

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 - 21 Mar 2012 13:11

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 FAITH OF AND TRUST OF PSALMS\84:12-13

"For my sun and my shield is G-d; HaShem Elokim bestows favor and glory. He will not withhold goodness from those who walk sincerely. HaShem of Hosts, fortunate is the man who trusts in You."

King David composed these moving words to strengthen the hearts of the People of Israel when they are in exile. HaShem is "my sun" i.e., He will be a Great Light to us when we dwell in the darkness of the exile. In addition, he is "my shield," that is, He also protects us from harm.

Even more, HaShem will grant favor and goodness to "those who walk sincerely" with HaShem and wholeheartedly return to Him. What's more, He will honor them by freeing them the exile.

Fortunate is the person who strengthens his faith to believe in HaShem's deliverance, as so eloquently expressed in the above verse. He will not despair at the length and troubles of the exile. Even more, he will trust and believe that HaShem will liberate him from the exile, rebuild the holy Temple, and bring him to the Temple courtyards so that he can rejoice and worship in the splendor of the Shechinah.

In this light, King David completes this Psalm with the Prophetic words, "HaShem of Hosts, fortunate is the man who trusts in You." For two thousand years the holy words of King David have encouraged us and strengthened us with irrepressible trust and faith in HaShem.

In our hearts, every member of Klal Yisrael believes that HaShem will redeem us and reveal His glorious light upon us in Jerusalem, forever.

[Based on the commentary of the Radak]

TODAY: Place your trust in HaShem and rejoice in His light, protection, and deliverance.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 22 Mar 2012 12:57

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

The Talmud (Sanhedrin) tells us that "Parveh" was a sorcerer who used black-magic to tunnel under the Temple. He planned to enter the Temple and disrupt the Divine service. Fortunately, when he crawled into the Temple he was apprehended before he had a chance to activate his evil scheme.

On the spot where his tunnel opened into the Temple, the Sages ordered a room to be built and they called it "The Chamber of Parveh." In addition, they built the ritual bath in which the Kohen Gadol immersed on Yom Kippur on the roof of "The Chamber of Parveh."

This cryptic account is mystifying! Why would the Rabbis name the chamber after the sorcerer, who was bent on sabotaging the Divine service? Even more, it is inconceivable that we should place the ritual bath of the holiest man, on the holiest day, in the holiest place - on the roof of "The Chamber of Parveh!"

In truth, the Talmud reveals here one of the great secrets of the Torah. We might assume that a holy person, in a holy place, at a holy time, will not be vulnerable to the devious ploys of the yetzer hora.

However - amazingly - at the pinnacle of holiness the yetzer hora attacks with full force. Like a candle that flickers with a final burst of light before it's is extinguished, so too, the yetzer hora fights for its life in the face of its nemesis - HOLINESS!

Accordingly, the Rabbis memorialized Parveh, in order to raise our awareness of his constant - and dangerous - threat. May this lesson enlighten us to take the proper precautions in order to ward off the attacks of the yetzer hora, so that we may ascend the spiritual heights.

[Based on a talk given by Rabbi Avraham Feuer}

TODAY: Never "let your guard down" against the schemes of the yetzer hora.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 23 Mar 2012 12:54

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

PARSHA INSIGHTS\THE LIGHT OF MUSSAR\VAYIKRA

What significance does the "language of love" have in the Heavenly realm?

When HaShem spoke with Moshe, He always prefaced His words with an expression of love to Moshe, as per the verse (Vayikra 1:1): "And He called to Moshe." The term "called" is also an expression of love used by the angels when speaking with each other, "And this angel called to that angel."

Each language has its own special aspects. Hebrew, for instance, is called "the holy language" because it is the language of the Torah, i.e., the Divine Wisdom. Our holy language reflects the holiness and purity of the People of Israel. Likewise, each nation has its own language which reflects the soul of its people.

Just as there is a holy language, there is also a language of love. The angels speak in the "language of love" because the souls of the angels are entities of pure love and kindness.

The Talmud (Pesachim 3a) states: "A should always speak with loving words." The words a person chooses reveal his inner essence. Therefore, if a person speaks with loving words, the qualities of love and kindness will be awakened within his heart.

May we speak with loving and kindly words, so that we express our true essence. In turn,

HaShem will bless us with love, peace, and holiness.

[Based on Da'as Chaim of Rav Yerucham of Mi]

TODAY: Begin all your conversations with words of love.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 28 Mar 2012 09:31

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\ZAV

Of all the treasures that HaShem bestowed upon us, Torah is the greatest of them all. Since the Torah is the Divine Wisdom, it would be reasonable to assume that our intention in Torah study is to become wise.

Yet, our Sages, commenting on the verse (Vayikra 8:37) "This is the Torah of elevation," explain: "Whoever studies Torah will be elevated." Apparently, the purpose of Torah study is not to become wise, but to become "elevated," i.e., holy.

The Torah renders holiness in two ways. Firstly, it rectifies any misdeed that was done, by restoring the holiness that was lost. Secondly, the study of the holy Torah draws the Shechinah close to dwell amongst the People of Israel.

In addition, Torah study neutralizes the influence of the negative impulse. Even more, the merit of Torah study will ultimately facilitate the uprooting of evil from the world.

The Prophet said (Zachariah 14:9): "And Hashem will be King over all the world - on that day HaShem will be One and His Name will be One." Meaning, the merit of Torah study will bring about the rectifications that lead to the revelation of HaShem, i.e., the redemption.

May we engage in Torah study and merit to see the holiness, joy, and illumination of the Shechinah.

[Based on the Ohr HaChaim HaKodesh]

TODAY: As you study Torah, rejoice with the awareness that you are elevating yourself and the entire world.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 28 Mar 2012 09:32

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\THE ETHICS OF OUR FATHERS \2:18

"Rabbi Shimon says: Be meticulous in reading the Shema and in prayer."

Regarding our daily recitation of the "Shema Yisrael," the very declaration of our faith in Hashem, our Sages give us sound advice. Specifically they tell us that each day that we recite the "Shema Yisrael," we should read it with the excitement as if it is a new royal document that we have just received!"

Yet how can we read the same passage every day, as if it was a brand new letter from HaShem that we have never seen?

The intellectual prowess that HaShem has instilled within us provides us with the "power of renewal." That is, by reflecting on the words that we say in prayer, our minds will discover a new significance to the holy words. This new insight revitalizes our spirits, firing us with the enthusiasm as if we read the Shema Yisrael for the first time in our lives.

In addition, the new insights fills our hearts with joy, increasing our love for Shema Yisrael, as well as the all of the other Mitzvoth.

May we succeed in brining alive our recitation of the Shema Yisrael - "Hear O Israel, HaShem is our G-d, HaShem is One." As a result, we will enhance our understanding of HaShem. In turn, we will scintillate with joy, wisdom, and the love for Mitzvoth!

[Based on Mictav M'Eliyahu of Rebe Eliezer Dessler]

TODAY: Take a few moments to reflect on Shema Yisrael and discover its endless secrets.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 29 Mar 2012 14:26

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

PESACH

Our Sages tell us that when Klal Yisrael was enslaved in Egypt, they were influenced by the spiritual decadence of their surroundings. Indeed, Egypt was the world center of idol worship and black magic. The crushing, ruthless bondage weakened the Jewish nation and rendered them vulnerable to the lures of idolatry. Klal Yisrael eventually sunk to the 49th level of tumah (i.e., spiritual defilement) - the lowest level of impurity.

Their spiritual state was so weak that had they remained in Egypt for one more minute, they would have been irredeemable, i.e., they would have been slaves forever in Egypt. At that very last minute, HaShem redeemed them from the clutches of evil and favored them with eternal freedom.

This magnificent reversal of fortune took place within a moment's time. Instantaneously, they went from slavery to freedom; from death to life; from darkness to light; from defilement to holiness; and from sadness to joy. Not only does this event reveal the great love that the HaShem bestowed upon us at the time of our redemption, even more, it demonstrates the amazing potential contained in every moment of existence. Each and every second is an abundant and boundless resource of goodness, and a powerhouse of deliverance and transformation.

The greatest lesson of the exodus is the importance of irrepressible optimism. The realization of the dramatic and awesome wonders that HaShem can perform for us in a mere second, dispels all notion of despair. Faith and salvation is a constant; an axiomatic foundation of reality.

Let us awaken our hearts to the countless opportunities embedded in each moment. By placing our faith in HaShem, we will greet each moment with joy and excitement. For each moment is a seed that blossoms forth with freedom, life, light, holiness, and redemption. [Based on Ohr Yael]

TODAY: Envision the next moment as river of goodness that flows into your life.

New SF Blogpost: SPIRITUAL BODY LANGUAGE

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 02 Apr 2012 13:08

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

PESACH: HASHEM - MASTER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

The Ten Plagues began at the lowest point on earth and incrementally rose to the highest heights of the universe. The first plague, in which the waters turned to blood, occurred in the rivers which rest on the very foundation of the earth. In the second plague, frogs swarmed in the waters which lay above the riverbed, yet still below the earth's surface. The third plague, was lice, which emerged from the soil of earth itself.

The next plague was the wild beasts, which stand upon the earth. The fifth plague was disease, which is carried in the air suspended over the earth. The next plague was boils, which is a manifestation of fire, which is above the air. The seventh plague was hail, which comes from the clouds above. The next plague was locusts which fly above the clouds. The ninth plague was darkness, which affected the luminaries, which stand in the heavenly heights. The final plague, the death of the firstborn, demonstrated that HaShem is the master of the souls, which dwell in the spiritual realm.

Now, we understand that the ascending levels of the plagues revealed that HaShem is the Master of every dimension of creation, from the lowest to the highest.

The revelation of HaShem during the Exodus is the foundation of our faith. Since, He rules over everything from the seabed to the souls in Heaven, it makes sense for us to trust in HaShem, alone. He will help us in every situation and fill our lives with deliverance, blessing, and peace.

May the light of Pesach renew our faith in HaShem and awaken merit so that we experience great miracles, just as our ancestors witnessed in ancient days.

[Based on the Maral of Prague]

TODAY: Feel confident that HaShem will help you and protect you in every place and situation.

New SF Blogpost: SPIRITUAL BODY LANGUAGE

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 02 Apr 2012 13:34

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

The Salant Center

Discover Your Goodness

THE WISDOM OF THE TALMUD

"Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa went to study Torah with Rabbi Yochanon ben Zakkai. Subsequently, Rabbi Yochanon's son fell seriously ill, i.e., he was at the edge of death. Rabbi Yochanon asked Rabbi Chanina to pray for his son's recovery. Rabbi Chanina prayed intensely and the child's life was restored.

Rabbi Yochanon said, "If I would have prayed intensely the entire day, my prayers would not have been received."

Rabbi Yochanon's wife asked him, "Is Rabbi Chanina greater than you?"

"No," he answered, "rather Rabbi Chanina is like a servant before the king, whereas I am like a minister of the king." (Brachos 34b)

What is the meaning of Rabbi Yochanon ben Zakkai's statement that he is "like a minister before the king" whereas "Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa is "like a servant before king?"

Rabbi Yochanon employed the two different terms to explain the qualitative spiritual difference between himself and Rabbi Chanina. "A minister before the king" alludes to a master of Torah, while "a servant before the king" refers to a master of prayer. Accordingly, Rabbi Yochanon was a prince of Torah, i.e., he knew the entire Torah on the highest level of scholarship.

In contradistinction, Rabbi Chanina was from the era of the early sages of piety, i.e., the

Chasidim Reshonim. Correspondingly, he prayed with holy devotion and unity with HaShem.

Therefore, Rabbi Yochanon was greater in Torah than Rabbi Chanina, while Rabbi Chanina was greater in prayer than Rabbi Yochanon. The prayers and piety of Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa drew him intimately close to HaShem. What's more, he was able to have an audience with the King of Kings whenever he wished. He would make his sincere supplication and the King would grant his request.

Prayer is the most powerful and immediate way to connect to HaShem. May we open our hearts and offer sincere prayer to our merciful Creator. He will answer all of our requests and bless us and all of Israel with light and peace.

[Based of the commentary of the Vilna Gaon]

TODAY Close your eyes and pray sincerely to HaShem for thirty seconds.

New SF Blogpost: CHEST OF DRAWERS

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 04 Apr 2012 12:55

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 Living Root of Faith

The miraculous exodus from Egypt, and its remembrance, is like a seed that sprouts from the past - and blossoms forth - into the future. After an earthly fruit is consumed the power of regeneration remains within the seed. So too, the clear and vivid perception of HaShem rendered by the Yetzias Mitzraim, i.e., the fruit, contains the seeds of regeneration. Thus, we can reawaken the vision of the exodus, even after the initial clarity of knowing HaShem diminishes.

Through the faculty of their intellect, our Patriarchs grasped the knowledge of HaShem. In turn, this brought them to attain a live awareness of the glorious presence of HaShem. Subsequently, the Divine Will sought to implant the knowledge of G-d in the hearts of the entire community of Israel. Therefore, He took them out of Egypt with great wonders, so that the knowledge of HaShem was etched in their hearts. Just as a seed can only grow when it is planted in the soil, so too, the concept and understanding of the exodus only thrive when planted deeply within the heart.

In light of this, Klal Yisrael experienced a wondrous level of prophecy at the Red Sea. Indeed, even the simplest handmaiden at the Red Sea experienced a greater level of clarity than Yechezkal, one of our greatest prophets. With time, the awareness faded from their hearts and lingered only in their intellect. However, the mental faculties, in and of themselves, do not have the power to engender the fruits of real and vibrant awareness of HaShem.

Nevertheless, these concepts stored in the mind are like a seed that contains the potential forces that bring forth a fruitful vine. Hence, by constant reflection the dry seed slowly takes root in the fertile chambers of the heart - and ultimately blossoms with sweet fruits.

This process of replanting takes place continuously throughout the generations. The father plants the seeds of faith in the heart of his children through the constant recounting of the miraculous exodus from Egypt, and in turn, his children tell their children, and ad infinitum. These seeds blossom forth with abundant fruits of dynamic faith in HaShem - the very lifeline of our existence.

[Based on Ohr Rashaz, volume 1, article 220]

TODAY: Envision planting a seed within your heart and see it blossom with fruits of faith.

New SF Blogpost: SPIRITUAL BODY LANGUAGE

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 17 Apr 2012 13:25

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

PIRKEI AVOS/ETHICS OF THE FATHERS _____5:23

"Yehudah ben Tema said: Be bold as a leopard; light as an eagle; swift as a deer; and strong as a lion to carry out the will of your Father in Heaven."

This passage reveals the secret of empowerment and vitality. Usually, when a person expends his energy, he must rest in order to regain his strength. While this is generally true of worldly endeavors, however spiritual matters follow a different dynamic. HaShem grants an extra measure of power and protection to people who are dedicated to spirituality.

The Prophet Isaiah said, "Those who trust in HaShem will experience a renewal of strength." That is, when those who devote themselves to HaShem tire, they turn to HaShem for help. HaShem increases and replenishes their strength so that they can perform more good deeds.

Accordingly, the text says: Be bold as a leopard - inspire yourself as well as others to study Torah and perform good deeds. Now that we are enlightened with the knowledge that HaShem

will grant us a surplus of strength, we should not desist from Mitzvoth due to lack of stimulation. Rather, we should feel confident that we can perform Mitzvoth with the "boldness of a leopard."

Likewise, a period of running begets exhaustion. However, a person whose is engaged in a good deed or Mitzvah will not tire, rather he will "swift as a deer." In addition, his determination to complete Mitzvoth will be as mighty like the "strength of a lion."

Not only does faith helps us to succeed in our affairs, even more, it awakens fresh supplies of energy so that can perform beyond our natural limits. Therefore, when we are fatigued we should pray for new reserves of strength and HaShem will renew our strength.

May we be blessed with love to do good both for Heaven and well as our fellow man. When we are aroused to fulfill HaShem's will, He will provide us with endless supplies of energy, vigor, and strength.

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

TODAY: When you are tired repeat aloud the verse: "Those who trust in HaShem will experience a renewal of strength."

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 19 Apr 2012 13:47

Dedicated by Manfred and Rose-Ellen Leventhal in loving memory of:

Yechiel ben Rav Pinchas, Gittel Rus bas Rav Meyer,

Meira Leah bas Rav Michael,

Elya Moshe ben Rav Yonah, Avraham Hillel ben Rav Yeshaya - Z"L.

THE PARABLELS OF THE BEN ISH HAI

There was once two neighbors - one was rich, while the other was poor. The wealthy one owned vast flocks of cattle and sheep, as well as, numerous vineyards and fields. His dining table was like the table of kings and his spacious house was a literal palace. Despite his luxurious lifestyle he was very thin and frail.

His neighbor, on the other hand, was a simple craftsman. He did not have the means to provide feasts for his family every night for supper, except on Shabbos Kodesh. His small house was sparsely furnished and lacked everything but the bare essentials. However, notwithstanding his

economic status he was robust and healthy; and his countenance always glowed with joy.

His wealthy neighbor asked him, "Why is it that I am so feeble, while you are so full of vitality and health?"

"Let me tell you the truth. You have an angry and irritable nature." he responded. "At least ten times a day you lose your temper with your servants and children. Anger weakens the body and takes a great toll on one's health. Moreover, you have insatiable desires and you are consumed with jealousy. Hence, you are always in a state of anguish because your head is spinning with your obsession for money. You cannot possibly satisfy all of your passions. That is why you always feel miserable and this worry consumes you. With all of this negativity how could you possibly be healthy? Whereas I have an easy going nature. I see to it to never get angry. Moreover, I am happy with whatever portion that HaShem grants me. I look at what I have and feel that HaShem has truly blessed me. I do not have jealousy of others. Therefore, I have peace of mind which is the foundation of good health."

This parable teaches us that personal happiness is not dependent on one's economic status, but rather the purity of his character. The Torah warns us not to fall to the negative character traits such as jealousy, greed, and conceit. Not only are these traits improper, even more, they are destructive to our well being, in and of themselves.

Let us resolve to avoid these unfavorable traits. Then we will be healthy both in body and soul. Even more, we will be happy in this world, as well as, The World to Come!

TODAY: Stay even tempered under all circumstances.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 20 Apr 2012 12:41

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

PARSHA INSIGHTS THE SAGES OF MUSSAR

The Torah (Vayikra 12:3) instructs us to perform bris milah (circumcision) on a Jewish male baby, eight days after he is born. Correspondingly, the Torah (Bereishis 17:10) records that HaShem commanded our Patriarch, Avraham Avinu, regarding the Mitzvah of circumcision.

However, atypically, the injunction of circumcision awakened a question in the heart of Avraham Avinu. He said to HaShem, "Before I circumcised myself, people came to me and joined me in my faith in You. Perhaps when people hear that I am advocating circumcision they will be deterred from embracing my faith." HaShem responded, "Avraham, even if people no longer come to learn about your faith, let it suffice for you that I am your G-d; let it suffice that I am your patron."

Avraham expressed genuine concern that the Mitzvah of circumcision would hamper his efforts to bring others under the wings of the Divine Presence. HaShem answered him, "Even if you are the only man of faith - you alone are worthy of My loving kindness; the entire Torah; and the creation of the entire universe."

This is not to say that HaShem did not care about the spiritual welfare of others, rather He divulged that each individual is fully valid and worthy in the eyes of Heaven. Specifically, he informed Avraham that His love for him was not predicated upon Avraham's success to turn the hearts of man to G-d. Avraham's recognition of the Creator and his devotion to Him suffices, in and of itself, to earn him eternal favor.

As our Sages say: "Every person is obligated to say, 'The whole world was created for me.'" Meaning, that each individual is created with the potential of greatness to be worthy of the entire universe.

Moreover, HaShem revealed to Avraham that not only is he worthy of the creation of the cosmos, even more, he alone is worthy of all of HaShem's boundless goodness, holiness, and pleasure. May we merit walking in the ways of our Father Avraham, and merit enjoying all of HaShem's infinite and eternal love, compassion, and blessing.

[Based on the Midrash Bereishis 46:3]

TODAY: Say aloud with inner joy: "The whole world was created for me."

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 23 Apr 2012 13:15

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

The Prophet Isaiah (58:5) admonished Klal Yisrael for being downhearted on Yom Kippur-Is such gloom the fast that I have chosen? Is the purpose of the day for man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under his feet?

What is the criticism of Isaiah? Yom Kippur is a time of judgment, fasting, and repentance. Isn't the focus of the day to reflect on one's misdeeds and shortcomings-and to feel a sense of despondence?

In the next passage (58:6) Isaiah explains what should take place on Yom Kippur-Isn't the purpose of this fast that I have chosen to loosen fetters of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke?

Yom Kippur is a time of liberation. It provides us with the opportunity to extricate ourselves from negativity and selfishness. If we open our hearts to the power of Yom Kippur and fill our souls with goodness and kindness-Then shall your light break forth as the morning, and your healing shall quickly spring forth (58:8).

The Torah deliberately writes (Vayikra 23:32) that Yom Kippur takes place on the ninth of Tishrei, even though the actual date of observance is the tenth of Tishrei. By associating the previous day, i.e. the ninth, to Yom Kippur, the Torah is telling us that anyone who partakes of a festive meal on the ninth is considered as if he fasted on both the ninth and the tenth.

In the same spirit of the Prophet, this verse teaches that Yom Kippur is a time of joy and celebration-for there is no greater happiness than forgiveness and redemption.

The purpose of avodas Hashem and repentance is true joy and delight. Although certain aspects of our observance evoke remorse-this is the means and not the end. Through proper appreciation and fulfillment of the Yom Kippur procedure-our spirits are cleansed, our souls elevated, and our hearts filled with delight.

[Based on Ohr HaZafon of Rav Nosson Zvi Finkel]

TODAY: Envision the sun of Yom HaKippur shining upon you with light and healing.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 24 Apr 2012 13:18

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_1:6

"Yehoshua ben Prachya said: "Make a Rabbi for yourself, acquire a friend for yourself, and give everyone the benefit of the doubt."

This passage alludes to the good impulse (i.e., the yetzer hatov) and the negative impulse (i.e., the yetzer hora). The 'good impulse' is helpless because although he is wise, his counsel is largely ignored. Whereas the 'negative impulse' exerts great influence over us as long as we are stationed here in the material dimension of existence.

HaShem has blessed man with a sensitive conscience, an inherent ethical compass that shows him the way to high ground. Notwithstanding, the voice of the conscience often is drowned out by the earthly persuasions. Nevertheless, the Torah assures us that our good essence is our true self - a constant power - that resides with us forever.

Accordingly, the Mishneh advises, "Make a Rabbi for yourself." That is, make your 'good impulse' your inner teacher. Recognize his wisdom and make him your spiritual guide. Consequently, we will excel in the service of HaShem and in our conduct with others.

In addition, our sages instruct us to 'acquire a friend for yourself.' That is, convert your negative impulse into a friend. Yet, how is it possible to make the negative impulse into a friend. Through Mussar study, the negative impulse is 'sweetened.' That is, the base forces are rectified, virtuous character traits are awakened, and the person desires to perform good deeds.

When a person listens to his inner sage and transforms his character traits, he becomes elevated and holy. He attains the purity of soul to view everyone in a positive light, i.e., to "give everyone the benefit of the doubt."

May we discover the inner sage, our intelligent soul that HaShem has breathed within us. Then we will shine forth with the light of purity, holiness, and, goodness.

[Based on the commentary of the Chidash to Pirkei Avos]

TODAY: Speak to your positive impulse - and appoint him to be your inner guide.

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