

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 - 15 Jul 2012 13:51

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 TABLEPARSHAS PINCHAS

When Klal Yisrael was enticed into immoral behavior with the Midianite women, a devastating
plague ensued that took 24,000 lives. Pinchas heroically brought an end to the epidemic by
putting to death Zimri and Cozbi.

The Chumash (BaMidbar 25:11) records the reward that HaShem bestowed upon Pinchas for

his valiant act: "Pinchas ben Eliezer, son of Aaron the Kohen, turned back My anger from upon the Children of Israel, when he zealously avenged Me among them, so I did not consume the Children of Israel in my vengeance. Therefore, I will give him my covenant of peace."

The Torah reveals that Pinchas was rewarded for two reasons: (1) he zealously avenged Me, i.e., he took the proper disciplinary measures called for in such sinful behavior, and (2) so I did not consume the Children of Israel, i.e., he saved Klal Yisrael from destruction. Amazingly, the Torah equates the Kiddush HaShem (Sanctification of HaShem) that Pinchas bravely performed to the saving of Klal Yisrael.

Imagine a rebellion breaks out in a country that threatened to topple the government. One courageous soldier of the king's guard steps forward and assassinates the rebel leader. This act crushed the rebellion, and consequently saved countless lives of the dissident forces. However, it would be counterintuitive if the king would award his champion both for saving the kingdom, as well as, saving the lives of the rebel army.

However, HaShem equates the significance of Pinchas' application of justice, with the resultant saving of Klal Yisrael. Even though they grossly violated the Torah, nevertheless HaShem rewarded Pinchas for saving the lives of those who fell to sin. There is no greater merit than to bring benefit to B'nai Yisrael because HaShem's love for Klal Yisrael is without bounds. [Based on Chochmah U'Mussar of Rav Simchah Zissel]

TODAY: Do something today to help or bring merit to Klal Yisrael.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 17 Jul 2012 12:16

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

AROUND THE SHABBOS TABLE

Parshas Masie begins with an enumeration of the encampments of B'nai Yisrael in their forty year sojourn in the desert. The Rambam explains the significance of this detailed

documentation of their route.

The greatest miracle described in the Torah is the survival of B'nei Yisrael in the wilderness for forty years. This arid and desolate region was unsuitable for human existence, being uncultivated and devoid of water. During this entire period HaShem provided Manna from Heaven, and water from the Well of Miriam. All of these wonders were publicly witnessed - and experienced - by Klal Yisrael.

HaShem knew that future generations would be skeptical of these miracles. They would offer various theories to rationalize what actually took place. For instance, they might claim that although B'nei Yisrael traveled in the desert, they always stayed in close proximity of civilization in order to have access to provisions.

In order to remove these doubts the Torah records the exact path of their journeys. Examination of the point by point trek shows that they were a great distance from cultivated land. In this way future generations learn the awesome miracles of HaShem which enabled human beings to live in uninhabitable places for forty years.

We understand from this teaching that HaShem does not require our faith to contradict our common sense. Rather HaShem desires that our faith in HaShem be in sound agreement with the tenets of the human intellect. The Torah therefore, alleviates any skepticism by presenting us with incontestable of HaShem's miracles. As a result we benefit to achieve pure, rational faith. The comprehensive truth of the Torah illuminates the sturdy foundations of faith in the Creator.

[Based on Moreh Navuchim of the Rambam]

TODAY: Rest your faith on sturdy intellectual foundations.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 20 Jul 2012 13:13

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 _____2:6

"Hillel says: One who is embarrassed to ask does not learn."

One of the hardest things in life is to admit that you don't know something. For instance, when a Rabbi makes a difficult point in a shiur, it is hard for some people to reveal that they don't understand.

The Mishneh tells us: One who is embarrassed to ask does not learn. Since he does not resolve his confusion - he remains unknowing. On the other hand, this implies that one who is not embarrassed to ask for clarification does learn. Hence, if he doesn't understand something, he will ask so that he be enlightened with the truth.

Whereas, "A foolish person does not desire understanding (Mishlei 18) - meaning - he is embarrassed to reveal his lack of understanding. He would rather 'stay in the dark', then admit that he doesn't know.

What is the factor that gives one the strength of character to reveal that he does not yet understand?

A person who admits that he does not understand, has developed a love for learning. Indeed his passion for Torah overcomes his natural proclivity to conceal his inadequacy to understand. His quest for truth is stronger than his fear of humiliation. Therefore - for the sake of knowing - he reveals what he does not grasp

Rav Tzvi Hirsh Brodie, Z"L, the former head of the Salant Beis Din, was one of the most esteemed scholars in his generation. On occasion he would render a ruling; and then subsequently he would consider a doubt about the truth of his ruling. If after further deliberation he concluded that his ruling was erroneous - he would reverse his original decision.

May our love of Torah inspire us to ask for clarification of what we do not yet understand - and in this way we will advance higher and higher in Torah knowledge.
[Based on the commentary of Rebe Chaim Voloshin to Pirkei Avos]

TODAY: Practice saying the words "I don't understand".

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 20 Jul 2012 13:14

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
Sefer Mitzvoth HaBitachon/The Book of the Mitzvah of Faith

The Zohar reveals to a us a deep teaching about faith:

"Rav Yehudah explained the verse: 'Trust in HaShem and do good, that you may dwell in the land of the living and nurture faith' (Tehillim 37:3), as follows: A person should always be careful with his Master [i.e., HaShem], and attach his heart to the highest level of faith so that he will completely trust his Master. For when a person's faith in HaShem is complete, nothing in the world can harm him."

This passage counsels us to "be careful with our Master and attach our hearts to the highest level of faith". We understand from this choice of words that faith in HaShem is a very delicate matter-requiring special care, constant attention, and consideration.

Our activation, contemplation, and clarity of faith in HaShem is the very secret of our connection to Him-the Source of all good. Hence, when we maintain our trust in HaShem by constantly nurturing our faith, we access the abundant, eternal fountain of Divine Blessings. Conversely, if we weaken in our faith, we separate ourselves from the lifeline-and detach ourselves from His blessings.

Yet if we maintain the highest level of faith, meaning we place our complete faith in the unbounded mercy, infinite love, and mighty life-giving powers of HaShem-then we will be surrounded with the loving kindness of HaShem. It will pour into our souls-illuminating them; and flow throughout every dimension of our lives-giving us continuous opportunity to rejoice and delight in His magnificent Providence and Divine Beneficence.

Let us aim for the highest level of faith-immediate redemption for our families and Klal Yisrael-then HaShem will shine the light of pure goodness upon us, forevermore.

TODAY: Look up to Heaven-reflect on your highest hope-and anchor it in your heart.

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Re: Salant Center d'var
Posted by chaimyakov - 20 Jul 2012 13:14

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

MISHLEI/PROVERBS 2:20

"So that you may walk in the way of good people, and keep the paths of the righteous."

King Solomon instructs us to conduct ourselves with absolute-and constant-goodness towards everyone. Thus, we should not sometimes bestow goodness, whereas other times, act with indifference or harshness; rather we should be good to all people, at all times.

Even in situations where you were wronged, do not demand your rightful justice. Preferably, distance yourself from harming others (even if you are in the right) so that only good emanates from you.

This teaching is derived from the phrase the way of the good. "The way" is singular, implying that there is only one path that a person should traverse-the way of the good, while causing no harm!

This principle is also taught in the Chumash (Devarim 28:9): "And you shall walk in His ways." And what are His ways? "HaShem is good to all, and His mercy is on all of His creations (Tehillim 145:9)." As we see through the uninterrupted continuation of existence-the goodness and mercy of the Creator extends to all.

In addition, the word "way" (derech) in the verse from Mishlei cited above, refers to a public path that is well known to the community. Likewise, the way of good should be traversed by all so that only goodness and no harm emerges from society, both individually and collectively. Thus, the general rule of interpersonal affairs must be: forgive your antagonist, and antagonize none.

May HaShem grant us the courage to follow King Solomon's prescription for living, so that the quality of our lives-and the lives of our neighbors-will be elevated, beautified, and filled with joy. [Based on the commentary of the Ohr HaChaim to Mishlei]

Implement: Spread your sunshine to all, with exception to none.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 20 Jul 2012 13:16

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
AROUND THE SHABBOS TABLEPARSHAS MATOS

After 24,000 Jews died in a plague for their immoral behavior with the Midianites, HaShem commanded Moshe Rabenu to attack Midian to avenge the calamity that they brought upon Klal Yisrael. Although, HaShem told Moshe that he would die after the war, Moshe immediately activated the troops.

When Klal Yisrael heard that Moshe's fulfillment of this mission would mark the end of his life, the warriors had to be coerced to go to war. During the 40 years that Klal Yisrael were in the Wilderness, they often criticized and complained about Moshe. Accordingly, it seems untenable that the people would feel so deeply for Moshe that they would refuse to fight a war that result in the passing of Moshe.

During Moshe's tenure of leadership the nation suspected that his motives were tainted by self-interest. This skeptical attitude caused much strain and conflict in their relationship. However, when they saw that Moshe did not delay to defend their honor, even at the cost of his life, they realized that Moshe's sole intention was for the benefit of Klal Yisrael. Instantaneously, they reversed their perspective and their hearts were filled with the greatest admiration and love for Moshe.

In addition, they realized their instinctual desire to preserve Moshe's life revealed their true feelings. Despite their external discord with Moshe, this incident awakened their deep subconscious love for him.

We often think that we cannot control our emotions. However, we see from the swift transformation of Klal Yisrael's sentiments toward Moshe that our feelings are under our control. Although their negativity towards Moshe festered for decades, they were able to swiftly change their entire intellectual and emotional perspective! May HaShem help all of Klal Yisrael master their feelings so that our hearts be filled with only positive thoughts.

TODAY: Feel a sense of happiness and confidence that you can master your thoughts and emotions.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 06 Aug 2012 13:41

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

Shammai said: "Greet every person with a cheerful countenance."

The greatest gift that a one person can give another is "a cheerful countenance." A pleasant expression is a healing balm. Like the diverse benefits of the brilliant sun that shines forth with splendorous light and comforting heat, so too, a cheerful countenance is a radiant luminary that conveys a glowing light of love and warm rays of friendship.

A cheerful countenance is a life-giving force. Therefore, the passage instructs us - regardless of circumstance - to "Greet every person with a cheerful countenance." Even if a person is enduring hardship, he should make an effort to greet others with joy.

For instance, consider the following true story. A Tzadik was suffering from such a severe headache that he could not pick up his head. Just then, someone from the community passed by who was unaware of the Tzadik's condition. The Tzadik picked up his head and greeted the person with a friendly smile.

His students asked why he forced a smile rather than explain his true situation. He explained to his students that every person has the capacity to encourage and bring joy to others. If we show them that we are in distress or a bad mood, we will impact them negatively. Even worse, we might even cause them sorrow when they see our pain. Therefore, we have a responsibility to greet all of our fellow men with happiness and "pick them up"- regardless of how we feel.

There is nothing more vital to the well-being of others than our sincere effort to greet them with a cheerful countenance - regardless of our mood, and even if we are not particularly fond of the person. If we do so, we will strengthen them in heart, soul, and spirit. In turn, HaShem will bless us with peace, confidence, and joy.

TODAY: Greet everyone you meet with a cheerful countenance.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 06 Aug 2012 13:42

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 _____ 31:2-4 _____

"In You, HaShem, I have taken refuge, let me never be ashamed; in Your righteousness let me escape. Incline Your ear to my prayer, quickly rescue me, be to me a rock of strength, a fortress of defense to deliver me. For You are my rock and my fortress, and for the sake of Your name - guide me and lead me."

King David composed this psalm when he was fleeing from Saul, who was intent on killing him. Instinctively, when a person is in mortal danger he falls into a trembling fear, thinking of only his own survival. Whereas, King David expressed his absolute trust in HaShem - even as he was running for his life.

"In You, HaShem, I have taken refuge, let me never be ashamed," that is, I am confident that on the merit of my trust in HaShem I will never be put to shame. The dire straits that threatened King David did not in any way compromise his belief that HaShem would never abandon him. What's more, he knew that if he strengthened his faith in the midst of this precarious time, HaShem would surely deliver him.

Even if the impending trouble was brought by his accountability, he knew HaShem would save him. In light of this, he said, "in Your righteousness let me escape," that is, save me HaShem in Your righteousness, for I have no merit to speak of.

Although Saul was in hot pursuit, King David did not feel vulnerable, i.e., "incline Your ear to my prayer, quickly rescue me, be to me a rock of strength, a fortress of defense to deliver me." Meaning, he was certain that HaShem would surround him with invincible protection.

He concluded his prayer with the words, "for the sake of Your name - guide me and lead me." His belief in the goodness of HaShem was so solid that he asked HaShem to save him for His sake. That is, I know You love me and care for me. Therefore, rescue me so that you do not suffer over my predicament.

May we strengthen our hearts with irrepressible hope and indefatigable trust in HaShem. As a result, HaShem will help us, safeguard us, and rescue us in countless and amazing ways.

[Based on the commentary of the Radak to Tehillim]

TODAY: Ask HaShem to help you for the sake of His compassion and care for you.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 06 Aug 2012 13:52

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 AGADAH OF THE TALMUD

Rabi said, "Some people acquire their share in the World to Come in one moment, whereas others acquire their share in the World to Come in a few moments."

There are moments in life when a person attains absolute clarity of HaShem. That awareness inspires him to "return" completely to HaShem, with both heart and soul. In this light, the Mishneh teaches that "some people acquire a share in the World to Come in one moment." Meaning, that a momentary glimpse of light inspired the person to sincerely devote himself to HaShem.

However, we would assume that if a person does not acquire his share of the World to Come in one moment, than he would have to earn his share through a sustained effort over many years. Yet, the text says some people acquire the World to Come in one moment, whereas others acquire the World to Come in a "few moments." What is the difference between acquiring the World to Come in "one moment" versus "a few moments?"

The material nature of this world veils the light of spirituality. Nevertheless, at certain "moments" HaShem reveals Himself, like a flash of lightening that illuminates the night. When this occurs, the presence of HaShem deeply impacts our hearts and ignites our souls.

For instance, these "moments" of clarity occur on the periods of our Shabbos and festivals. During the time of Shabbos and the holidays, holiness is revealed, granting us the opportunity to reconnect to the sanctity of that moment.

May we "acquire our share in the World to Come" through opening our hearts to know HaShem during the holy "moments" of our Shabbos, festivals, and holidays.

[Based on the writings of Rav Daniel of Kelm]

TODAY: Envision the Shabbos lights illuminating your soul with holiness, joy, and peace.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 07 Aug 2012 14:02

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

The Salant Center

eMussar - The Wisdom of Personal Growth

SF The Daily Middah Acceptance - Personal Growth

"A gracious person blossoms with personal growth because he is open to receive guidance and advice."

- Based on Orchos Tzadikim

If you want to receive the Daily Middah quotes please send an email to:

dailymiddah@gmail.com

OHR HATORAHEMANATIONS OF TORAH LIGHT

The Ramchal in his work, "The Path of the Just," taught that Mussar is the study of "universally accepted truths." Why do we need to study ideas which are common knowledge? The Ramchal explained, "according to the degree that these truths are clearly apparent, to that same measure we find that people lack the conscious awareness of these ideas."

Rabbi Yisrael Salanter explained this paradox with an insightful axiom: The furthest distance between two locations is the distance between the mind and the heart. In other words, the ethical concepts that we know intellectually remain distant from our heart. Mussar is "the tool" that opens up the sealed chambers of our heart, facilitating the inculcation of these great truths.

For instance, the Torah states (Devarim 4:39) states, "And you shall know today and instill within your heart that HaShem is G-d - in heaven above and on the earth below - there is no other."

This injunction informs us that to know about G-d, i.e., that He created the world, that He is merciful, that is omnipotent, etc., is just the beginning of "knowing G-d." However, in order to "know G-d" we must devote a special focus of study - "and instill within your heart that HaShem is G-d."

The study of Mussar gives us the methodology to ingrain the awareness of HaShem within our inner-being. It strengthens our faith in HaShem and brings our knowledge of HaShem to life.

Intellectual knowledge is acquired just as soon as we grasp the concept. Whereas, the "knowledge of the heart" is attained incrementally, over time. Each Mussar session that we engage in makes a subconscious impression. Ultimately, the impressions crystallize and give birth to a vivid and robust awareness of HaShem.

Today: Devote thirty seconds to reflect that HaShem is creating you in these very moments.

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Re: Salant Center d'var
Posted by chaimyakov - 07 Aug 2012 14:13

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 TABLEPARSHAS EIKAV

A straightforward reading of the verse (Devarim 11:13) that we read every day in Krias Shema seems perplexing: "if you continually hearken to My commandments that I command you today, to love HaShem..." Is "to love HaShem" the sum total of what HaShem requires of us? Aren't there six hundred and thirteen commandments?

King Dovid said "My soul knows very much" (Tehillim 139:14), meaning, the human soul is

inherently wise, i.e., it knows HaShem. However, the material element of the body intercepts our inner light. Therefore, HaShem gave us the Mitzvoth, which protect the soul from the impure influence of the material elements.

The Talmud (Shabbos 152b) presents a parable that alludes to this: "A king distributed royal garments to his servants. The wise among them stored it in a chest, whereas the fools wore them while they did their work. Subsequently, the king requested his garments that He had distributed. The wise ones returned them to him clean, while the fools returned them soiled. The king was pleased with the wise but angry with the fools. So too, HaShem gives us souls. In the future He will collect them. If we return them clean we will be rewarded, but if we return them soiled they must be purified.

The entire purpose of Torah is to protect the soul so that it remains pure and holy. As long as the soul is protected through Mitzvah observance, it naturally is drawn to its source. Hence, it is filled with love for its Creator, for it was formed from the Divine element.

Now we understand the verse from Krias Shema: if you continually hearken to My commandments that I command you today - the soul will revert to its natural state - to love HaShem. Hence, the fulfillment of all the Mitzvoth awakens love within the soul of man - the very purpose of creation.

[Based on Da'as Torah of Rabenu Yerucham HaLevi]

TODAY: Elevate yourself through a Mitzvah and awaken the natural love of HaShem that rests within your soul.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 08 Aug 2012 13:23

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

PIRKEI AVOSTHE ETHICS OF OUR FATHERS 3:21

"Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah said, 'If there is no Torah, there is no Derech Eretz (good conduct); if there is no Derech Eretz, there is no Torah.'"

HaShem instilled the goodness of Derech Eretz within all of His creations. For instance, when HaShem created the trees, each one took a place far enough from the others so that it wouldn't infringe on another's space!

In this light, HaShem gave mankind the Torah, i.e., the Divine Laws, and the knowledge of Derech Eretz, so that we too will have the wisdom to conduct ourselves with sensitivity to our fellows.

The wisdom and holiness of Torah, enhances the integration of Derech Eretz; and the goodness of Derech Eretz enhances the development of Torah wisdom.

Rabbi Nosson Zvi Finkel, the Alter of Slabodka, was a master of both Torah and Derech Eretz. Once, when he was very ill and elderly a student accidentally served him a spoonful of alcohol instead of water. Rav Nosson Zvi coughed so hard that a doctor was summoned, and it took a long time for the Rabbi to recover. The student was so embarrassed that he hid away in shame. When Rav Nosson Zvi realized the student was embarrassed, he sent for him. Rav Nosson Zvi greeted him with a warm smile and assured him that he completely recovered.

May we be inspired by Rav Nosson Zvi's living example of Torah and Derech Eretz, and treat others with decency and respect.

[Based on the commentary of the Chidah]

TODAY: Make an extra effort to treat others with kindness and gentleness.

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Re: Salant Center d'var
Posted by chaimyakov - 09 Aug 2012 13:13

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

FAITH AND TRUST IN HASHEM

The prophet, Habakkuk, condensed the entire Torah into one principle, "The righteous live by virtue of their faith in HaShem."

Yet, how can the entire Torah - the Chumash, Talmud, Midrash, etc. - be represented by one simple axiom?

Shimon was on board a ship that was caught in a great storm. As powerful winds and crashing waves pounded the ship, Shimon was thrown overboard into the churning sea. As he fought for his life, he noticed a tree growing far away from him. Shimon swam with all of his strength towards the tree. Finally, he grasped a branch of the tree and held on for dear life.

The people of our generation are challenged by great spiritual tests and trials. "Winds" of unimaginable force and "tremendous waves" bombard us from every side. Yet, HaShem has sent us a lifesaving message, through Habakkuk, "The righteous live by the virtue of their faith in HaShem."

The tree in the parable represents the Torah - the Tree of Life. Trust in HaShem is the very root of the Torah. Just as Shimon grasped the branch in order to survive, so too, if we grasp the branch of Trust in HaShem we will survive the great tests of life.

When we grasp the branch of Trust in HaShem, we connect to HaShem and Torah - the true lifeline of our souls!

[Based on the writings of the Chofetz Chaim]

TODAY: Grasp the branch of trust in HaShem, and connect to Eternal Life!

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 10 Aug 2012 13:19

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 WISDOM OF THE TALMUD BRACHOS 56B

Once, a great sage, Bar Kappara, had a disturbing dream in which he saw himself without hands. He related the dream to the elder sage, Rebe, who gave a positive interpretation, "You will be so wealthy that you will not require the labor of your hands." That is, the image of the dream symbolized not that he would lose his hands, but rather that he would become so wealthy that he would not have to work.

This passage reveals a great secret of the Torah. HaShem has given man a wondrous power. Specifically, man has the capacity to influence his life experience by the way he perceives the events of his life. If a person perceives events in a negative way, it is as if he is planting weeds in the soil of his life. In time, the negativity will emerge and unfold around him.

Whereas if we interpret life in positive way, we are planting a field of beautiful flowers, an orchard of exotic fruits. With time, he will find himself in a fragrant garden, surrounded by every delight.

What is the explanation of this phenomenon? Everything in life comes from HaShem, the Source of all good. HaShem is pure, unadulterated goodness. Once we have a clear understanding that everything comes from HaShem, we perceive that everything is good. Even if the surface looks scary, we know that ultimately it will be good.

Even more, a truly optimistic person sees everything in a positive light. Accordingly. Rebbe, who was a master of a "good eye," saw a positive message in Bar Kappara's 'eerie' dream.

May we strengthen our awareness that HaShem is good. As a result, we will perceive life with optimism and the "kindness of HaShem will surround us."

TODAY: Find a positive interpretation for a seemingly negative event.

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