It comes from Eisev's blessing, it is his craft and you stole it from him."

Yaacov's reproof centered on "the craft" of Shimon and Levi. It is not appropriate for the sons of Yaacov to take a murderous sword. It could very well be that the people of Shechem were liable for the death penalty in response for their sin against Dina. Nevertheless, "Their weapon is a stolen craft." Eisev received the blessings of "you shall live by your sword." Murder is Eisev's craft and you stole it from him. A son of Yaacov does not grasp a marauder's sword, this is not his craft. It is not appropriate for his level of holiness.

The essence of the elevated Jewish soul is a good and holy character. It is important for us to recognize our true selves, and rejoice in knowing that we have inherited a noble, benevolent, and peaceful temperament. May all of our deeds and words emanate from our inner goodness, integrity, and dignity.

[Based on Da'as Chaim of Rebe Chaim Walkin]

TODAY: Reflect on how pleasantly Avraham and Sara conducted their interpersonal relationships.

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Re: Salant Center d'var
Posted by chaimyakov - 09 Jan 2012 14:34

WOW! Is this a powerful lesson or what???

L'zecher nishamos Rav Yochanon Motel ben Rav Ephraim and Moras Esther Leah bas Rav Yehudah Yoseph B"H

The Salant Center

Mussar - A Healing Spirit for the Heart and Soul

Dedicated to the Refuah Shleimah of Yisrael ben Malka -Ivan Sacks.

PARSHA INSIGHTS\THE LIGHT OF MUSSAR\SHEMOS

Pharaoh's daughter went to the river to bath because she was afflicted with leprosy. She saw a small ark holding a tiny 'Hebrew baby floating amongst the reeds.' The Shechinah - the Divine

Presence - rested upon the baby. Reaching out to draw the baby near, her hand touched the baby, and she was miraculously healed.

She saw and experienced that the baby glowed with a holy illumination. This amazing event opened her heart to love this baby, who as we know was Moshe.

There is a simple yet profound message contained within this occurrence. The Shechinah has a phenomenal power to heal. Indeed, when a person is in the presence of the Master Healer, the healing takes place instantaneously! Even more, this is so even regarding an idol worshipper. Once the mercy of Hashem is awakened, the deliverance takes place, unconditionally.

When we stand in prayer, we often think we are unworthy of receiving HaShem's compassion. While we might have flaws, (after-all we are human,) notwithstanding, the mercy of HaShem is infinite. If we rely on His unbounded and eternal kindness and mercy we will "be healed," regardless of our past.

May we remember that we can always rely on HaShem's infinite mercy. And on that merit, may we all experience an immediate redemption!

[Based on Pirkei D' Rebe Eliezer]

TODAY: Ask HaShem to reveal His holiness and heal the entire People of Israel.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 10 Jan 2012 20:27

L'zecher nishamos Rav Yochanon Motel ben Rav Ephraim and Moras Esther Leah

bas Rav Yehudah Yoseph B"H

The Salant Center

Mussar - A Healing Spirit for the Heart and Soul

PIRKEI AVOS/THE ETHICS OF OUR FATHERS

"One of the ways to acquire Torah is to help your friend bear his burden of troubles, i.e., to help your friend when he has a problem."

There are two aspects that lead to the fulfillment of helping your friend bear the burden of his troubles: (1) to take specific actions that will help him bear the burden; (2) to think and contemplate the difficult situation that your friend is enduring. Reflecting on your friend's hardship is not a well-known element of helping others. However, it is the primary vehicle that spurs a person into action to help others carry their load.

For instance, Moshe was brought up as a prince in Pharaoh's palace. He could have easily lived a life of power and prestige for the rest of his life. Nevertheless, he knew that he came from Jewish parents - and that the Egyptians had enslaved the Children of Israel. He felt an affinity and compassion towards his people and "went out to see their burdens."

That is, he did not suffice himself just to empathize with his people. Rather, he went to see their sufferings, i.e., he went physically to see with eyes and commiserate with his heart. In this way, by looking upon their affliction he sensitized himself to their pains. He concentrated and continuously remembered them until their troubles were etched in his very soul. He persisted in this reflection until he felt as if he himself was suffering with them. As a result, his noble heart opened with compassion and care for his beloved people. At that moment, he was ready to fight for his people - to liberate them from slavery and lead them to freedom.

To perform an act of kindness means to give something needed to someone else. Whereas to help your friend carry his burden means to literally 'to give your heart to him'. That is, to feel his pain as your own and to help him with your full heart and soul. May we reflect on the hardships of our friends and be inspired to help them shoulder their load. In turn, HaShem will bless with us with wisdom, kindness, and peace. [Based on the writings of the Saba M'Kelm]

TODAY: Reflect on a person that you know who is bearing hardship. Think about them and try to feel their pain, and be inspired to help them.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 11 Jan 2012 14:16

L'zecher nishamos Rav Yochanon Motel ben Rav Ephraim and Moras Esther Leah bas Rav Yehudah Yoseph B"H

The Salant Center

Mussar - A Healing Spirit for the Heart and Soul

Trust and Tranquility

The kindness of HaShem is endless and abundant; yet it is also somewhat hidden. The Torah reveals the way for us to attain clarity of HaShem's kindness, mercy, and love. In fact, the path is very easy and attainable.

In this light, King David compared trust in HaShem to the properties of a shadow. Specifically, a shadow casts its shade according to the image that it reflects. If you show it one finger, it shows one finger; if you show it two fingers, it shows two fingers. If you show it the whole hand, it shows the whole hand.

In the same way, the more a person focuses on recognizing HaShem's help and kindness, the more HaShem will reveal Himself to that person. The more we strive to see HaShem's beauty, the more He will make Himself known to us.

The Sages of Mussar tell us about hashgacha pratit. This is the awareness of the Divine providence that HaShem extends to each individual person. For instance, you're running late for your plane, but you still make the flight because the take-off is delayed. You could say, "Boy was I lucky. If I would have missed that flight, I would have missed a key meeting."

Whereas, if you add HaShem into the picture, your perception of the event is much different; "Look how HaShem cares for me! He arranged for the plane to be delayed, so I could catch the flight."

A Gratitude Journal is a great tool to help us track and take note of the amazing kindness of HaShem, that constantly surrounds us. The more we focus on recognizing HaShem in our lives, the more He will reveal to us His wonderful and infinite love, mercy, and kindness.

TODAY: Take a few moments to appreciate your wondrous gift of health and wellbeing. Consider the specifics, for instance, HaShem gives you two legs that serve you perfectly.

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Re: Salant Center d'var
Posted by chaimyakov - 19 Jan 2012 16:16

L'zecher nishamos Rav Yochanon Motel ben Rav Ephraim and Moras Esther Leah
bas Rav Yehudah Yoseph B"H

The Salant Center

Mussar - A Healing Spirit for the Heart and Soul

PARSHA INSIGHTS\THE LIGHT OF MUSSAR\VA'EIRA

Moshe thought about the situation in Egypt quite deeply and was troubled:

HaShem revealed to me that the time has come for B'nei Yisrael to be redeemed. He sent me to Egypt to free them from slavery and lead them out of Egypt. I thought that since their time of deliverance arrived their bondage would ease up. But since I have come to Egypt things have gotten worse for my people. On the other hand, if their time of freedom has not yet arrived, so why did HaShem send me now? It would have been better to send me when the time for redemption arrives.

Hashem responded, "The time of redemption had definitely arrived. However, regarding your question of, "Why are things bad if it is the time of redemption," the answer is, "I am revealing aspects of both mercy and justice.'

Before Moshe Rabenu returned to Egypt, HaShem had revealed to him the highest level of prophecy, i.e., the Ispecluria. Indeed, HaShem did not show this level of prophecy to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaacov. Nevertheless, Moshe could not understand the ways of HaShem.

No human intellect, not even Moshe Rabenu, can understand all the ways and reasons of

HaShem. However, once HaShem has revealed His goodness, His kindness, His love for B'nei Yisrael, and that He is the Master of the Universe, there is one overarching rule for us to follow. That is, regardless of the situation, HaShem asks of us, "Trust in Me. Things will be good!"

May we instill within our hearts steadfast faith in HaShem and His promise to redeem us. In turn, we will have inner peace and merit to see the final - and glorious - redemption!

[Based on the Magid Mesharim of Rebe Yosef Cairo]

TODAY: Discover peace of mind through accepting those things that you don't understand - and TRUST HASHEM.

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