

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 - 26 Nov 2012 15:07

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 - 29 Nov 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

THE FAITH AND TRUST OF PSALMS_____119:176_____

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

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

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 29 Nov 2012 14:40

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 FATHERS2:16

Rabbi Tarfon used to say: If you learned much Torah, Heaven will grant you abundant reward. Your Master is trustworthy to 'pay your wages.' And know that the bestowal of the reward for the righteous is in the World to Come.

Just as the body requires sustenance, so too, the soul requires sustenance. The sustenance of the body is food, whereas the sustenance of the soul is holiness. When we engage in Mitzvoth we draw holiness upon our souls, which fills our souls with pleasure, joy, and life.

The holiness is manifested upon us in a few different ways. For instance, when we perform a Mitzvah we receive a reward that very day. Specifically, the Mitzvah that we performed today, grants us the merit to receive a neshamah yeseira - an extra dimension of holiness - on the Shabbos of that week in which we fulfilled that Mitzvah.

In addition, each Mitzvah that we perform and each word of Torah that we learn grants us an immediate increase in our holiness. Moreover, a Talmud Chacham, who is immersed in Torah study, receives a neshamah yeseira even on the weekdays.

Up to here, we have explained the holiness that HaShem bestows upon a person in this world for the Mitzvoth that he has performed, i.e., "If you learned much Torah, Heaven will grant you abundant reward. Your Master is trustworthy to 'pay your wages.'"

Whereas the next phrase in the Mishneh refers to our eternal reward in Gan Eden: "And know that the bestowal of the reward for the righteous is in the World to Come." The "bestowal of reward" in the World to Come will be exceedingly great and wondrous.

May we merit performing many Mitzvoth each day, so that we enjoy holiness in this world as well as the glorious, eternal reward in Gan Eden.

[Based on the commentary of the Chidah, who cites the Arizal]

TODAY: When you perform a Mitzvah, be aware of the holiness illuminating your soul - and rejoice.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 29 Nov 2012 14:41

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

THE PATH OF REPENTANCE

The Talmud (Pesachim 86b) tells us that a guest should display good manners by eating whatever food his host offers him. However, there is one situation in which the Talmud tells us not to listen to the host. Specifically, if the host tells the guest to leave, the guest should not listen!

Why does the Torah tell us on one hand to courteously comply with the host's requests and on the other hand to refuse his demand to leave his home?

The great Kabbalist, Rabbi Moshe Kordevaro, sheds light on the meaning of this curious statement. He explains that this passage is an allegory, in which the host represents HaShem and the guest represents a person. There are times when a person sincerely dedicates himself to perform repentance, yet all of his attempts seem to be rebuffed. It is as if Heaven is resisting his efforts. In this light, the person may translate the events as a message that HaShem is saying, "Leave my house. I do not accept your return to Me."

In response to this situation, in which a person falls into despair, the Torah tells him, "Do not listen to the Host!" Meaning, do not interpret your difficulties in performing repentance as a sign that HaShem has rejected you. Rather, rest assured that HaShem is merciful and He always shows compassion and love to people who strive to come close to Him.

If your challenge is difficult, do not give up because HaShem NEVER gives up on you. This is especially so during the Ten Days of Repentance and Yom Kippur, as King David said, "Seek HaShem when He is present, pray to Him when He is close."

[Rabbi Moshe Kordevaro]

TODAY: Rejoice in knowing that HaShem is Merciful and will always welcome you into His presence.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 30 Nov 2012 13:58

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

After forging a river, Yaacov remembered that he left some small containers on the opposite bank. Therefore, he crossed the river again in order to retrieve his vessels. Regarding this incident, the Talmud says (Chulin 91): "The property of the tzadikim is precious to them. Why is this? Because they do not steal property from others."

However, a tzadik is primarily focused on spirituality. If so, why was material property so precious to Yaacov, that he felt compelled to go back over the river for small containers?

Yaacov was not concerned with the material value of his property. Rather, his property was beloved to him because he considered everything that he had as a "gift from HaShem."

Even more, since everything belongs to HaShem, the Creator of Heaven and earth, Yaacov did not consider himself the "owner" of his holdings. Rather, he saw himself as a trustee of HaShem's property. For this reason, he valued "every cup" that was in his care and charge.

The fact that Yaacov never stole from another person shows conclusively that he did not desire the material possessions in and of themselves. Rather, he cherished his own possessions as a gift from HaShem.

May we learn from Yaacov to value everything that HaShem places in our trust. The awareness of HaShem's amazing - and unabated kindness - will fill our hearts with joy and our souls with carefulness.

[Based on Lev Shalom of Rav Shalom Shvadron]

TODAY: Realize that everything you have comes from the Holy Hand of HaShem.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 10 Dec 2012 22:11

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

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 - 11 Dec 2012 19:35

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

Ripples. Water reacting to a tossed stone. The human personality also has the capacity to react to - and learn from - life's events. In fact, the greater one's spiritual level, the quicker and more accurately will he respond to stimuli. Conversely, the less spirituality one has, the less his capacity to react.

For instance, when Pharaoh had a disturbing dream in which he saw seven lean cows consuming seven healthy cows, he woke up with a start: "What an eerie dream!" Nevertheless, he ignored it so that he could go back to SLEEP.

HaShem had sent him a powerful message, with far-reaching repercussions for his country. Strangely, Pharaoh managed to detach from the intense dream and slip off into oblivion.

Conversely, we find that when HaShem appeared to King Solomon in a dream, he immediately woke up with great excitement and joy. His holy soul quickly responded to the special dream, with great emotion. His spiritual awareness empowered his sensitive reaction.

The occurrences of our lives transmit important messages. Like ripples on the water, may we react to these events so that we glean their hidden fruits. As a result, we will enlighten ourselves and improve our paths so that we are pleasant to both G-d and man.

[Based on Lev Shalom of Rav Shalom Shvadron]

TODAY: Reflect on one event that happens to you today and discover the "hidden message."

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Re: Salant Center d'var
Posted by chaimyakov - 12 Dec 2012 21:16

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

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 - 13 Dec 2012 19:36

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 OF AND TRUST OF PSALMS/118

"HaShem is with me, I have no fear; what can man do to me?"

When things don't go the way we want, we can react in one of two ways. Human nature responds with frustration. Whereas, a person of faith trusts in HaShem, that the situation will ultimately be good.

For instance, when Joseph's brother's sold him into slavery, his future looked bleak. What was the likelihood that he would ever find freedom or become reunited with his father, Yaacov? Yet, Joseph maintained steadfast faith in HaShem. He believed that HaShem would reverse his fate. On the merit of his faith in the face of darkness, HaShem rescued him from slavery and made him king of Egypt!

In light of this King David said, "HaShem is with me, I have no fear; what can man do to me?" That is, even when I am in a trying situation, I maintain my awareness that "HaShem is with me." Therefore, "I have no fear; what can man do to me?" Meaning, I trust that HaShem will reverse the difficulty to good.

Trust in HaShem empowers us with irrepressible optimism. Rather than letting the hardships of life bring us down, our faith assures us that HaShem is with us in every event of our lives. If trouble meets us, "we will not fear," because we know that HaShem will convert every life experience into a positive blessing.

May we strive to place our steadfast trust in HaShem. In turn, we will always be hopeful because we know that HaShem will illuminate every darkness with golden and glorious sunrise!

[Based on Chochmah U'Mussar of the Alter of Kelm]

TODAY: Say to yourself: "HaShem is with me, I have no fear; what can man do to me?"

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 18 Dec 2012 02:54

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 1:12

"Hillel said: Be from amongst the students of Aaron - love peace, pursue peace, love people, and draw them close to Torah."

This stunning passage reveals a beautiful path of life for us to take. That is, we are advised to open our hearts to the wonderful attributes of "loving peace" and "loving people."

Even more, we are encouraged to "pursue peace." While it is magnificent to "feel love for peace and people," such a person does not necessarily actively "endeavor to make peace." Whereas, a person who loves peace and people, as well as "pursues peace" - significantly strengthens

peace in the world.

Aaron HaKohen not only utilized the "pursuit of peace," as an approach for making peace between two quarreling parties, he also used the pursuit of peace as a method of helping others to improve themselves. For instance, if he noticed a person who was acting improperly, he would not rebuke or correct them.

Rather, he would befriend them! Once they had Aaron HaKohen as a friend, they would correct their behavior on their own accord, for they would say to themselves: Aaron has befriended me. If he would know the misdeed that I do, he would no longer want to be my friend. Therefore, in order to preserve his friendship with Aaron, he would be motivated to quickly change his ways.

May we learn from Aaron "the way of love and peace" and apply it - exclusively - to all situations and relationships. As a result, we will bring about the increase of peace, love, and happiness amongst mankind.

[Based on the commentary of Rabenu Yona to Pirkei Avos]

TODAY: Use the peaceful approach to solve interpersonal conflicts.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 18 Dec 2012 02:56

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 worshipers, 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 - 21 Dec 2012 19:11

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

THE SAGES OF MUSSAR ON THE PARSHA

Yoseph's brothers originally planned to settle their score with him through murder. Eventually, in order to incur less culpability, they tore off his tunic and threw him into a deep pit creeping with snakes and scorpions. They ignored his screams for help and then sold him off as a slave.

Years later, when they came to Egypt, they did not recognize Yoseph who was king. Yoseph put them through a series of heart-rending events designed to open their eyes to their unspeakable cruelty.

At the climax of the drama, Yoseph says to his brothers, "I am Yoseph. Is my father still alive?" With these few words, Yoseph revealed himself to his brothers. He did not scold, nor confront his brothers. Neither, did he scream, nor try to make them feel guilty. He simply told them the fact that he was Yoseph. They then intuitively understood their terrible mistake.

Yoseph teaches us the proper method of rebuke. When one person rebukes another he should not say any accusing, inflammatory, or hurtful words. Admonishment is not an excuse to unleash cruelty or anger. In light of this, concerning rebuke, the Torah states (Vayikra 19:17), "Do not bear a sin." That is, when offering rebuke, do not embarrass or hurt the person you are advising.

If a person humiliates his fellow through rebuke, the Torah counts his rebuke as a grave sin. In such a case, the admonisher usually feels self-righteous for 'setting his friend straight.' However, if he wounded his friend's self-esteem, the Torah clearly faults him and his ruthless rebuke.

Even in a case where a person committed a terrible crime, such as Yoseph's brothers, HaShem forbids the rebuke to be delivered in the form of an attack. Yoseph did not scream out. He effectively made the point by simply saying, "I am Yoseph. Is my father still alive?"

May HaShem bless us with the tact to avoid all hurtful words, and the wisdom to find words that will inspire others to rise to their true potential.

[Based on the writings of Rav Dovid Leibowitz]

Today: Refrain from saying all hostile words and do not engage in any criticism.

SHIR HASHIRIM\THE SONG OF SONGS_____1:1-2_____

"The Song of Songs, dedicated to the King of the Universe, to Whom peace belongs. Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth - for Your love is better than wine."

King Solomon's holy "Song of Songs" expresses the song that the People of Israel sing to HaShem, requesting from Him to hasten our ultimate redemption. Our future redemption is tantamount to our "Day of Marriage" at which time HaShem will speak with us, just as intimately as He spoke with Moses.

In the period of our history prior to our redemption, our relationship to Torah is comparable to wine. Just as wine is sweet and makes our heart happy - nevertheless - there is a limit to how much wine we can consume; so too, although Torah is pleasant and enjoyable - there is a limit to how much Torah we can learn.

However, at the time of our redemption our soul will be united with the Shechinah - the Divine Presence. Then we will have unlimited capacity to understand His Torah.

Therefore we pray: "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth," i.e., may HaShem draw close to us and illuminate our souls with His brilliant holiness. "For Your love is better than wine," i.e., when You unite with us in love we will have an unlimited capacity to know HaShem.

The Torah alludes to this glorious aspiration of the Jewish people (Mishlei 7:18): "Come let us be satiated and rejoice in love until the morning," as well as (Ezekiel 16:8): "I passed by you and looked upon you, and behold; your time was the time of love."

The secret of our nation is our steadfast prayer - and irrepressible faith - that HaShem will unite with us in "Eternal Splendor."

[Based on the commentary of Rabenu Yaacov Meir HaGola]

TODAY: Envision your soul enjoying the endless wisdom and light of Torah.

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Re: Salant Center d'var
Posted by chaimyakov - 27 Dec 2012 21:32

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 OUR FATHERS/2:7

"The more advice, the more wisdom."

The ancients used to say, "Take advice and follow your own judgment." Although this statement seems contradictory - in truth - it reveals a great secret.

A person who is asked to give advice cannot see the whole picture because he is viewing the problem from "the outside." Whereas the person who actually has the problem is aware of "the inner details," yet is too immersed in the situation to see the best solutions.

In light of this, the man seeking a solution lacks the objectivity to solve his problems. And although the advisor sees the problem objectively, he does not grasp the details of the surrounding issues.

Now we can understand the meaning of the saying, "Take advice and follow your own judgment." Take advice from many advisors in order to gain insight from each one's perspective. It is as if each one holds one piece of the puzzle. Once you see it clearly through their eyes, you can render the best decision for your situation.

Therefore, the Mishneh said, "The more advice, the more wisdom." Meaning, in order to see a clear picture, we need to take counsel with many people. The composite opinion of each person will ultimately shed light towards a solution. When we consider their collective opinion through the eyes of our intimate grasp of the situation, we then have the capability to render a sound judgment.

[Based of the commentary of Rav Chaim Voloshin]

TODAY: Seek counsel from a number of advisors until you achieve clarity.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 27 Dec 2012 21:46

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

The Torah states (Bereishis 47:28) "And Yaacov lived in Egypt for 17 years." We understand why he lived there during the years of the famine. However, after his being in Egypt for 5 years the famine ended. If so, why did Yaacov not return to Eretz Yisrael?

Our Patriarchs - Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaacov - were so pure, that they were called the Mercavah of HaShem, i.e., the "Chariot of HaShem." Meaning, the Shechinah - the Divine Presence - "dwelt within them."

When Yaacov was on the way to Egypt HaShem told him, "I will go down with you to Egypt." Meaning, the Shechinah accompanied him to Egypt.

Yaacov's presence in Egypt was needed in order to facilitate the dwelling of HaShem amongst the People of Israel. If Yaacov had returned to Israel the Shechinah would have left with him. When Yaacov died Yoseph "put his hands on Yaacov's eyes." This symbolized that the dwelling place of the Shechinah transferred to Yoseph.

There is no greater blessing and joy within the human experience than "knowing HaShem" through the revelation of the Shechinah. It is the ultimate! We learn from Yaacov the importance of providing other people with a pure spiritual environment - the very life of our souls.

Of course, we are not on the holy level of Yaacov Avinu. However, we can make a difference by strengthening the spirituality of those around us. May we succeed to uplift ourselves and in turn inspire our family and friends with holiness, purity, and goodness.

[Based on Magid Mesharim of Rav Yoseph Cairo]

TODAY: Encourage someone in their spiritual endeavors.

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