

The Secret of Modeh Ani

Posted by lwtbf613 - 11 Dec 2018 14:41

Shalom Aleichem! My baby daughter woke me up at 5:30 and as I was trying to rock her back to sleep (didn't work) I realized that I hadn't said modeh ani or washed negel vasser so even though I'd already been up and walking around for close to 5 minutes, I decided to still say modeh ani. Then it hit me with complete detail as to how modeh ani can be the secret to overcoming our addiction. I am a Lubavitcher chossid, so much of this is going to come from the chassidus I've learned on modeh ani, but I think that what might make it a bit different is the application in our lives.

We begin by saying modeh ani before anything, even before washing negel vasser. And we begin by declaring the ultimate nature of a Jew, a *yehudi*: I am grateful. However, we can read this as "I am being *modeh* the *ani*." I am giving up and giving over the *ani* that is within myself. Meaning, not only am I being m'vatel myself, but whoever I think I am, any sense of self, any sense of who I am with my predispositions, limitations, etc. I am giving that up and giving that over....to Who or What? To *l'fanecha*, to Hashem, but not just Hashem. In chassidus, many times when it talks about Hashem in a way that is "before Hashem", it can be read as meaning a time (so to speak) that was before shem Havaya, before Hashem brought anything into being, before the tzimtzum, to the yesh amiti. In chassidus it talks about a *yeshi amiti* and a *yesh hanivreh*, the *yesh hanivreh* is us; we are a created self from which any sense of autonomy is complete *sheker*. *Yesh amiti* on the other hand is true existence and since it is true, it therefore is *hiskayim*. So what we are essentially saying is that I am giving over the *yesh hanivreh* to the *yesh amiti*.

Afterwards, we say "*Melech chai v'kayim*" we are recognizing that Hashem is a living and enduring King, however, another way of reading it is that our level of *modeh* should be like a servant to the king, that I have no will of my own, what matters is the will of the king. Not only that but that king is *chai v'kayim*. He is life itself! He is endurance itself! It's not that Hashem is alive....He is life itself! This moment right now that you are experiencing is only so because Hashem willed it to be! Were He to not will it to be, then we would not exist ch"v. He is also enduring, this made me think of GYE principle #7 that speaks of true fulfillment vs. false fulfillment. If the fulfillment is false, then it ultimately will not last, which is why we keep going back to lust "once is too much and a thousand times is never enough." However, since Hashem is the King and He is life- a **true** life- He endures and satiates our souls.

Shechechezarta bi nishmasi b'chemla- You have returned my soul in compassion. Hashem didn't have to return our souls to us. When we sleep, we are a sixtieth dead. This has particular significance for me as someone who struggles with an addiction where death is a central idol. The worship of lust, of gashmiyus, the ultimate sheker, is truly the worship of death. Anyone that has been completely overtaken by lust will attest to this. After we satisfy our desire for physical

carnal pleasure, all we are left with is the hollow feeling of death and disgust. We are like those who sleep in the dust, like one who is dead. So the fact that Hashem restores our souls to us and decides that we still have purpose and meaning to our existence is truly out of Hashem's compassion. But not only that- *raba emunasecha*- Hashem has such immense belief in us that we can change for the better that out of that *emunah*, Hashem decides to give us our souls back even though we may not deserve it. We have a mission in this world to overcome our propensity towards lust and to m'kadesh ourselves, to live a life based on *emunah* and not based on our flawed, human nature and existence- to create a *dirah b'tachtonim* in both the world and in ourselves. It is the *raba emunasecha* that is the motivation behind and reason for *shechechezarta bi nishmasi b'chemla*.

Once we have had this recognition born from this meditation: that whoever I am and whoever I think I am- the *yesh hanivreh*- I am giving up and giving over the *yesh amiti* that preceded all creation like a servant gives over any sense of autonomy or will to the King, and that the King is life itself and creates a feeling of enduring sustenance within us, and that out of His immense belief in us to change and accomplish our mission in this world, He gives our souls back to our dead bodies- only once I've gone through that meditation and come to this higher, self-transcendent realization (all within the first 5 seconds of my day!!!) can I wash my hands, can I take the *tumas meis* that has clung to my fingers and wash it away, can I m'kadesh myself. For some of us (most of us) the addiction that overtakes us comes through two main body parts: our eyes and our hands. I do not need to elaborate on that any further- use (or maybe don't use) your imagination. The fact that I take those very same hands that I've used to launch myself into hell through my addiction and I am able to m'kadesh them, it is **only possible** when I come to this realization through *modeh ani*, when I realize that as a Jew, I am beyond all of the *shtus*, I am beyond *tumas meis*, I am beyond *sheker*, I am a *chelek elokah m'ma'al mamash*- I am **literally a piece of G-d walking around on this earth in this body**. Since I realize that I am beyond all of that, I am able to draw down from that transcendent level of Hashem's Essence- untouchable by any *shtus* or *klipah*- the ability to take that which I've fallen with so many times before- my hands- and m'kadesh them, to utilize them, meaning my addiction, in the service of Hashem. Coming out of *Chanukah*, we must know this to be true: **that the greatest light comes from the greatest darkness!**

Chevre, may we all be blessed to be "*Modeh Ani*" *yidden*, to be able to say "thank You Hashem for my addiction!" that because of it we have the ability to connect to Him in wondrous ways, and that we can take the realization of *modeh ani* and carry it with us into the world, bringing *geulah* for ourselves and the ultimate redemption with the immediate coming of *Moshiach tzidkeinu*.

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Re: The Secret of *Modeh Ani*
Posted by ColinColin - 01 May 2019 00:54

That is great and inspiring.

Thank you.

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