

Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 01 Dec 2011 14:34

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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 - 29 May 2012 16:12

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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 AGADADA

A peddler came into the market and called out, "Who wants to buy the elixir of life?" Rabbi Yanai approached him and asked to see his goods. The peddler took out a book of Psalms and showed him the verse (34:13): "Who is the man who desires life, who loves days of seeing good?"

"The next verse answers the question raised in the first verse, "Who is the man who desires life?" said the peddler. "Guard your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. Turn from bad and do good, seek peace and pursue it."

Rabbi Yanai responded, "All my life I have been reading this passage, but I did not know its meaning until the peddler explained it to me." (Midrash Vayikra Raba 16:2)

What was the new insight that so impressed Rabbi Yanai? The peddler explained that the verse, "Who is the man who desires life," is not referring to a person who wants to avoid death. Rather, the verse reveals the way to TRULY BE ALIVE. That is, "Guard your lips from evil, do good, seek peace and pursuer it."

There are many levels of existing in this world. Typically, we determine if a person is alive if they are breathing and their heart is beating. However, the Torah illuminates the path to grasp the essence of life. That is, doing good deeds is the factor that makes us truly alive. May we be inspired to live the good life, by performing good deeds - and then we will truly be alive.

[Based on Cochvei Ohr of Rabbi Yitzchak Blazer]

TODAY: Do a good deed and feel your whole body and soul fill with vitality.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 30 May 2012 14:10

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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 INSIGHTSTHE SAGES OF MUSSAR

The Midrash relates that one Friday night a certain woman attended a public lecture given by Rebe Meir. By the time she returned home her candles were extinguished. "Where have you been?" her husband demanded. She replied that she had been to the class of Rebe Meir. "You are not permitted to enter my house until you spit in the face of Rebe Meir," insisted her foolish husband.

Elijah the Prophet informed Rebe Meir that the woman was banned from her house. Rebe Meir

went to synagogue. When the woman came to pray, Rebe Meir made himself yawn. He told the women that he was suffering from an ailment that could be cured if she would spit in his eye seven times. After she reluctantly complied, he told her, "Go tell your husband, 'You told me to spit once, whereas, I spit seven times.'"

Rebe Meir's students were appalled, "Rebe, the honor of the Torah has been disgraced. If you would have given the word, we would have forced him to take his wife back."

Rebe Meir responded, "The honor of Rebe Meir should not exceed the honor of Hashem. If Hashem allows his Holy name to be dissolved in the waters of the Sota (Bamidbar 5:23) - in order to make peace between husband and wife - all the more so should I lower my honor in order to make peace between husband and wife."

Although there was an alternative solution (as the students suggested) Rav Meir preferred to solve the problem by degrading himself. Rav Meir reasoned that the Sota procedure did not necessarily require the erasure of the Divine name. Rather, Hashem chose that method because - in His boundless compassion - He is willing to disgrace Himself in order to bring peace between husband and wife. Yet, if peace could have been achieved without disgrace - why did Hashem command us to erase His name?

When someone loves something, he does not delegate it to others to perform on his behalf. Rather, he himself pursues it. Hashem's love of peace is the reason that He chooses that His name be dissolved in order to make peace. May, we learn, as Rebe Meir did, to cherish peace so dearly - that we are even ready to make great sacrifices for the sake of peace.

[Based on Lev Eliyahu, Rav Elya Lopian]

TODAY: Give up something for the sake of peace.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 31 May 2012 13:17

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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 TALMUDBRACHOS 28B

Rabbi Nachunya ben Hakana would utter a prayer before he began to study Torah: May it be Your will that I do not err in my studies, and my friends rejoice in me. And may my friends not err in their studies, and I rejoice in them.

The intent of his prayer was, "May my friends truly be happy for me when they see that I do not err in my studies." And conversely he prayed, "May I truly rejoice when I see that my colleagues do not err in their studies."

How beautiful are the sentiments expressed in this prayer! It is human nature to feel a sense of satisfaction when other people make a mistake. Whereas, the students of the holy Torah pray that our friends should succeed in their learning and we should rejoice in their success.

The virtue of rejoicing in others is one of the attributes through which the Torah is acquired, i.e., "to bring happiness to others." What greater happiness can we give to our friends than to be happy for them in their Torah studies?

The prayer of Rabbi Nachunya ben Hakana is said today before Torah study. May HaShem answer our prayers so that we rejoice for each other's success in Torah learning.

[Based on the commentary of the M'harsha]

TODAY: Pray for your friend to succeed in his Torah learning and rejoice in his attainments.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 01 Jun 2012 13:34

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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 NASSO

When the Kohanim bless Klal Yisrael they should take care not to offer their blessings hurriedly and hastily, rather they should bless intently and with a whole heart. (Rashi Bamidbar 6:23)

What is the practical significance of blessing them "intently and with a whole heart"?

Before blessing Am Yisrael, the Kohen is required to recite a pre-blessing to Hashem: Blessed are You Hashem, Elokanu, King of the universe, who sanctifies us with His commandments and commands us to bless His people Israel "in love." In fact, love is so essential to the blessing of the Cohen that the Magen Avraham (1637-1683) rules that if the Kohen does not love Klal Yisrael, or if Klal Yisrael does not love the Kohen, he is not permitted to offer his blessing.

In light of this, we see that that there is a cause and effect relationship between the love of the Kohen for Klal Yisrael and his blessing. The Kohen is commanded to bless the Jewish nation in love because the blessing is manifest and emanates from the love. If the Kohen does not feel love for Klal Yisrael no blessing will come forth. Hence, without love, there is no purpose in intoning the words of the blessing.

It is for this reason that phraseology of the pre-blessing states: commands us to bless His people Israel in love. Love is not an extra dimension of birchas Kohanim; it is the very foundation of the Mitzvah itself. The blessing of the Shechinah is only conveyed through the Kohen when he holds love in his heart for Klal Yisrael - as does Hashem - Who is the Source of love and blessings; and Who desires that His love and blessings flow upon us.

Therefore, the Kohen should not bless hastily, but intently with his whole heart. Love - especially love of an entire nation - requires concentration, awakening, and spreading of the love in the Kohen's heart to all Yisrael.

The Kohen has a specific Mitzvah to love Klal Yisrael so that the blessings of Hashem will rest upon His people. Similarly, all of Klal Yisrael, in general, is commanded to love all of Hashem's creations. Just as the Kohen awakens his love by consciously engaging his whole heart, so too, we can fulfill the Mitzvah to love all of Hashem's creations by intending to open our hearts to love all of His creations.

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

TODAY: Express an extra measure of love to your family and friends.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 06 Jun 2012 13:44

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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

Our Sages tell us that as long as we are in this physical existence it's impossible for a person to imagine the splendor of Gan Eden. Although, this is true, wouldn't it be wonderful if there were a conceptual image to give us a glimpse of the inestimable quantum of reward?

After Moshe instructed Aaron to light the menorah, the Torah writes: "And Aaron did as Hashem commanded Moshe" (Bamidbar 8:20). This verse extols the praise of Aaron - that he did not deviate from the instructions that Moshe gave him (Rashi).

Given that the lighting of the menorah was not particularly challenging, nor did it entail any monetary expenditure on the part of Aaron - this verse needs clarification. What is the significance of the Torah praising Aaron for performing the relatively easy act that Hashem commanded him to do? Would we think that Aaron, the Cohen Gadol, would do anything else other than meticulously fulfill the Divine Will?

Every day of his life, Aaron HaCohen immersed himself in Torah, Mitzvoth, and character perfection until his entire being was sanctified to Hashem. We might have assumed that for a man of Aaron's stature, following simple orders would not earn him much credit. This verse reveals just the opposite: Hashem praised, valued, and rewarded Aaron greatly, even for this seemingly relatively minor effort of not deviating from the specifications of the commandment.

We can understand from here, how great, then, is the reward for the performance of a Mitzvah that does require an expenditure of money or toil. The magnitude of reward increases exponentially with the level of difficulty required to perform the Mitzvah. If even the most infinitesimal quantum of difficulty amplifies the rewards - then - how much more so, does an intense effort yield an incalculable abundance of reward.

Now that Hashem has revealed His formula of reward, we can apply this quantum of reward distribution to each and every Mitzvah that we do - from the easiest to the most difficult. The Mitzvos that we perform guarantee us a glorious, unending, and eternal reward.

[Based on the Ohr RaShaz, of Rabbi Simcha Zissel]

TODAY: Realize that the reward for reading this short essay is worth more than all the riches of this world.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 06 Jun 2012 13:45

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

The Salant Center

Mussar - A Healing Spirit for the Heart and Soul

PIRKEI AVOS/ETHICS OF THE FATHERS \_\_\_\_\_2:1

"Rebe said: Which is the straight path that a person should choose for himself? That which is honorable for him who adopts it, and brings him honor from people."

The focus of this Mishneh is positive character traits. In essence, Rebe teaches the proper approach to good character traits is to walk the middle road. Hence, extremes of either too much or too little, should be avoided in setting one's course in character traits.

For instance, a person should set fixed times for Torah study. At the same time, he must be aware that Torah study does not exempt him from performing acts of kindness. He needs a balanced blend that is comprised both of Torah study and the performance of kindness. If one only studies Torah, and refuses to help others, his relationship to both Torah and kindness is flawed.

The middle path in character traits is honorable for him who adopts it because it engenders a pure heart and awakens a new spirit within him. In other words, adherence to the middle path in character virtues fills one's soul with nobility. One's carefulness to apply the proper trait - in its correct measure - invigorates the human spirit because conducting oneself in a harmonious fashion creates an inner harmony.

And brings him honor from people because the middle path trains him to conduct himself pleasantly with people. For instance, concerning the trait of generosity, one should be neither stingy nor a spendthrift. Rather he should value and protect his money. He should distribute charity intelligently. This involves taking counsel and keeping an organized record of his contributions. If he follows this plan he will have sufficient funds to benefit those causes which are deserving of his support. In this way, he will be honored by people who recognize the structured way he organizes his affairs in order to show consideration to others.

This teaching has illuminated the path that leads both to self-respect, as well as, respect from others. May we walk the middle path so that we feel an inner sense of dignity, and also are dignified in the eyes of others.

[Based on Rabenu Yonah's commentary to Pirkei Avos]

TODAY: Before acting today, ask yourself: Is this an honorable endeavor, and will it bring me honor from others.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 07 Jun 2012 13:14

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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  
Ohr Yisrael/The Stars of Light

The Talmud (Pesachim 118b) tells us that the people of Israel who were redeemed from Egypt were 'of little faith.' For even after HaShem saved them from the Egyptians with the miraculous splitting of the Red Sea, they still doubted that HaShem would fulfill His promise to destroy the Egyptians. Indeed, after they traversed the dried sea bed, they said: "Just as we ascend on one side of the sea, so too, are the Egyptians ascending on the other side." Hence, they did not believe that HaShem drowned the Egyptians!

Yet, Klal Yisrael witnessed the Ten Plagues, which demonstrated HaShem's mastery over nature. In addition, they experienced the revelation of the Shechinah-in all of its glory, power, and holiness. If so, how could they be of "little faith"-and deny that HaShem would destroy their Egyptian pursuers?

In order to understand this incident we must define the terms of "little faith" and of "great faith". Of "little faith" refers to one who believes in HaShem according to the tenets of human logic. However, they do not believe the kindness of HaShem will supersede that which is 'reasonable' in the eyes of man.

Now, under the decadent Egyptian influence, Klal Yisrael succumbed to idol worship during their years of bitter bondage. Therefore, the people of Israel, who were of 'little faith', could not fathom that HaShem would drown the Egyptians-for since both the nations had served idols, why would Hashem save Israel, yet destroy Egypt?

However, when the people of Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore, then their minds opened up to comprehend that man cannot fathom the sublime compassion of HaShem. At that point, the faith to believe in HaShem and His servant, Moshe-even in matters that are above and beyond human comprehension, i.e., "Great in Faith"-was deeply implanted in their hearts. May we absorb the lesson of the sea, so that we be counted amongst those of "Great Faith"-and in turn, may we merit seeing the magnificent final redemption.

[Based on Ohr Yisrael, English edition, a project of the Salant Foundation]

TODAY: Expand your trust to believe that the unbounded kindness of HaShem is beyond human comprehension - and flowing into your life.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 08 Jun 2012 18:29

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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

Doeg HaAdomie was the most brilliant Torah scholar and Chief Judge in the generation of King David. Despite, all of his extraordinary qualities, he eventually fell from grace. The Midrash (Bamidbar Raba 18:17) likens him to a house full of straw. As time passes the straw maneuvers itself into the cracks in the wall and pokes its way to the outside-revealing the worthless contents of the house. Likewise, the arrogance of Doeg-i.e., the decrepit contents of his externally glorious 'house'-rose to the surface for all to see.

What was the 'straw' of Doeg that poked through the holes revealing his true nature? The Midrash tells us that when Doeg referred to David, he called him ben Yishai (son of Yishai), instead of calling him by his first name,.

That Doeg did not use Dovid's' first name might have been improper etiquette. However, is this seemingly minor- and common - social imperfection sufficient grounds to overturn Doeg's good reputation? In and of itself, does calling somebody by an impersonal name prove that their total being is corrupt?

The Torah teaches us the physical symptoms that reveal the state of spiritual purity and impurity. For instance, Parshas Tazria reveals the bodily blemishes that indicate various levels of impurity caused by arrogance and loshon hora. Likewise, Doeg's lack of respect for Dovid was a symptom of the base nature that lay beneath the facade of greatness.

The slightest misdeed or improper character trait can disrupt our spiritual chemistry.

The daily study of Mussar is the antidote to cure the negative impulse. It also sensitizes us so

that we can recognize our impurities-and endows us with the capability to cleanse our souls to the state of absolute purity.

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

TODAY: When referring to another person use their proper name.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 10 Jun 2012 11:26

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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 PARABLES OF THE BEB ISH HAI

There was once a king who had two storehouses that stood side by side. Both storehouses had two entrances - one on the north side and the other on the south. One of the storehouses was filled with many heavy rocks of marble, while the other was completely empty. One evening the king, gave his servant the keys to the southern doors of the both storehouses, and ordered him to remove all of the marble from one storehouse and place it in the other. This task had to be done during the night and finished by the break of dawn.

What did the king do? He opened the northern entrances to the storehouses, and began carrying rocks from one storehouse to the next in order to help his servant fulfill his task. However, all the efforts of the king were carried out covertly - the servant had not an inkling that the king was helping him. Moreover, at midnight the king saw that servant was exhausted from his labor and could no longer carry the heavy rocks on his shoulder. Hence, under the cover of darkness the king drew close to his servant and helped him carry his load. Yet the servant did not have any idea that the king was helping him from behind.

It just the same with our performance of Mitzvoth and Torah study. HaShem instructs us to fulfill His Mitzvoth and study His Torah. However, as much as strive to do our part, HaShem shares our burden - helping us to perform our Mitzvoth and succeed in Torah study. In addition, when HaShem sees that we are fatigued He helps us even more, and literally bears the weight of our service. All this kindness and assistance of HaShem is completely hidden from our eyes. Nevertheless, let us realize that HaShem is present when we perform our Mitzvoth - and in his great compassion - helps us complete them. Indeed, He stays with us and helps in every way

we may need, from the very beginning of the task, until the Mitzvah is completed before Him.

TODAY: Relieve yourself from undue pressure regarding Mitzvoth by remembering that HaShem, Himself, is there to help you.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 13 Jun 2012 15:30

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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

When Hashem created Adam he placed him in Gan Eden and sated him with sublime delights. Adam was served by angels like a guest at a royal banquet. However, after Adam sinned, Hashem required Adam to make an effort to sustain himself in order make a rectification for his sin, in which he expressed ingratitude to Hashem.

The rectification worked in the following way: Adam now had to employ natural means to conduct his affairs. At the same time he had to maintain clarity of mind to see that everything that he attains is not the result of his efforts. Hashem is the only cause. This rectification also applies to us - i.e., we must employ a natural means, while realizing all blessing comes from Hashem.

The difference between our existence and Gan Eden is a matter of perception. Hashem provides for our livelihood and grants us our successes. Our test is to not be lured into assuming that the natural efforts we make contribute to our success in any way, whatsoever. Working 'by the sweat of our brow' forces us to make a constant and conscious effort to stay focused on Hashem as the source of all good that comes to us - lest we slip into taking credit for our 'accomplishments'.

This understanding sheds light on the magnitude mistake committed by the spies. Although, spying of the land led to the downfall of the spies, the procedure of spying is legitimate, in fact obligatory. In point of fact, subsequently, to this tragedy, Moshe sent spies to Yoezer, and Yehoshuah sent spies to Jericho - and miracles followed in their wake.

The flaw of the spies laid in their calling for a spy delegation to be dispatched even before they were commanded by Hashem to send out spies. Their anxiousness to spy revealed their inner intentions: they felt that victory was dependent on their strength and savvy. They lost the focus:

use natural means of warfare - while relying totally and absolutely on Hashem.

If we maintain awareness that the efforts that we make are not the true cause of our success. - Hashem will provide and care for us with royal bounty, as he did in Gan Eden.

[Based on Ohr Rashaz, the Alter of Kelm]

TODAY: Envision the blessings of HaShem that are constantly flowing upon the efforts of your hands.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 13 Jun 2012 15:31

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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 \_\_\_\_\_1:13

[13] Hillel used to say; He who does not increase his Torah learning - decreases it.

A master orders his servant to climb to the top of the ladder in order to spread dates on the roof to dry in the sun. The master cannot fault his servant for placing his foot on the bottom of the ladder. It would be absurd for him to say: "I told you to go to the top of the ladder! Why are you on the bottom rung?"

In our spiritual ascent - through Torah and Mitzvot - the Talmud (Pesachim 50b) tells us: "A person should engage in Torah and good deeds - even if his intention is not lishmah (purely for the sake to fulfill the Mitzvah), for by means of doing good deeds with impure motives, one will come to do good deeds with pure intentions."

Just as the servant in the parable needs to begin his climb from the first rung, likewise, we must begin the performance of Mitzvot from the "bottom rung" - not lishmah. This is not just an excuse for beginners - it is a necessity. A person cannot begin to advance in Torah and Mitzvot unless he begins at the first level.

At times we may feel that we are unworthy, or lacking the knowledge to do certain Mitzvot or engage in certain aspects of Torah study. In response to this, the Torah grants us permission - in fact, urges us - to engage in Torah and Mitzvot no matter how impure we feel our motive

may be.

Then, as one grows spiritually stronger he incrementally makes the transition to lishmah. The holiness of the Torah and Mitzvoth purifies him so that he is able to climb the ladder of lishmah.

The Torah encourages us to take the first step, regardless of our level or intention - as long as we intend to grow towards lishmah. Once we begin our spiritual climb, we will advance continuously - one step at a time - climbing a little higher every day.

[Based on the commentary of Rav Chaim Voloshin]

TODAY: Advance spiritually upwards by taking one small step.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 13 Jun 2012 15:32

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

The Salant Center

Mussar - A Healing Spirit for the Heart and Soul

Sefer Mitzvoth HaBitachon/The Book of the Mitzvah of Faith

We are endowed with both positive and negative emotions. The purpose-and challenge-of our existence is to master the feelings of our hearts. This is accomplished by neutralizing and cleansing ourselves from the unfavorable inner forces that lay within our heart; while activating and strengthening the favorable ones.

On of the most pervasive-and counterproductive-negative tendencies is the trait of worry. In fact, worry is detrimental both to one's spiritual and physical health. Thus, on the spiritual plane, the worry syndrome weakens our capability to interact pleasantly with others, impedes our ability to Torah study, and diminishes the level of our Mitzvah performance. What's more, undue worry damages the heart.

Indeed, Rav Yisrael Salanter once remarked, "The only worry that is permissible is to worry about being worried."

The greatest cure-and motivation-to liberate oneself from worry is reflection upon the powerful influence of tranquillity and happiness. Indeed, the Sages of Mussar teach the following axiomatic principle: When a person is joyous- (i.e., the opposite of worrisome)-HaShem blesses

him with all manner of good!

Indeed, once some people asked the Tzemach Tzedek to pray for a member of their family. The Rabbi replied, "If you think positive thoughts, all will be good!"

Thus a happy heart generates positive energy that awakes-the abundant love and boundless kindness of HaShem-to surround us with countless blessings of good. May our hearts be filled with joy so that 'rivers of good' flows into our lives-and the lives of the entire Klal Yisrael.

TODAY: Release yourself from worry; fill your heart with joy.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 02 Jul 2012 20:55

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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 PARABLES OF THE BEN ISH HAI

Two acquaintances entered a country and were arrested for smuggling. They were given the choice of either imprisonment for three years, or, for each one to pay a fine of one thousand gold coins. They were not able to produce the funds and were thrown into a dark dungeon. One of these prisoners was in a state of utter despair over his cruel fate. He refused to eat, would not speak, and cried and wept incessantly. The other fellow resigned himself to accept his bad luck.

The warden asked the first man why he was inconsolable, while his partner was not nearly so troubled.

"Yes, it is true the both of us must serve the same sentence. However, my fate is far more terrible than his. You see, my friend has neither resources of his own, nor no one in the world to pay his ransom. Therefore, he immediately resigned himself to three years in a harsh prison. However, I have family and friends in another city who would have gladly lent me the required funds. Yet, I did not contact them because I have a wealthy friend right here in this city. I was confident that he would lend me the money. However, when I went to him and pleaded my case, he acted as if he did not even know me! I left his home without even ten gold pieces, and



by that time it was too late for me to travel to another city to seek the help of my other friends. Hence, I am devastated because I could have surely found the means to redeem myself. Moreover, my friend here not only abandoned me, even worse, he did even offer me a word of comfort. He acted as if he never saw me in his life. Whereas my partner is not so heartbroken because he did not suffer this type of terrible disappointment, which brings me such grief."

When Job was inundated with unspeakable troubles his three friends came from afar and stood by his side, offering him unwavering comfort and support. A true friend stays with his friend through thick and thin. Indeed, our Sages say that "death is preferable to anguish caused by unfaithful friends." May we merit being faithful and caring friends, and being there for our companions both in the good times, as well as, through hardships.

[Based on Moshol V'nimshol of the Ben Eish Chai, 11]

TODAY: Reach out to one of your friends that could use your moral support, care, and encouragement.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 02 Jul 2012 20:56

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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

OHR HATORAH

Regarding tzitzis, the verse (Bamidbar 15:39) says: And you should see them and remember all of the Mitzvoth...and you should not follow after your heart and eyes. There are 613 Mitzvoth; each one is unique and comprised of many particulars. How is it possible to remember all of the 613 Mitzvoth and their details in the span of the few seconds that it takes to glance at the tzitzis?

Another question: the essence and foundation of the Torah is to perform Tikun HaMiddos - to rectify and purify the heart from all deficiencies, and to possess all of the praiseworthy virtues of character. Yet, we don't find any injunction that deals with character rectification. Why is there no specific Mitzvah in the Torah that instructs us to make Tikun HaMiddos?

The Talmud (Sota 14b) explains the verse: "And you shall walk in His ways' - Just as He is merciful, you should be merciful." Meaning, that the central axiom of the Torah is for us to

emulate the virtuous attributes of Hashem - you shall walk in His ways. Hence, the entire Torah rests on the general axiom of conducting ourselves with compassion, kindness, and love - in feeling, deed and thought.

In light of this, the Mitzvah - and you should see them and remember all of the Mitzvoth - refers not to the enumeration of the 613 Mitzvoth, but rather to the foundation of all the Mitzvoth. You should reflect on the primary pillar of the Torah upon which all the Mitzvoth are based - virtue of character and conduct.

The tzitzis symbolize all the Mitzvoth. Although, remembering all 613 Mitzvoth in a second's time is impractical, however, it is most appropriate and beneficial to remember the general principle of the Torah. Hence, the purpose of the injunction to look at the tzitzis is to remind us to remember the central purpose of the Torah - and you shall walk in His ways. Hence, when a person looks at tzitzis he should remember to perform Tikun HaMiddos through the study of Mussar.

It is impossible to delegate one Mitzvah to instruct us to do Tikun HaMiddos because every Mitzvah in the Torah is based on character rectification. The fulfillment of the Torah and the proper observance of all Mitzvoth depend on Tikun HaMiddos. May Hashem help us rectify our hearts so that we become a fitting vessel to study Torah and perform Mitzvoth.

[Based on Ohr RaShaz of the Alter M'Kelm in the name of Rav Chaim Vital]

TODAY: Reflect for a few moments that the purpose of our existence in this world is to rectify our character.

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