

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 - 05 Jul 2012 19:50

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 Torah states: "And Balak the son of Zippur saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites."
Israel's defeat of the Amorites was a major military victory. Therefore, all the other nations in the
region certainly heard about the downfall of the Amorites If so, why does the Torah single out

Balak's seeing: "Balak....saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites"?

The ancient kingdoms believed that victory in battle was not contingent upon superior military capability. Each nation aligned themselves with "forces", i.e., idols or sorcery, which they believed empowered them. It was reputed that the Amorites were allied with the strongest idol and therefore they were considered invincible. Nevertheless, when Klal Yisrael swiftly defeated the Amorite troops, only Balak grasped the true implication. He understood that there is a Supreme Power-and that Klal Yisrael is connected to that force.

Balak then hired Bilaam, an occult master, to invoke powers against Klal Yisrael. He reasoned that since Bilaam was a prophet-albeit of evil-he was connected to HaShem. Therefore, Bilaam should be capable of contending with Moshe.

Despite Balak's strategy, Bilaam proved to be powerless against the Jewish people.

While Balak recognized the omnipotence of HaShem, he did not apply the new information to adjust his own distorted world outlook. He was blind to the implications of his insight because he was consumed with a passion for power and self-indulgence, and thus devoid of any sense of morality. Balak saw HaShem as another force to be exploited for his own benefit. The concept of Divine Service never occurred to him.

How fortunate is Klal Yisrael, for we aspire for Holiness and Purity. The essence of our lives is the service of the Almighty. Therefore, HaShem favors us with mercy and Divine intervention. Thus, He subdues our enemies and helps us grow in righteousness so that we may merit Eternal life.

[Based on the Magid Mesharim of Rav Yoseph Cairo]

TODAY: Reflect that from the time of Avraham the Divine Presence dwells amongst and protects Klal Yisrael.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 05 Jul 2012 19:54

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

Refuah Sheleimah for Yaacov ben Miriam

PIRKEI AVOS/ETHICS OF THE FATHERS _____1:15

"Shammai says: Make your Torah study your main occupation; say a little and do much; greet everyone cheerfully."

On the day that your car is in the shop, you ask your co-worker for a ride to the bus stop. He readily agrees and invites you into his car. As he approaches your bus stop he says, "I'm going to drive you home, it is only a few minutes out of my way."

It is really ten minutes out of his way, but he insists. Imagine how impressed you would be with his graciousness. Not only did he fulfill his word, he went beyond it. We learn this exalted virtue - say a little and do much - from Avraham Avinu. When the three guests came to enjoy his hospitality, Avraham said to them, "I will bring you a slice of bread." Subsequently, he provided them with a sumptuous feast of delicacies.

Our Sages of blessed memory observed this precious attribute in Hashem during the Exodus from Egypt. Hashem's promise to redeem Klal Yisrael from bondage consisted of only two words (Bereishis 15:14), "Don Anochie (I will judge)." Nevertheless, the redemption actually was manifest in twenty-seven words (Devarim 4:24).

Regarding this, Sa'adia Gaon said: "Hashem's promise to our ancestors in Egypt that he would redeem them was expressed in two words - and yet - he did an incredible amount of phenomenal miracles. Hence, two words of assurance from Hashem embrace spectacular resources of love and deliverance for Klal Yisrael.

Therefore, when we consider how many books of promises and consolations has been recorded in the name of the Prophets - how much more so - will Hashem perform countless, amazing wonders; and will the Shechinah be clearly manifest, at the time of our redemption."

Moreover, we should strengthen our faith in the unfathomable, immeasurable, and awesome miracles that will take place in the final redemption. Hashem, in His unbounded kindness will abundantly reward us for our faith that He will do much. May the geulah come quickly!

TODAY: Do a little more for someone than you originally promised.
[chaimyakov here with my two cents. i think this applies even to ourselves. let's do a little more for our recovery than we originally promised]

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Re: Salant Center d'var
Posted by chaimyakov - 05 Jul 2012 20:00

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

The highest part of our prayer service is the recitation of the prophetic verse, "Holy, Holy, Holy is HaShem, the whole world is full of His Glory." The three time repetition of "Holy" conveys that the Holiness of HaShem permeates - and is the true essence - of creation.

The physical world is a veil that covers over the Divine Presence. Meaning, that HaShem established His kingdom over all creation. Therefore, the spiritual dimension, i.e., the Holiness of HaShem, is present within all creation.

Accordingly, when we praise the Holiness of HaShem, we are not merely acknowledging the He has the attribute of Holiness. Rather, we are verifying that His Holiness is a reality amongst us. That is, all life emanates from the Holiness of HaShem.

Since the Holiness of HaShem is the cause of all creation, the laws of nature are subject to the Divine Will. Therefore, there are no boundaries or limitations in the material world. Just as HaShem reversed the laws of nature in the Exodus from Egypt, so too, His rule supersedes every physical entity.

This profound idea sheds light on the episode in the Torah when HaShem told Moshe to "speak to the rock." That is, HaShem intended that through Moshe words, water would flow forth from the rock to give drink to the Nation. However, instead of speaking, Moshe hit the rock with his staff.

The water came forth even though Moshe deviated from HaShem's instructions. Nevertheless, HaShem held Moshe accountable because "he did not sanctify the Name of HaShem." Specifically, when Moshe struck the rock, it suggested - falsely - that nature was capable of asserting some minimal degree of resistance against the Divine Will.

May the awareness that we emanate from the holiness of HaShem inspire us to elevate our lives and encourage us to reach new levels of joy, goodness, and spiritual growth.
[Based on Da'as Torah of Rav Yerucham of Mir]

TODAY: Know that there are no limitations to the miracles that HaShem can perform.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 05 Jul 2012 20:02

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
Refuah Sheleimah for Yaacov ben Miriam

Duties of the Heart/The Gate of Reflection

One of the most important subjects to reflect on is the universal good that HaShem bestows upon all living creatures and plants of the earth, such as the rains which fall when they are needed and in due season.

As the Torah (Yirmeyahu 14:21) says: "Are there any among the false gods of the nations that can bring rain? Or can heavens give showers? Surely it is You Who are HaShem our G-d, and we hope in You, for You have made all these things."

Similarly, the Tanach (Iyov 5:9-11) says: "Who does great and unfathomable things, wonders without number: He lays rain upon the earth, and sends water over the land, to raise on high those who are low; the downcast are uplifted in deliverance."

In the days of our ancestors, in the Land of Israel, a lack of rain was a life-threatening situation. If there was no rain - life could not survive. The poor people could not grow any crops and they were forced to sell their fields to the rich for a pittance. The Navie expresses the plight of poor people, who were on the brink of starvation from the lack of rain.

When HaShem hears their prayers and sends forth rain upon the earth, they rejoice in the Divine deliverance and compassion. The blessed rains fill the wells with sweet waters for their feeble children to drink; and flows onto the fields pumping life into the parched grains. Hence, they rejoice and sing praises to HaShem.

When we contrast our lives to the hardships of the ancients, as described in the aforementioned Torah passages, it is clear that we live in a world of abundant blessings. Thank G-d, most of us have never experienced a drought, or have never known real hunger. How fortunate we are that water is available to us at the turn of the nearest faucet. HaShem continuously sends His treasures from heaven - the life-giving waters of rain.

TODAY: Fill a glass with water and think about where it came from for ten seconds. Then make a blessing and enjoy the water.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 05 Jul 2012 20:03

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
SF Daily MiddahTrust and Tranquility

"One who trusts in Hashem is safe from all harm. Hashem brings him joy and he obtains his livelihood with peace of mind." Adapted from Chovot HaLavavot, Sha'ar Bitachon

To receive the daily inspirational quote, send email to: dailymiddah@gmail.com

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 - 05 Jul 2012 20:05

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

King David, the consummate master of faith in HaShem, revealed a deep lesson in strengthening our trust in Heaven. In one of his most famous verses of Tehillim, David inspired us with these words: "Hope to HaShem, strengthen yourself and He will give you courage, and hope to Hashem."

Let us explore two aspects of this verse. Firstly, we note the unusual repetitive structure of the verse, i.e., the phrase "Hope in HaShem", both opens and closes the verse. The lesson is as follows: all aspects and situations in our lives are dependent on our "Hope in HaShem." Yet, how should we respond if we place our heartfelt faith and prayers in HaShem-yet nevertheless we are not delivered from our problems.

The natural reaction would be to assume that we do not merit Divine assistance. In reference to this King David repeats his instruction-"And hope in HaShem". That is, do not despair. Rather,

extend and increase your hope in HaShem. Pray again and again. Hold your faith in HaShem-consistently and without wavering. Undoubtedly, He will ultimately come to your aid.

But from where will you get the strength to maintain your trust before help arrives? The middle section of the verse answers this: "strengthen yourself and He will give your courage." Meaning, as you await His redemption, you must fight the inner battle, i.e., the struggle between faith and disheartenment.

If we but make a sincere effort to strengthen ourselves to sustain our trust in HaShem, then "He will give you courage"! Hence, if we endeavor to further our faith, as much as we are humanly capable, then HaShem will bless us with new dimensions of courage and trust.

May we strengthen our faith in HaShem, each day, so that He sends us courage-and on that merit may He answer all of our prayers!

TODAY: Reflect on one area of life where you can extend your faith-and confirm the immediate encouragement that HaShem sends to you.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 09 Jul 2012 09:23

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

The Salant Center

Mussar - A Healing Spirit for the Heart and Soul
Refuah Sheleimah for Yaacov ben Miriam

THE PARABLES OF THE BEN ISH HAI

"Listen to the distant things that I have done; know that My great power is very near." (Isaiah 33:13)

There was once a prisoner who was sentenced to death by the court. However, he could not be put to death until the king signed the execution orders. His friend came to visit him every day and tried to comfort him, "Have faith in HaShem and He will save you!"

Yet the prisoner would always respond, "There is no hope for me." Six days passed and the

king's orders still did not arrive. On the next day his friend again said, "Have faith and HaShem will save you." This time the prisoner responded, "With G-d's help my deliverance will soon be here."

His friend asked, "How come up to now you said there was no hope, and yet today you say that HaShem will soon save you?" He answered, "I used to think that since the court sentenced me to death, the king's signature was only a formality, for the king would rely on the ruling of his judges. However, yesterday there was a prisoner here who was sentenced to death and the king placed his royal seal on the execution order. Nevertheless, yesterday he was saved as the execution order was rescinded and the king granted him a special pardon. So I realized that also my deliverance is close at hand, just as he was saved. Indeed, my situation is better than his because the king has not signed the order.

Likewise, there are many verses in the Torah that assure us of the future redemption. However, the fulfillment of many of the spectacular visions that our holy prophets revealed concerning the redemption seems hard to imagine. Yet, when we consider the great miracles that occurred during the time of exodus from Egypt, we then realize that nothing is too wondrous for HaShem.

Therefore, our faith is invigorated that our deliverance is close at hand, and that HaShem will perform all the miracles and awesome wonders that are recorded in the writings of the Prophets. Hence the Prophet said (Micha 7:15): "Just as the days of your going out of Egypt, so too I will show you my wonders."

TODAY: Nurture your faith in the future redemption by contemplating the miracles of the past.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 09 Jul 2012 09:24

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 BALAK

A nobleman heard that a doctor in a distant country had formulated an ointment that renders a person invulnerable. Since he often traveled through dark forests, he made his way to the inventor and purchased the ointment. Before leaving for home, he applied the ointment to every

part of his body.

On the path home he was attacked by a group of thieves. They fell upon him and beat him from head to toe, but found that he was impervious to their blows. Thinking that their must be a magic spirit protecting their victim they left him and fled in terror.

They were quite shocked when he called out to them and offered them some brandy to drink. They asked him why would he be so kind to them when they had just sought to rob and kill him? He replied, "I went to great trouble and expense to purchase an ointment which renders a person immune to attack. However, I had no way to know if the ointment was effective until your futile efforts to attack me proved that I had not been cheated."

The people of Israel, like the nobleman, presumed that they were immune to all black magic and sorcery, as the verse says (Bamidbar 23:23): "For there is no black magic against Jacob and no sorcery against Israel." Their ancestor, Jacob, had served Laban for 20 years, and during that entire period Laban attempted to cast evil spells on Jacob, but to no avail. Jacob could not be harmed. The descendants of Jacob assumed that they had inherited this same protection, but they had no way of confirming whether they were truly insurmountable.

However, after they saw that not only were Bilaam's vain attempts to curse the people ineffective, even more, his curses were turned into blessings-then they saw living proof that they were just as protected from evil as was their Patriarch, Jacob. Thus the end of the verse says: "In due time it shall be said to Jacob and to Israel: What had HaShem done [for you, i.e., placed His blessing of protection upon you]." The reality of our existence despite 2000 years of exile is a living confirmation that HaShem protects Klal Yisrael. May we walk with confidence and joy, knowing that throughout the ages, HaShem safeguards the people of Israel.
[Based on the parables of the Maggid of Dubno]

TODAY: Feel a sense of tranquillity knowing the we are sheltered by the Divine blessing.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 09 Jul 2012 09:25

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

One day Rav Yisrael Salanter saw a lady about to jump off a bridge. He begged her not to jump. "But I had a child that took sick and died," she cried in utter despair, "Then my husband became sick with grief and cannot get out of bed. I hired a man to drive the horse and wagon - our only source of livelihood - and now the horse has died!"

Rav Yisrael comforted her, "Maybe things, with the help of HaShem, will get better for you. Maybe your husband will recover. And maybe you'll be blessed with a new child. And as far as the horse, I'll give you the money to buy a new one."

The woman gained her composure and returned to her home. Things started to turn around for her. Her husband recovered, and with the money from Rav Yisrael they bought a new horse. In fact, in the year that followed, Rav Yisrael was invited to serve as the sandek at the bris of her newborn son!

Throughout our history we as a people and as individuals have risen to the heights from the ashes. What is the secret of our phenomenal knack of survival?

In parshas Pinchas, HaShem instructs Moshe to take a census. The tribe of Binyamin is numbered at 45, 600 souls, while the tribe of Don is numbered at 64,400 souls. Yet Binyamin had ten sons, whereas Don had one son, Chushie, who was hearing impaired. Nevertheless, HaShem blessed Don that his offspring should be fruitful.

When HaShem desires to favor a person who has less than others, he will ultimately be blessed with superior increase. The same is true regarding one's financial standing: HaShem can bless a poor person to rise from rags to riches.

No matter how dismal one's situation in life appears to be - there is no wisdom or advise that can deter the Divine Will from bestowing boundless blessings of success.
[Based on the Chofetz Chaim on the Torah]

TODAY: Envision the abounding blessings of HaShem flowing into every aspect of your life - filling you with joy.

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Re: Salant Center d'var
Posted by chaimyakov - 15 Jul 2012 13:44

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 1:14

"Hillel used to say: If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And if I am for myself, what am I?
And if not now, when?"

When Yehoshuah sent two spies to Jericho, a woman named Rachav hid them, protected them, and helped them escape. All the nations heard about the miracles and victories of Klal Yisrael. Yet, it was only Rachav who had the sensitivity to internalize the ramification of Klal Yisrael's success: Hashem, Creator of heaven and earth was fighting for them.

The impact of this notion stuck a chord deep within her heart. She decided to convert and become part of the Jewish nation. When one considers that Rachav - had been a harlot for forty years - it is amazing that she possessed such clarity.

Her capacity to sense the truth engendered her conversion and her subsequent marriage - to no less than Yehoshuah - the leader of the Jewish nation - second only to Moshe. What's more, eight prophets, as well as Hulda, the prophetess descended from her. What trait did Rachav have that enabled her to see what others could not?

It is human nature to put one's life in the hands of one who has great knowledge. For instance, we instinctively trust our doctor and follow his advice because he knows more about medicine and health than we do.

In the same way, Rachav opened her heart to fathom the greatness of Hashem. When she heard about the splitting of the Red Sea and the miraculous conquests of Klal Yisrael - she was moved to place her faith in Hashem. She reasoned - since Hashem is the Master of all, shouldn't she put herself completely in His hands?

We understand from here that no matter how far away one is from Hashem - even if they are immersed for 40 years in promiscuity - they can raise themselves up from the depths. It takes moving oneself, as our Sages said: If I am not for myself, who will be for me? The most powerful inspiration is self-propelled. Power that can raise one from the depths to the spiritual heights!
[Based on Ohr RaShaz, The Saba M'Kelm, Rav Simcha Zissel]

TODAY: Decide to leap to a new spiritual plateau.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 15 Jul 2012 13:45

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

The Salant Center

Mussar - A Healing Spirit for the Heart and Soul
Sefer Mitzvoth HaBitachon/The Book of the Mitzvah of Faith

The Talmud (Brachos 60a) reveals a deep insight concerning the powerful effect that "attitude" has in our lives. One Sage, Yehudah bar Nosson was walking behind Rav Hamnuna. Yehudah let out a sigh, apparently without warrant. Rav Hamnuna said to him: Do you want to bring troubles upon yourself? For Job said (Job 3:24), 'For the thing which I feared has come upon me, and that which I was afraid of has overtaken me.'

Thus, complaining or fearing without reason may generate a force that draws difficulties within the sphere on ones' orbit.

Conversely, a happy, optimistic attitude creates a positive field that welcomes the boundless blessings of HaShem. The more inner joy we cultivate in our hearts, the more sunshine will illuminate our lives.

This formula sounds logical. However, let us ask a simple question: Yehudah bar Nosson was one of the Talmudic Sages, who were living angels. Hence, they surely were aware of the importance of maintaining a positive outlook. If so, why did he jeopardize himself by allowing a 'cloud of doubt' to obscure a positive view of life?

We see from here that people are sometimes susceptible to negativity. This awareness will give us the strength to filter out all needless fears and worry. What's more, when we realize that our attitude is the genesis that determines the climate of our lives-we will be inspired to awaken a sun of happiness within our hearts-so that our lives will radiate with joy.

TODAY: Envision "the sun of hope" rising in your heart and filling the entire world with light.

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Re: Salant Center d'var
Posted by chaimyakov - 15 Jul 2012 13:47

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 CHAI

There was a man who was given a yearly stipend from the king. The king would give him the sum at the beginning of the year, and he would use it to buy daily provisions for his family. However, each day when he would set out for the market to buy food or clothing, he would first go to the royal palace. He would stand at the king's gate for five minutes, and only then would he go to make his purchases.

His friend said to him, "Why do you trouble yourself everyday to stop at the palace for no reason?" The man replied, "Even though I take the money out of my wallet and buy all of my provisions, nevertheless, this money is not mine! Rather, this money is a gift of the king, who granted it to me at the beginning of the year. Yet, when I take the money out of my wallet - I, my wife, and children - imagine that it is really mine. Therefore, before I buy anything, I first go to the to the king's palace to remind myself and my family that it is the king that provides us with our food and clothing."

Likewise, a person must come each evening, morning, and afternoon to the "courtyard of the King" - the synagogue - and pray for all of his needs. In this way, a person reminds himself, that even though he takes the money out of his wallet to buy his provisions, nevertheless, the money is not his! Rather, his livelihood is provided by HaShem. When a person follows this procedure and engages in these thoughts he will not be ungrateful.

Therefore, if a person eats before he prays he will forget these vital thoughts. He will think that his strength is the source of his family's livelihood. Therefore, HaShem says about one who eats before he prays: "After this person exalts himself, i.e., he thinks that he is the source of his own provisions, only then does he accept upon himself the Yoke of Heaven.

[Based on Moshol V'nimshol of the Ben Ish Chai, 4]

TODAY: Pray the morning prayers in the synagogue before you attend to your personal needs.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 15 Jul 2012 13:48

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/3:8

"Rebe Elazar of Bartuta says: Give Him of what is His, for you and all you have are His."

HaShem created us, and is our Master; He gave us this world, as well as, The World to Come; sustains us, and provides us with our every breath. In light of this, we might assume that we are required to serve Him to the point of exhaustion, i.e., to expend our strength in Torah study and Mitzvah performance until we literally cannot move a muscle.

However, the phraseology of this Mishnah reveals the correct level of dedication that HaShem requires of His servants. The passage says Give Him of what is His. These words-of what is His- imply: "give Him a portion of what is His, i.e., not everything! Hence, although He gives us everything, He requires us to devote a share of our energies to His service.

Let us quantify this lesson into a precise formula that we can apply on a daily basis. Of the twenty four hours that comprise a day, how much time should be devoted to HaShem? He requires that we serve Him, until our body becomes tired-and not more than that. (Although, special circumstance may occasionally may require us to go beyond our normal level of commitment.)

We are not to exert ourselves beyond the boundaries that are consistent with good health. Our service to HaShem should be wholesome both to body and soul. Hence, when we serve HaShem with the proper measure of devotion-our body signals us through the feelings of tiredness, that we need to rest and replenish our energy.

If we give of ourselves to the proper measure of Divine service, then Hashem -the Giver of life- will restore and revitalize our energy, so that we can serve Him with renewed strength and vigor. [Based on the commentary of Rav Chaim Voloshin to Pirkei Avos]

TODAY: Take a deep breathe. Reflect for a moment on how to apportion and balance your spiritual energies.

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Re: Salant Center d'var

Posted by chaimyakov - 15 Jul 2012 13:49

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

There is one axiomatic-and universal-response for every circumstance in life: Hope in HaShem. So powerful is this perspective-that it is the primary antidote, source of healing, and genesis of redemption-in all human affairs.

The Midrash (Vayachie 98) states: "Rabbi Yitzchak said, 'The success of everything is dependent upon hope, i.e., unwavering trust in HaShem.'

Thus at times of hardship one should be hopeful that HaShem will deliver him. Likewise, when one is sanctifying the name of HaShem, he should be trustful. Also, when a person prays in the merit of our Patriarchs, his heart should be filled with optimism. And our yearning for a share in the World to Come should be infused with hope.

The Torah (Yeshayahu 26:8) enlightens us to the relevancy of hope concerning these specific realms: 'Even when in the path of your judgments (i.e., hardships), HaShem we have hoped for you. The desire of our soul (i.e., alludes to the World to Come) is to Your name (refers to sanctifying the name of HaShem), and to the remembrance of You (pertains to the Patriarchs).'

Moreover, finding favor in the eyes of HaShem depends on our longing for His help, as the verse (Yeshayahu 32:2) states: 'HaShem, be gracious to us, we have hoped for You; be their strength every morning, also our deliverance at the time of trouble.'

In addition, Divine forgiveness depends upon our hope that HaShem will forgive our shortcomings. As King David said (Tehillim 130:4-5): 'There is forgiveness with You...I hope for HaShem, my soul hopes, and I await His word.'

The message of this profound teaching is that even if a person is unworthy, nevertheless, hopefulness and optimism in HaShem awakens Divine assistance.

May our hope in HaShem bring about great miracles for ourselves and all of Klal Yisrael.

TODAY: Review this passage and fill your soul with hope!

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