

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 - 30 Apr 2012 13:09

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

The Salant Center

Mussar - A Healing Spirit for the Heart and Soul

Monday, April 30, 2012

SPRING CLEANING

By June Silny

Spring is here. Flowers are in bloom. I sit on my patio feeling the breeze, enjoying the fresh air
and admiring the trees. The beauty of nature permeates my soul. A joyful calm is within me.
Suddenly the noise begins, a grinding sound from a motor appears. I can hear the blades

spinning. I look up to see the workmen climbing high on their ladders holding the chainsaw as the loud buzzing sound continues disturbing my serenity.

My first reaction is annoyance. Who do they have to do this now? I am content in my peaceful place. Can't they do this on another day when I'm not here? Why don't they come back when I'm inside, not on a magnificent day like today? My anger mounts. I notice the change in my body. Discomfort appears, taking the place where peacefulness was. Then suddenly I realize, I am the one disturbing my own tranquility. Is what I see all that there is?

I struggle to make peace with the noise. My beautiful green bountiful yard is being slaughtered. The lush green paradise is coming down. The sounds from the heavy palm fronds falling to the ground can be heard. My serenity is being shredded, branch by branch. A quiet sadness comes over me as I watch the lustrous green branches tumble from the treetops. It will be bare for months until the beauty returns to my peaceful place. All I will see is raw sliced-open branches of the trees, dry and colorless. I impulsively call my husband asking him "What are they doing my yard, why does this landscaper cut so much off, can't they take less each time and come more often?" "Don't worry it will grow back soon," he reassured me, "we have to do this, the trees need it so they can grow new leaves and grow back more beautiful than they were before."

And then, it hit me... I need to do the same for myself. I need to cut back so that I can re-grow.

Spring is here.

It's time to get rid of the old and bring in the new. We clean our houses, empty garages, and cut back our yards, it's also time to cleanse our souls. Our old behaviors, negative character traits, and harmful words need to be shredded and thrown away so that we can make room for the new. As long as the "old" remains, the "new" cannot grow.

Each night we count the omer. We recite the blessing which asks Hashem to purify us from our evil and uncleanness. For seven full weeks we count so that the souls of Klal Yisrael may be cleansed from their defilement, so that the blemishes that we have caused be rectified. May we be purified and sanctified with supernal holiness. May abundant bounty be bestowed. May it rectify our nefesh, ruach and neshama from every defect. May it rectify and purify us with Your supernal holiness.

The omer is our spiritual landscaper. It's time to say good-bye to the blemishes, defects and negative traits. It's time for rectification and purification. It's time to cut back the old branches and grow new ones that will be more beautiful than the ones before. It's time to refresh, renew and readjust.

Since it's not so simple to just stop the "old" harmful ways, a guide is necessary to take you through the process. Mussar learning is the guidebook. A teacher is required to lead you through the cleansing process and offer a new path to grow on.

Spring is here. It's time to get rid of the old; refresh, renovate and discover a new you. May Hashem bless you with bountiful blossoms as you become anew.

JOIN RABBI ZVI MILLER for the Salant Foundation Series on 'INFINITE COMPASSION.'
Beginning Monday April 30.

for more information contact..... salantorg@gmail.com

New SF Blogpost: SPIRITUAL BODY LANGUAGE

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 10 May 2012 15:02

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 _____ 1:6

6) Yehoshuah ben P'rach'ya said: Make a Rabbi for yourself, acquire a friend for yourself, and give everybody the benefit of the doubt.

There are three spiritual advantages that a friend provides. First, a friend helps one improve the quality of his Torah study. The Talmud (Ta'anis 7a) teaches this idea: "I learned much from my teachers, I learned even more from my friends, and I learned the most from my students."

Second, friends strengthen each other in Mitzvoth observance. Even a friendship where one person is more spiritually inclined than his friend can engender positive results. For instance, let's assume that Shimon is more spiritually advanced than Reuven. Yet, even when Shimon is occasionally tempted to transgress-he will withhold himself because his conduct would have a negative impact on Reuven (i.e., Reuven will think if Shimon does that misdeed, than certainly I can). Instead, Shimon will urge Reuven to strengthen his commitment to Mitzvoth-and in turn-Reuven will see to it that Shimon stays on the proper path. Hence, in a properly structured relationship, good friends will influence each other to spiritual improvement.

The third advantage of friendship is good advice. A person should reveal his secrets to no one but his trusted and proven friend. If he confides in his friend (who sincerely cares for him) concerning all the matters of his life-his friend will give him good counsel-that will illuminate the path to success in his endeavors. Shlomo HaMelech taught (Mishlei 15:22) the importance of taking advice-Thoughts are frustrated when there is no counsel, but through an abundance of counsel they will be established.

Hence, friends are so valuable and indispensable that the Mishnah says acquire a friend, i.e., meaning that it is worth it to befriend him even if you have to spend money or draw him close with gentle words. Once you have established your friendship, do not argue with him if he disagrees with you. No two human beings see all things the same way. Therefore, do not sacrifice your precious friendship over an insignificant issue.

Rebe Akiva said that the essential principle of the Torah is Love your fellow, as you love yourself. If we appreciate the incomparable worth of friends we will see much success, spiritual growth, and happiness in all aspects of our lives.

[Based on the commentary of Rabenu Yonah]

TODAY: Reach out to a friend and strengthen your bond of friendship.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 10 May 2012 15:03

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

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

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

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

was I lucky. If I would have missed that flight, I would have missed a key meeting."

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

Take note of the amazing kindness of HaShem, that constantly surrounds us. The more we focus on recognizing HaShem in our lives, the more He will reveal to us His wonderful and infinite love, mercy, and kindness.

TODAY: Take a few to moments to appreciate your wondrous gift of health and wellbeing.

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Re: Salant Center d'var
Posted by chaimyakov - 10 May 2012 15:06

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 AGADATTA OF THE TALMUD

Just as a small seed engenders a fruitful tree, so too, each person contains a potential that can carry him to great heights. How do we access our true inner strength so that we grow to our full level of goodness, wisdom, and purity?

When Elijah the Prophet was nearing his departure from this world, he wanted to bless his student, Elisha. Realizing the precious and unique opportunity of the moment, Elisha said to Elijah, "Bless me with twice the level of prophecy than you have."

Elijah responded, "I accept your request. However, I cannot fulfill it until I begin to ascend to Heaven." Indeed, when Elijah ascended to Heaven in a "Chariot of Fire," he blessed Elisha with twice the level of prophecy that he himself possessed.

However, the question arises: How can a person give more than he actually possesses? The sum cannot be greater than its parts.

Elisha knew that his body masked the true radiance of his soul. However, when his soul separated from his physicality, the full magnitude of the soul was illuminated, allowing Elijah to bless Elisha with a double portion of prophecy.

Even while alive in this earthly world, Elijah reached a great level of holiness. Nevertheless, that was only half of his soul's true power. If this is true of Elijah, how much more so this is true of us, who have are quite distant from his holy level of prophecy.

May the knowledge of our true level of holiness and purity inspire us to elevate ourselves to always higher levels of spirituality.

TODAY: Rejoice in knowing that you have vast supplies of untapped holiness, kindness, and wisdom.

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Re: Salant Center d'var
Posted by chaimyakov - 10 May 2012 15:09

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

THE SAGES OF MUSSAR ON THE PARSHA

The Midrash tells us that HaShem states, "I honor those who honor Me, and I love those who love Me." Accordingly, HaShem holds a special love for the tzadikim (i.e., the righteous people) because they honor and love HaShem. The tzadikim demonstrate even a greater level of devotion to HaShem than the Kohanim. For the spiritual level of the tzadikim, is born by their own initiative, whereas the status of the Kohanim is inherited from father to son.

Additionally, the Midrash relates a parable: There was once a king, who employed a shepherd to tend his flocks. One day as the flocks were grazing in the pasture, a deer from the mountains appeared and grazed with the flock. He stayed with the flock all day and returned with them at night to their corral. This unusual relationship continued for a number of days, at which point the shepherd related this incident to the king.

"Make sure to pay special attention to the deer; and see to it that he is well fed," the king responded. "But why should he be singled out above the other sheep," asked the shepherd. "Because the nature of a deer is to live in the wild. This deer goes against his nature, choosing to live with the domesticated sheep. Therefore, we need to compensate and reward him

accordingly," the king responded.

This parable alludes to gairim i.e., converts and the ba'alei teshuvah, i.e., those souls who advance themselves in Judaism, even though they had minimal exposure in their youth. HaShem shows them special favor and love because in embracing Judaism they must overcome many personal challenges.

We understand from HaShem's love for the tzadikim as well as his love for the gairim and ba'alei teshuvah, that HaShem grants great reward for those who make an effort to come close to Him. In fact, even if a person strives to do just one Mitzvah or to engage in one proper thought, HaShem blesses him with magnificent and eternal reward.

May HaShem's love for us and sensitivity to our efforts, inspire us to strengthen our Mitzvoth observance. The more we devote ourselves to HaShem, the more He will shower His love, honor, and eternal joy upon us!

Today: Know that for the effort you invested in Torah study, HaShem will crown you and bless you with endless light.

THE SHALOM YISRAEL INITIATIVE

A senior Rabanit of Jerusalem has a wonderful idea for increasing peace in the world! "The Shalom Yisrael Initiative" helps people who are in dispute to make peace with each other. Qualified counselors meet with interested parties and help them find the path to peace.

The service is available for friends, relatives, or neighbors who had a disagreement and seek reconciliation. (Couples are advised to refer to the many sources which are already available to them for the pursuit of shalom Bayit.)

The Salant Foundation has joined the "Shalom Yisrael" team.
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Rabanit Esther Leah Avner: estelav@netvision.net.il (for women)

Rabbi Zvi Miller: salant@netvision.net.il
(for men and general inquiries)

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

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

The Salant Center

Mussar - A Healing Spirit for the Heart and Soul

AROUND THE SHABBOS TABLEPARSHAS BEHAR

The Torah (Vayikra 25:1) instructs us to observe a continuous cycle of working the land for six years and allowing it to rest on the seventh, or Shemitah year. "Speak to the children of Israel and say to them-when you come to the land that I shall give you, the land shall observe a Shabbos for Hashem." What is the meaning of "the land shall observe a Shabbos for Hashem?"

The Ramban explains that there is a commonality between Shabbos and Shemitah. On the Shabbos after creation, HaShem ceased from work and rested, therefore the Torah instructs man regarding the seventh day: "you shall not do any manner of work." Similarly, since the Shemitah is the seventh year in the cycle of years, the Torah instructs us to desist from working the land. Hence, both Shabbos and Shemitah are ordained Shabbos for Hashem, alluding to the Shabbos of creation.

The Ramban writes that this concept of Shabbos for Hashem, touches on one of the great secrets of the Torah. That is, everything that will take place in the future is embedded within the seven days of creation. Thus, in the first six days of creation, Hashem fashioned all the days of existence. While the seventh day of creation, is Shabbos for Hashem, signifying in the World to Come there will be an Eternal Shabbos and tranquillity. Hence, from the time of creation, Hashem has programmed the universe with a stretch of time that spans the six thousand years of this world and culminates with the Eternal rest in Gan Eden, the Shabbos for Hashem.

The six thousand years of creation and the Shabbos of Bereishis not only include all the days of this world, but also even transcends to Eternity. Therefore, the concept of Olam HaBah-the true place of our existence-is not merely a tradition or wishful belief. The future eternal delights of Gan Eden are a substantiated dimension of existence that was, is, and always will be. It is woven into the fabric of creation.

Each Shabbos and Shemitah year, Hashem grants us the opportunity to ponder the wonder and splendor of the Shabbos for Hashem, and thereby acknowledge the work of creation and life in the World to Come. The Shabbos for Hashem experience enables us to crystallize the truth of Gan Eden, and therefore, inspires us to strengthen our devotion to Mitzvoth, through which we will merit to delight in the eternal pleasure of the Shechinah, please G-d.

[Based on the commentary of the Ramaban]

TODAY: Take a moment on Shabbos and reflect on the concept that Shabbos signifies the definite and certain existence of eternal peace in Olam HaBah.

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Re: Salant Center d'var
Posted by chaimyakov - 10 May 2012 15:11

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

PIRKEI AVOSTHE ETHICS OF OUR FATHERS2:16

"Rabbi Tarfon said: If you learned a great amount of Torah, you will receive a great reward."

A man traveling on the road found a pouch full of precious diamonds. He quickly returned to his house in order to get a closer look at his find. When he opened the pouch the sparkling gems lit up his house. His happiness and exuberance over these diamonds was without bounds because he knew they would give him the means to live a life of luxury and comfort.

HaShem blessed us with the precious gift of speech. Through speaking words of Torah, we can produce thousands of words of Torah every week. Each and every word of Torah that we learn is a precious gem in the eyes of HaShem, and will bring us eternal delight in Gan Eden.

How wonderful is this gift of speech that HaShem granted us! Through Torah study, we can form thousands upon thousands of pearls, diamonds, and emeralds that will illuminate eternally for us in the World to Come.

In addition, a person's Torah study will also bear fruits in this world, as King Solomon said, "Life and death are in the tongue, and those who love it will eat her fruits." One who "loves" the faculty of speech in order to speak words of Torah, which is the very source of "life," will eat from the fruits of his or her "gems of Torah" in this world as well as the World to Come.

May we take advantage of our gift of speech and create countless diamonds through the words of Torah that we speak!

[Based on the commentary of the Chofetz Chaim]

TODAY: Dedicate time each day to study Torah and illuminate your life with the most sparkling, precious gems.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 10 May 2012 15:12

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 BRACHOS 16a

Rabbi Chama ben Rebe Chanina said, "Just as immersion in a river elevates a person from spiritual defilement to spiritual purity, so too, Torah study raises a person from culpability to a meritorious status."

The merit of Torah is supreme, extending far beyond all human concepts of goodness. Not only does Torah protect its students from making mistakes, even more, if the student of the Torah does commit a misdeed, the study of Torah will purify his soul from the impurity. Therefore, the passage compares the study of Torah to the purifying waters of the rivers.

In addition, our Sages taught, "The study of Torah extinguishes the sin." That is, the merit of sincere Torah study is so great, that it entirely eradicates every trace of the misdeed.

What's more, devotion to Torah awakens abundant dimensions of Divine compassion. Amazingly, the mercy of HaShem that is evoked through Torah study converts the misdeed into a Mitzvah!

Just as immersion in a river changes the status of the person from impure to pure, so too, Torah study elevates a person from accountability to worthiness. The Torah reverses misdeeds into merits, and changes the status of an unworthy person to become a righteous person - in the same way that ritual immersion elevates and sanctifies a person.

May we designate a daily time to Torah study, so that the purifying waters of Torah elevate us to worthiness, holiness, and joy.

[Based on the commentary of the Anaf Yoseph to the Talmud]

TODAY: Engage in Torah study - and know that your mistakes are being converted to good deeds.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 10 May 2012 15:14

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 AGADATTA 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 occurred 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 - 11 May 2012 14:03

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The Salant Center

eMussar - The Wisdom of Personal Growth

The Sages of Mussar

In ancient days, each family in Eretz Yisrael was awarded a parcel of land. This ancestral heritage was their eternal possession. Thus, even if someone became impoverished and was forced to sell his land, notwithstanding, it reverts to the original owner in the Jubilee year.

Moreover, the Torah (Vayikra 25:25) instructs the relatives of the impoverished seller to redeem the land and return it to its rightful owner. The purchaser is required to sell back the land whenever the family is in a position to reimburse him.

What happens if a man has no relatives to help him buy back his land? We would assume that he must wait for the Jubilee year. Yet, the Torah (Vayikra 25:26) states, "If a man will have no redeemer; but his means will suffice and he acquires enough for its redemption...then he pays the purchaser...and he shall return to his ancestral heritage."

A person who had to sell his land should not despair if he has no relatives to bail him out. Eventually, he will have the sufficient funds to regain his property. Hashem will send him the means so that he, himself, will be able to redeem the land.

We often are discouraged because we feel we lack certain advantages that other people seem to have. We tell ourselves, "If I only had the connections that that guy has." Or we think, "If I

only had wealthy relatives to help me start a business."

The truth is we are never alone. We have the most loving Father, the Master of all power and wealth, that helps us twenty-four hours a day. No matter what situation we find ourselves in, we can trust and pray to Him.

He will help us and redeem in the most wondrous of ways, the deliverance of Hashem comes as quickly as a blink of the eye. Just as Hashem will help an impoverished person find funds to buy back his land, so too, He will send us help from Heaven. Hashem is there beside you, He will never abandon you.

[Based on The Chofetz Chaim on the Torah, BeHar]

TODAY: Say: "HaShem, You are near me. Help me HaShem."

THE SHALOM YISRAEL INITIATIVE

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Rabbi Zvi Miller: salant@netvision.net.il

(for men and general inquiries)

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 16 May 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

Discover Your Goodness

THE JOY OF FAITH

King David said, "Protect me HaShem, for I am righteous. For, the other kings of the world spend their nights attending lavish parties, whereas I awake at midnight and praise and thank You." King David was confident that his good deeds and dedication to HaShem earned him favor in the eyes of HaShem.

Yet, on another occasion he said to HaShem, "I know that You will bestow great reward to the righteous in Gan Eden. However, I am not sure if I will be counted with the righteous."

On one hand, David had a strong self-esteem, asking HaShem to protect him on the merit of his devotion to HaShem. Yet, on the other hand, David was worried that he may not merit a share in the World to Come. So, how did David view himself - as good or as bad?

The reason why David was worried about his lot in the Next World was because he was concerned that past misdeeds might detract from gaining his reward in the World to Come.

Nevertheless, despite his acknowledgment of his flaws, he ALWAYS viewed himself as "righteous" and good.

David reveals the secret of maintaining a positive self-image. A person's essence is immutably and eternally good. In that light, King David was confident that he always strove to be the best person that he could be. The awareness of his inherent goodness inspires him to define and identify himself as an entity of pure "goodness." If he occasionally acts inappropriately, he does not view himself in a negative light. Rather, since his goodness is his true and permanent essence, he always views himself in a positive light, i.e., "I am righteous."

May we be inspired by King David to always see ourselves as good!

[Based on Brachos 4a]

TODAY: Define and view yourself as good - and always feel good about yourself.

New SF Blogpost: THE ROADMAP TO YOUR SOUL

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 20 May 2012 16:14

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

THE AGADAH OF THE TALMUD

Rabbi Akiva said, "'Love your friend as you love yourself' - is the primary axiomatic principle of the Torah." This ideal implies that there should be an equivalency between the love we have for others and the love we have for ourselves. Meaning, just as we want the best for ourselves, we should want the best for others.

If we don't give with the complete love within our hearts, we are not quite fulfilling the principle. Therefore, we should give our friends everything in our capacity, without holding back any benefit that is within our power to give. For instance, we should share with them our wisdom, financial resources, time, and give them honor, etc.

Avraham Avinu was a master of loving others. Yet, if someone were to suggest to us that we should wait outside our house and find guests to invite for a meal, we would say, "I am not on that level." However, if we fully accept the value system of the Torah, we will realize that there should be no bars on our hearts.

Conducting ourselves in the kind ways of Avraham is the true and ultimate pleasure. Meaning, when we open up all the chambers of love that reside within our hearts, we will discover our true selves. The pursuit of unbounded loving-kindness and good deeds will bring us true and lasting joy. By reaching out to others and giving them our "all," we will experience a taste of the Garden of Eden.

[Based on Da'as Torah of Rav Yerucham]

TODAY: Allow yourself the joy of awakening the Avraham Avinu within you.

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Re: Salant Center d'var
Posted by chaimyakov - 21 May 2012 13:04

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

TORAH EMANATIONS

When the People of Israel left Egypt, HaShem made symbolic flags for each of the tribes. These divinely designed flags conferred holiness and greatness upon Israel. When the nations of the world saw the glory of Israel, they said to them, "Come within our midst and we will appoint you as leaders to rule over us."

In turn, Am Yisrael responded, "It is impossible for you to honor us with same degree of honor that HaShem honored us in the desert." He gave a special and unique flag to each tribe, bestowing greatness and distinction to each individual member of Israel.

Not only did HaShem honor us through the flags, he also assigned a position for each tribe in their dwelling place surrounding the Tabernacle. What's more, the schematic of these positions, vis-à-vis each tribe, corresponded to the position that Yaacov assigned to each of his sons when they carried him to his burial.

Yaacov informed his sons that they were to follow this same formation when they would encamp in the desert around the holy Tabernacle. Therefore, when HaShem instructed each tribe to assume a specific position, He said to Moshe, "I will not add anything to what Yaacov Avinu said, regarding the positions he appointed at the time of his death. The tribes will surround the Tabernacle in the same order in which their ancestors surrounded Yaacov."

In this light, the Torah draws a commonality between the Mishkan and Yaacov. Yet what relevance does Yaacov have to the holy Mishkan?

Rather, the Torah reveals that HaShem valued Yaacov as much as the Mishkan. Just as the Mishkan was the dwelling place of HaShem, so too, Yaacov was so pure and holy - that he served as a dwelling place for the Shechinah!

[Based on Ohr Meir, of Rav Meir Chadash]

TODAY: Rejoice in knowing that HaShem honors and distinguishes you - and the entire Nation of Israel.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 25 May 2012 13:04

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

PIRKEI AVOSTHE ETHICS OF OUR FATHERS4:1

"Ben Zoma said: Who is wise? The person who learns from every person. Who is strong? The person who overcomes his passions. Who is wealthy? The person who is happy with his portion. Who is honored? The person who honors others."

This passage of Ben Zoma presents a formula for spiritual success. The following parable illustrates the central pillar of Ben Zoma's ideology.

Steve and Larry found two precious diamonds. Each one took one of the diamonds and went his own separate way. Steve realized the value of the gem and guarded it with his very life. Larry did not fathom the value of the gem and traded it for a loaf of bread.

The diamond in this parable represents our wise and lofty soul. The person who appreciates the greatness of the soul will devote his life to holy endeavors, such as Torah study and good deeds. Accordingly, he will merit blessings in this world and earn a share of eternal life in Gan Eden. Whereas, the person who does not realize the preciousness of his soul will pursue the earthly passions and forgo the aspirations of his holy soul.

In this light, Ben Zoma teaches us that one who sincerely values wisdom, will learn from every person. In addition, he will protect his soul by overcoming the passion of the body. Then, he will attain true joy through his spiritual achievements. What's more, the goodness of the Torah will rectify his character; he will honor every person and be honored in return.

[Based on the commentary of the Yavetz to Pirkei Avot]

TODAY: Realize that through the power of your soul you can attain spiritual success, true joy, and eternal life.

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