LIVING GUILT FREE-BUT I’M A JEWISH WOMAN

# shaindy krausz-yud bais elul/ September 14, 2016

The posuk says that in the time of Moshiach, “u’moloh ha’aretz dayo es Hashem’ -the land will be filled with the knowledge of Hashem. The word Daya is typically translated as ‘knowledge’ the world will be filled with knowledge of Hashem. But Daya also means to ‘experience’ Hashem; to KNOW Hashem-to have a clear understanding, to experience that Hashem is a constant in our lives.

Shaindy gave the example of the ‘shabbos lamp’. It is turned on the whole Shabbos, but there are times on Shabbos when it does not give off light, because we have turned it so that the light is covered. The light is still on but we cannot see it. So it is with our neshamas-our neshamas are also burning brightly. The light is never extinguished, but there are times when the light is hidden for example, when we are angry, we are in a state of despair-the light of our neshama is blocked off.

In order to tap into that healthy motivated connection, we have to be in control of our thoughts. As Shaindy explained on a previous shiur, we received hundreds of thoughts a day. We are constantly thinking-there is a constant flow of thoughts in our head. The question is –what do we do about them-which ones to we pick up on and which ones we let pass.

Thoughts can be positive, thoughts can be negative. These thoughts create feelings, create moods. Someone insults us-we can allow this insult to create negative thoughts-we can become ‘insulted’, angry or we can let it pass. Which thoughts I allow myself to focus on, is my ‘bechira’-is my choice.

All challenges we face in life-which create all sorts of thoughts-the good experiences-good thoughts, the bad experiences-bad thoughts-are all masterminded from Hashem. These are all ‘opportunities for growth’. They are all opportunities to come close to Hashem. When something good happens to us, i.e. we become grandparents, our child finally gets a shidduch-we have wonderful thoughts. We totally connect to Hashem on a high level-Thank you Hashem for this wonderful chesed you did for me today. But what happens, when someone insults us-we may become angry at them and have bad thoughts about them-How dare they speak to me like that? What are they thinking? We may latch out at them, speak loshon hora about them etc.

This was the point of Shaindy’s shiur-realize that these so called ‘bad’ situations’ are opportunities to connect to Hashem. When they happen to us, we have to stop and think-Hashem you sent this my way-what do you want me do right now? What is it that you want from me right now? Let Hashem guide you to come to the right thought. Be cognizant that Hashem will take care of you. Speak to Hashem constantly. ‘It is dark outside, no one is out, I am alone, there is a dog barking’ Hashem, help me. We have to view each opportunity that is presented to us as a chance to connect to Hashem. Talk to Hashem constantly.

At any given moment, since we have so many thoughts flowing through our brain at all times, we can choose to connect to Hashem or not. Even when we daven, we are connecting to Hashem, i.e. Hashem you gave me back my neshama this morning; Hashem you are allowing me to see today, to walk to day; my parnasa today, my health today-we can talk to Hashem all day-thank him, ask him questions-he is always there for us. He is powering everything for us. We just need to feel his presence.

We have to realize that our ‘bad thougths’ i.e. anger-are coming from the yetzer hora. These thoughts are designed to disconnect us from Hashem. The goal of the yetzer hora is to distance us from Hashem.

And this is where ‘teshuva’ comes in. I try to be more ‘tzonua’ I try not to speak loshon hora. I will most definitely fail sometimes. I am human. I am not meant to be perfect at all times. I am meant to learn and grow from my mistakes. Women have this quality of guilt-meaning- I messed up on this mitzvah-I am bad’. But that is not the correct attitude that is not what Hashem wants to hear from us.

Teshuva means to recognize, that ‘yes, I messed up on this mitzvah’. I realize that, I speak to Hashem and I acknowledge that fact. I connect to Hashem, and say, I will try harder next time and I go on with my life.

My not doing the mitzvah to the fullest, my losing my temper at my spouse, my child etc-is a ‘missed opportunity’ but it does not mean that I need to feel guilty about it. Guilt is one of the tools of the yetzer hora. If we recognize it for what it is- a tool in his hand-then we can stop the yetzer hora from pulling us down with it. The question has to be in our mind-we may have not done it right, but what does Hashem want from us at this moment-he wants us to acknowledge the cheit and move on. And when Hashem presents us with ‘the same opportunity for growth again’ hopefully we will be more cognizant of ‘this opportunity for growth’ and do the mitzvah a little bit better, not lose our temper etc. It is all about connecting to Hashem.

Hashem, created teshuva before he created the world. Why? Because he knew that as humans we would need a vehicle for correction. Teshuva has the ability to bring us back to where we were before the cheit.

Teshuva means to ‘return.’ To return to what? Returning to Hashem, to my true essence, actualizing my potential.

At that moment, when I become aware of my missed opportunity to come close to Hashem-that is the moment of Teshuva.

And in this month of Elul, we have a process of teshuva. We are building up to the yomim naarim, to the yom hadin. We do not need to reflect on our past year and feel guilty for all the wrong that we did. What we need to do, is acknowledge it, let Hashem know that we realize we could have done better and make a commitment that next time around, we will be more in control –that is teshuva.

In the tefila that we say before we go to sleep,’ Hashkivanu’- we ask Hashem to remove the Soton from in front of us and in back of us-when it is obvious to us that he is trying to manipulate us and at those times when it is not so obvious. When the Soton talks to us, he uses our own voice and our own wording-so it sounds like our real thought. ‘How could she have spoken to me like that?’ What was she thinking? It is always in first person-‘I should do, I should think’ etc.

The posuk says, remove the Soton, ‘milfonau’ from in front of us. The Soton presents itself to us as a ‘thought’. And ‘it feels right to do the cheit. Once we did the cheit, then the Soton has us in his claws. He has trapped us, and this is where ‘jewish guilt comes in. And if we go down the road of ‘guilt’, the Soton is victorious. Sin and guilt are one package.

“Hashkivenu’-we are asking Hashem, remove the Soton from us-remove the negative thoughts and if I do have negative thoughts, Hashem please allow me not to stew in bitterness because of it.

Shaindy went through the 4 steps of teshuva-vidu, charata, azivas cheit and kabala l’osid and showed how to perform these acts properly (without guilt).

Let us hope that going forward, we realize that Hashem constantly presents us with ‘opportunities for growth’ and we learn to utilize each opportunity as a forging a stronger connection to Hashem.