

Duvid Chaim's calls - By Momo

Posted by Momo - 22 Jul 2009 07:23

An amazing thing happened to me yesterday and I wanted to share it with all of you.

Duvid Chaim has been asking those who join him in his conference group to come up with an Awe and Wonder (A+W) moment, meaning a moment where we see haShem in our lives. The purpose of this exercise is to raise our G-d consciousness. He's looking for small things that we might take for granted and overlook. Well, I have have had one A+W moment in 3 weeks, and he's looking for us to find one every day, so I've been feeling frustrated, and I think that came across in yesterday's call.

In yesterday's call, I asked the group for instructions, or ideas on HOW we are supposed to open our eyes and see/feel an A+W moment. I must say, I didn't feel like I received a satisfying response during the call.

However, part of the greatness of these calls is that it bothered me enough to think about it afterward.

Here's my A+W moment: After the call on Tuesdays, I have a weekly hashkafa shiur. I decided to not allow the Rav to continue with the text, but rather ask him how he thinks we can see HaShem everywhere during our day in order to bring us to Dvekut. I explained that we can't really talk about hashkafa until we get this yesod down. He agreed with me, and we both hashed it out, and together we came up with an answer. Here's what we came up with:

1. Look at anything around you.
2. Break it down into it's smallest parts. (Think an air conditioner, the human body...)
3. Think about how complicated it really is.
4. Think about what is the source of this amazing item. If it's nature, animal, or human, the answer is obviously G-d. If it's man-made, then the answer is that G-d gave man the intelligence to create this item. Anyway you slice it, the source is G-d. So, when 24 hours ago I couldn't think of any A+W moments, now I can't stop thinking about them! I see them all around me, for each item I see becomes an A+W moment!

I remembered this morning that this idea sounded familiar, that I thought I read it somewhere. I opened the sefer Belvavi Mishkan Evneh, and in volume 1, chapter 3 he speaks about how we have to look at everything around us, ask ourselves who is the creator, and come to the conclusion that it's G-d. He says we must do this to get us closer to HaShem, in order to get dveikut.

I thank HaShem that I had the opportunity to discuss this idea with my Rav, that we were able to "think about it ourselves" in order to internalize it, and that I was able to feel it. I've read that chapter of the sefer a couple of times before, but it didn't really do anything for me until today after I discovered the idea "on my own" (with inspiration from HaShem of course), and internalize it.

I need to add that the sefer Belvavi Mishkan Evneh writes about levels. First, he talks about Dveikut as the purpose of our existence (as does the Mesilat Yesharim). Then he writes about the need to believe in HaShem. After we internalize that, we can work on seeing HaShem everywhere by asking who created anything we see (its source). That is what I've described here. He says that only once we've internalized this step (he suggests at least one week working only on this), then we should work on the next step which is haskgaha pratit. Meaning, OK, so HaShem is in the world and surrounds us, but he also is involved in every aspect in our lives, not just in the background.

I'm a bit unclear which step Duvid chaim is referring to when he asks for an A+W moment since he brought examples of both (a singing bird is an example of seeing HaShem in the world while getting out paying for a traffic ticket is an example of hashgaha pratit). However, I'd like to suggest to anyone having trouble thinking of A+W moments that we should first work on seeing HaShem around us, and once that's internalized, work on hashgaha pratit, as the Belvavi Mishkan Evneh suggests.

I'm very open to receive your thoughts, comments, and criticisms.

I thank HaShem for giving me this moment of inspiration, and I pray that I will continue to see HaShem around me, always.

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Re: Duvud Chaim's calls - By Momo
Posted by moti - 13 Aug 2009 18:42

Below is a summary of the main point I picked up during the call, summarized by topic.

Opening Of The Call

- The power of the fellowship of program was discussed; 2 participants got tremendous value from a private call they had yesterday
- Until now focus was Steps 1, 2, 3 the A-B-Ds" of the Program - Admit - Believe – Decide. We now moved on to Step 4 (Chapter 5) which begins the hard practical work part of the program, talking upon the underlying causes of the addiction. Mashal used is that of lust being merely the outer layer of the onion & addressing the RID (Restlessness, Irritability and Discontent) that fuels the lust.

Step 4 – What Is It

- Personal Housecleaning - “Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves”
- Mashal of doing a business inventory. In business it is common sense to take inventory and if we have bad goods on the shelf then we remove them. In same way we need to search for own flaws (inner layer of onion). Honesty is the key.
- Main source of flaws is resentment

Resentment – What Is It

- Duvud Chaim explained this very clearly and succinctly –when we are not treated as we expect to be treated.
- Our level of resentment is in direct correlation to our level of expectation from the other person. This is why our resentment is greatest with those who we are closest to and who we love (wife, children etc.). You do not resent strangers because you have low expectations of them.
- Resentment is major cause of spiritual disconnection. When we try to be in control & play Hashem (try to be controller in control tower) and others don't do what we expect of them then we experience resentment. As Momo wrote in his 12/Aug posting above “We need to fire ourselves as being our own bosses and make HaShem our boss”.

Homework

- Duvid Chaim distributed a “Review Of Resentments” worksheet for us to fill out in which we itemize who we are resentful at, the cause and its affect on us.
- .When doing this moral inventory key is to stop using logic (which is the highly developed mode of thinking in yeshiva world) and get in touch with feelings. Dealing with feelings helps to evaporate lust.

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Re: Duvid Chaim's calls - By Momo
Posted by the.guard - 13 Aug 2009 22:16

So beautiful, so deep, so much to learn!! WOW. I hope to share this in a chizuk e-mail...

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Re: Duvid Chaim's calls - By Momo
Posted by moti - 17 Aug 2009 18:44

Below is a summary of the main points from 17/Aug call.

Explanation of Purpose of Filling out “Review Of Resentments” Worksheet

- DC opened the call using the paradigm of life as a beautiful melody. Individual sour notes can ruin the entire melody. Filling out the spreadsheet with real deep honest thought is an opportunity to examine past and present resentments and eliminate the bad notes.
- This exercise is a way to freedom from the resentments. Instead of living our lives in autopilot, we need to examine the stuff below the surface (i.e. the subconscious). Otherwise, if we don't address resentments, we choose “our drug of choice” (i.e. acting out) to seek temporary soothing and escape.
- Personal Moti Note: Upon re-reading my description above, I realize that I do not do justice in explaining the value of filling out the spreadsheet to someone who was not on the call. It sounds too much like pop psychology or new-age stuff. It is either because of my poor description or,

alternatively, by its very nature this is a process better understood by experience rather than description. I myself was skeptical of its value before filling it out but was surprised by how useful the exercise felt (and more so when reviewing it with DC).

Digging Deeper Into Understanding Idea Of Resentment

- Insightful idea that bringing our resentment to **light** will avoid us from acting out in the **dark**.
- When we bear these resentments then we see that the world is dominating us with the power to kill. How can we properly deal with these resentments in a healthy way?
- 1) Understand that those who wronged us may be spiritually sick –we would not get angry with a sick man on crutches for unintentionally smashing us with a shopping cart. In the same vein, viewing the other person who we resent as sick changes our perspective and thereby grant us more tolerance and patience (note: - this point raised group discussion of fine-line between this and being a doormat.)
- 2) When reviewing our list of resentments, we need to honestly review what our **own** role is for each resentment. Our own part in this may be selfishness, need to control scared of loss etc..

Reviewing Our Fears

- In the same way we need to review our resentments we need to review our fears (separate tab on the spreadsheet). Filling this tab out is the next homework assignment.
- The big book states that “We trust infinite Hashem rather than our finite selves”. Instead of living in constant fear whenever our teenage daughter is driving and acting out to soothe ourselves, we need to realize that our lives are on loan from Hashem and we need to have our trust in Him.

Summary – Outcome of Spreadsheet

- Learn to live life according to Hashem’s terms, not my own. I need to change my perceptions and give up playing His role. To get real freedom I need to change my design for living.

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Re: Duvud Chaim's calls - By Momo
Posted by moti - 18 Aug 2009 19:14

Below is a summary of the main points from 18/Aug call. The focus of the call was an explanation and advice how to fill out the worksheet over the next week after which Duvid Chaim will do lengthy review with each one individually.

Overall Review of Worksheet:

- DC re-emphasized the importance and objective of the spreadsheet – to concretize and address the fuel feeding our lust; otherwise I will retreat to a place where I feel like I have control and where I'm the king and get my hit.
- There are 3 tabs to worksheet each addressing a review of a different fuel for lust:
 - 1) resentments discussed on last call
 - 2) fear continued this call
 - 3) sex conduct
- DC gave feedback on the Resentment tab filled out by the participants and sent to DC. He urged us to be more deeply honest with more detailed probing – this is a simple but not an easy program. It is our opportunity to be real and put it all down on paper.
- We must honestly probe *our own* part for each resentment and fear – “my reality is partly of my own making”.

Fear as a Fuel

- An intriguing concept (& counterintuitive to me) was explained: I have fear because I am playing Hashem. I am scared of life because I am unable to surrender control.
- Example of above: I am afraid of going on a roller coaster because I'm not in control, even though this roller coaster has been proven to be perfectly safe.
- When I let go of this fuel for lust, I can peel away my ego and reach dveikut with Hashem
- The Big Book compares fear to stealing – the analogy was drawn to gnaiva (stealing in secret) where you pay double penalty since this shows (like fear does) a lack of faith in Hashem.

Sex Conduct

- This review includes and sexual conduct where we had been selfish, dishonest or inconsiderate, be it our wife or our employer whose time we are stealing by surfing or the harm done to a woman we stared at.

Plan for August 19-26:

DC will be away. This is the time to work hard on the spreadsheet with complete honesty to "move Big Boulders". For each session during this week, a different participant will facilitate the call.

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Re: Duvid Chaim's calls - By Momo
Posted by the.guard - 18 Aug 2009 20:23

Moti you are doing us a great service. These notes will be helpful for years to come, and for all subsequent cycles that Duvid Chaim does. As a matter of fact, using these notes, you or Momo or other guys on the call, will one day be able to moderate your OWN phone calls. And we will need that one day. GuardYourEyes is growing. One day, hundreds of Yidden will want to go through the Big Book and learn these secrets. You are preparing the path for more and more free GYE 12-Step phone conferences!

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Re: Duvid Chaim's calls - By Momo
Posted by moti - 19 Aug 2009 18:11

Thank you for your encouragement, Reb Guard. Much appreciated.

19/Aug call: As Duvid Chaim is away, one of the participants facilitated the call.

Today's facilitator opened up by saying that in the past, he felt out of control and therefore Elul proved to be a scary, painful time. It was his hope and expectation that having found this 12 step program, this Elul would be different.

The story was recounted of a story heard from Rav Reuven Leuchter, a talmid of Rav Shlomo Wolbe. Rav Leuchter came from a less religious background and as a youth was an expert pianist. When he attended yeshiva, Rav Wolbe, surprisingly, strongly encouraged him to continue playing saying "one day the part of you that satisfied by piano will be replaced by Torah but until then you need to continue paying for your chiyus (vitality)." Rav Leuchter took his Rav's advice and as Rav Wolbe had predicted, one day he felt that the piano didn't have meaning or excitement anymore – he had reached the level where he got this excitement from avodat Hashem.

The analogy was drawn that similarly the addiction cannot be fought head on, otherwise we will be shattered. By continuing to follow the 12 step program the lust will evaporate.

{Note – obviously the analogy is not meant to compare damage of lust to playing piano, but rather that certain passions cannot be fought head on. Once we connect closer to Hashem these other passions can lessen on their own}.

The group had lively discussions on a range of topics including:

- The value of tshuva me'ahava instead of yir'ah
- Making kabbalas – it was suggested that rather making one that refers to staying clean for a period of time, to make a kabbala saying that we will connect to the program on a daily basis
- The power of the group: different strategies for staying clean were discussed as well as ways of enhancing the fellowship by staying in touch in a forum apart from the daily calls

I cannot attend tomorrow – someone else from the call is encouraged to post here tomorrow. Hopefully Momo is back next week!

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Re: Duvud Chaim's calls - By Momo
Posted by moti - 24 Aug 2009 18:11

24/Aug call: As Duvid Chaim is still away, a participant facilitated the call, opening with a brief dvar torah.

The dvar torah was based on a drasha of Rav Soloveitchik given for Pesach, the topic being “Freedom and Slavery”.

The Rav draws the distinction between 2 types of slavery - political slavery and “typological” slavery, referring to a mental state, an emotional condition referring to a slave mentality. When we say in the hagada *???* *??* *???* *???* *??* *????????* *???* *????* *?????*

?? *????????* refers to the former (political slavery) while *???* *????* *?????* refers to the mental state of slavery.

Rav Soloveitchik then explains the psychology of slaves and why a slave, because of his slave mentality, is exempt from 3 categories of halachot:

1. Pasul L’edut (cannot testify) – because a slave is in constant fear of his master he cannot make his own decisions. As a result he doesn’t develop faith in his own decisions. He becomes entirely passive and his conception of truth becomes distorted.
2. Mitzvot Aseh Shehazman Gerama (exempt from time bound mitzvot aseh) – being conscious of time is the faculty of a free man. A slave has no control over his time and therefore becomes insensitive to time. The significance of these mitzvot are derived from their association with time. A slave, lacking this sensitivity to time, is therefore exempt.
3. Isur Hithatnit (cannot marry) – marriage is a spiritual relationship. Only a free man, ben horin, can develop the proper spiritual relationship which is the essence of marriage.

We can see how the conditions underlying these 3 categories apply in our case:

1. There is a strong element of truth distortion, be it denial or taking risks we would not take in any other aspect of our lives.

- 2. One becomes totally time insensitive during inappropriate behaviors such surfing
- 3. It definitely affects both our spiritual connection with our spouse and with Hashem

We hope to free ourselves of this disease and become bnei horin.

The balance of the call was spent discussing our experience filling out the worksheet and insight from one of the members who has more experience with the 12 step program.

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Re: Duvid Chaim's calls - By Momo
Posted by tom613 - 26 Aug 2009 16:20

In our session today, we discussed "The Promises" p.83-84, the AA Big Book

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before half through! We are going to know a new freedom and happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us—sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we

work for them.

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Prayer

Posted by moti - 03 Sep 2009 11:06

This week, in addition to the daily phone call, Duvid Chaim is reviewing our worksheets (see a previous post for an explanation of what the worksheet is) with each of us individually. Each call with each participant is 2 hours. Incredible time and energy dedication on DC's part – how he does it I don't know.

We are at a point in the program where I think summarizing the main points from a phone call is less interesting and less relevant to a non-participant.

Instead of summarizing the main points of the calls, I wanted to share with you an interesting experience of mine. A few weeks ago we were reviewing Step 3 (Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of Hashem) and the associated Step 3 prayer:

“God, I offer myself to You —to build with me and to do with me as You will. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Your will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Your Power, Your Love, and Your Way of life. May I do Your will always!”.

At the time a few phone call participants felt uncomfortable with this prayer as it sounded too Christian and not “Jewish”. I was also quite skeptical of adopting this prayer but I decided to give it a try. I incorporated this prayer in “Elokai N'tzor”, one of the insertion points in the shmoneh esreh for a personal tefilla,

The first time I did this I was immediately struck by their congruence, how closely the Step 3 prayer fit in with the theme of Elokai N'tzor (English translation below) :

"... As for those who design evil against me, speedily nullify their counsel and disrupt their design. Act for Your Names sake; act for Your Right Hand's sake; act for Your Torah's sake; that Your beloved ones may be given rest; let Your Right Hand save, and respond to me..."

Thematically the 2 prayers are identical – free me from those who do evil against me (read Y”H, lust) so that I may do proper Avodat Hashem.

I have been saying Elokai N'tzor 3 times a day (usually) for years and had never quite made the association to this addiction. My tefilla has been given new meaning. Big eye-opener.

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Re: Duvid Chaim's calls - By Momo
Posted by Momo - 15 Sep 2009 05:52

Hi everyone. I'm sorry I was gone for so long. First I was on vacation, then I had to work overtime to meet a deadline. However, I attended the last 2 calls from Duvid Chaim.

A big thanks to everyone who took over when I was gone, **especially Moti**.

I didn't write about steps 4-5: Making an inventory of our lives and talking about it with our sponsor.

I didn't write about steps 6-7: Ask HaShem to remove our shortcomings.

I didn't write about steps 8-9: Make amends to people we harmed.

Maybe in the future I'll write about steps 4-5, which I did with DC. I haven't done steps 6-8.

Yesterday DC said some really nice ideas:

- What is good? Good is anything that brings us closer to HaShem, makes us feel connected to Him. We should strive to do good each day.

- Each day is made up of small moments. Each moment we should ask ourselves: Are we moving ahead or falling behind? We don't stay in idle mode.
- Be conscious of each moment. Don't live on autopilot.
- Chet doesn't mean sin, it means missing the mark, like an archer shooting arrows. Our goal is to slowly get closer and closer to the mark.
- This time of year (before R"H), we should feel remorse, not guilt. We should not get depressed. We should consider how far we've grown this year (with GYE and the 12 steps), and consider how we can continue to grow next year.
- We read step 10 which is a daily chesbon hanefesh.
- We read step 11 which is reviewing our day before bed and when we wake up. Were we resentful, selfish dishonest? Do we owe an apology to anyone? Think: What can we do today that's G-d's will, that helps other people?

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Re: Duvid Chaim's calls - By Momo
 Posted by the.guard - 15 Sep 2009 12:01

Beautiful Momo! Keep them coming!

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Re: Duvid Chaim's calls - By Momo
 Posted by Momo - 16 Sep 2009 11:37

Points from yesterday's call:

- We should speak to ourselves as nicely as we should speak to others, not in a criticizing voice. The way we speak affects how we see the world
- It's good to be aware of our feelings, that means we are in recovery. When feeling something, ask whether that feeling is good, why do I feel this, where is it coming from (what's causing it).
- During the day, before each moment, we should pause. We should not react to everything based on our desires.

My own chidush: I find my thoughts are either:

- positive, and then I should I continue

- tense, and then I should trust HaShem and relax, or

- crazy, and then I should tell myself that this is just "crazy talk", and stop it.

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Re: Dovid Chaim's calls - By Momo

Posted by Momo - 17 Sep 2009 06:45

Yesterday we started chapter 7 that talk about the 12th step, that of helping others.

Here are some nice thoughts from the call:

We are told in the book to tell a potential newcomer about our habits and experiences. This is to make him feel comfortable, show him that you really understand what he's going through since you went through the same stuff, and it also builds trust and a connection with him. Addicts are lonely people, so when we show we want to help him, if he's interested in recovery, he'll be happy to connect with you. He is looking for true intimacy and is not fulfilled with the fake intimacy he's been running after (prostitutes, porn).

True intimacy means "in to me see", see what's inside of me. It's with our wives (or husbands), and with HaShem.

Why is it so hard for us to be truly intimate with our wives but easy for us to run after fake intimacy with other women?

1. True intimacy makes us vulnerable. This is hard for us either because our egos get in the way, or because it might bring up bad memories of our past when people took advantage of our vulnerabilities.

2. We are lazy people. Addicts are creatures with no patience, and want instant gratification. It's

easy to click on a website and see what we want, but of course, it's not fulfilling. That's why we keep coming back for more and more porn. However, true intimacy, building a relationship, is hard work and takes time, but it will fill us up. Once we're full of true relationships with our wives and HaShem, there will be no more room inside us for the lust.

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Re: Duvud Chaim's calls - By Momo
Posted by Momo - 24 Sep 2009 05:35

Here are some nice points from yesterday's call:

1. Joshua (a caller) had some great lines: "Progress, not perfection." "Perfection is too high a standard for us." "We fall where we are and get back up. We don't fall and tumble backward."

2. Our problem is our attempt to control life. We need to surrender to HaShem, like an ant on a log who doesn't run around because he knows he's not in control. The stream is in control. Think that I am not in control of any outcome, HaShem is. HaShem is always on our side, by our side. Lust is our drug of choice that makes us feel in control. We decide who to watch, and if we don't like it, we simply click on the next picture.

3. I am not the source of my happiness, HaShem is.

4. When something happens during the day that upsets us, pause, don't react immediately.

5. The problem is in our head, not in the computer.

6. When a lust urge comes, get out of your own head by doing the following:
 - Talk to HaShem. Ask Him, OK, what do you want from me now?
 - Call your sponsor or a program buddy.

- Be of service to someone else.

7. The program takes time before you feel it working. You may not feel it for a while, so keep at it and don't give up!

8. We will reach a state eventually when we don't have to avoid the streets and we won't get triggered by things that trigger us now.

9. Even when the program is over, stay in the program by helping others, and taking a personal inventory each day (do a cheshbon hanefesh).

10. The condition for success is to trust in HaShem and clean up our own house (do a chesbon hanefesh). Recovery is not dependent upon people; it is dependent on our relationship with HaShem.

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