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Don't Wait For Yom Tov

When Yom Tov comes many people feel *chiyus* (vitality) from it which they do not usually feel during the rest of the year. A person looks forward to Yom Tov so he can feel more alive from it, while the rest of the year seems boring; our *sefarim hakedoshim* call the winter (when there is no Yom Tov) a "time for sleep".

It is nice to look forward to Yom Tov, but we must realize that there is a different attitude we can have. There is a way for us to derive even more vitality from the ordinary days of the year than from Yom Tov!

Of course, Yom Tov is the holiest time of the year, both from a halachic viewpoint and from an emotional viewpoint. Yet, there is a rule, which our *sefarim hakedoshim* teach, that states everything is contained in its opposite. This means that if Yom Tov is holier than the rest of the year, then there is way to see how the rest of the year can be holier than Yom Tov.

If a person only feels vitality from Yom Tov, he is full of vitality sometimes. He feels elated on Shabbos and Yom Tov, but daily life is boring to him. However, if a person learns how to derive vitality from the rest of the year, he can always feel alive.

After Yom Tov Ends

There is a concept that a person can extend the holiness of Yom Tov to the rest of the year. This is what we ask for in the Yom Tov prayer, "*and lift us up, Hashem our G-d, with the blessings of Your festivals.*" We are asking that Hashem should prolong the holiness of Yom Tov into the rest of the

year. However, the reality is that most people do not succeed in doing this except for a short amount of time.

The holiness of Yom Tov can actually be an impediment to one's growth in his *avodas Hashem*. All changes, even changes for the good, are somewhat harmful. Even when a person becomes more spiritual, he is in danger, because he has gone through a change. All changes are dangerous to a person!

For example, the sons of Yaakov were afraid that if their father found out that Yosef was still alive he would die from the good news. Why were they afraid of this? Could anything have been better for their father to hear? It is because an extreme emotion is harmful, even if it is about something good.

When Yom Tov comes, a non-feeling person doesn't feel any changes from the Yom Tov, whereas, a person who takes Yom Tov seriously and prepares for it, receives vitality and elation from it. When Yom Tov is over, he is apt to fall from his plateau.

If a person falls from a chair, it hurts. If a person falls from a table, it hurts even more, and if he falls from a higher place than this, the pain increases. The same goes for spirituality. When a person reaches a spiritual high, his fall will be more painful. Although Yom Tov is holy, a person's soul cannot always handle the holiness and he falls soon after.

If we want to gain from Yom Tov, we first need to feel alive from the ordinary days of the year and see what is contained in them. Then, we will be able to receive the holiness of Yom Tov without losing it afterwards.

Two Different Abilities In The Soul

Every person's soul has two abilities: the ability to become inspired and grow, and the ability to stabilize and remain still. These are two opposite forces in one's soul. Usually, when a person uses one of these abilities he loses the other. For example, when a person feels spiritual growth, he is apt to lose his inner peace. Whereas, when a person feels at peace with himself, he becomes complacent and doesn't strive for growth.

What should a person do – strive for more growth, or stay still?

It's a challenge. When a person has growth, he often loses his calmness. He might be happy, but he

isn't calm. On the other hand, if a person feels calm, he often becomes lethargic and doesn't seek to improve himself.

A person has the power of inner calm, but if it doesn't come from a deep place in his soul, this power just makes him sleepy and lethargic. (If one doesn't know how to calm himself down, there are solutions for this such as thinking about the ocean waves or something else relaxing).

There is a story about Rav Shmuel Vosner shlit"a, that depicts calmness. One time he went to the Chazon Ish to ask him something. When he came, he found the Chazon Ish with closed eyes. He seemed to be sleeping.

Rav Vosner stood there and waited. Suddenly, the Chazon Ish opened his eyes and asked, "Why didn't you ask your question?"

Rav Vosner responded, "I saw the Rov was sleeping..."

The Chazon Ish answered, "No. I was not sleeping".

Why did the Chazon Ish look like he was sleeping?

The Chazon Ish seemed to be sleeping because of the great connection he felt with Hashem. However, a simpler understanding of his behavior is that his soul was very calm and this did not make him sleepy.

The Calm Place In The Soul

When a person is only calm in a superficial way, he becomes lethargic. From a superficial perspective, a person is able to fall asleep when he is less busy, thus calmer. The inner perspective of this power is that a person is calm when he reaches an inner silence. Just like all of creation was silent during the giving of the Torah, so also a person has the power to experience this deep place in his own soul. This is not describing fatigue, but a quietness that calms down one's excitement.

Usually, one is only excited by something he doesn't often have. When a person sees a new kind of food he has never tasted before, he gets excited. If he is a more materialistic kind of person, he is

even more excited. Yet, if he eats it again and again, he loses passion for it. When one has something on a constant basis, he doesn't get excited from it. If we have something pleasurable consistently, we wouldn't need new things to get us excited.

Consistency And Renewal

Hashem is unchanging. He "was, is, and will be". He is constant. Hashem renews creation every day, but He Himself is never renewed. We need to learn how to connect to a power in our soul that is constantly in existence and doesn't require us to change. The depth of life is to live in a silence that stays the same and doesn't get renewed.

A more internal kind of person knows how to derive vitality from the regular days of the year, no less than what he gets from Yom Tov. It's like eating and drinking; we need both in order to survive. Our soul needs Yom Tov and it also needs the rest of the year.

There are people who misuse this power of the soul and become lethargic. However, others know how to connect to this power from an inner silence in their soul.

We have two forces in our soul. One is the ability to find renewal. The other force is the ability to live without renewal. If a person only gets his vitality from renewal, he needs new things to feel alive. He feels alive from Yom Tov and from buying new clothes, because now he has something he didn't have yesterday- vitality. There is, however, another source of vitality a person can have. This foundation is Hashem, who is unchanging - the very source of life.

The Need for Renewal Comes From Being Superficial

A superficial person constantly seeks new things. There are people who are always exchanging their items for a new one, because they need new things to live. If a person is only connected to renewal, this shows a lack of connection to Hashem, Who is consistent and never changes.

The Jewish people are compared to the moon, which renews itself every thirty days. However, this was a curse that came to the moon after it was created. Before Creation, the plan was for the moon to remain consistently of equal size to the sun. When a person derives vitality from consistency, and doesn't need renewal to survive, he is connected to the state that existed before Creation, which is the more desirable state to be in.

The Dangers to Both Ways

Each Yom Tov, a person derives new vitality. However, there is another source of vitality. When a person feels vitality from consistency it does not involve anything new. Without this kind of vitality, a person might gain from Yom Tov, only to fall from his level after Yom Tov is over; in between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, he grows spiritually, but after Yom Kippur, he stops growing.

However, when one accesses the inner silence in his soul, he is able to derive vitality from the consistent reality of Hashem. Yom Tov becomes another kind of vitality to him, but he doesn't depend on it, because he already has vitality. This person feels alive during the year, so he doesn't need Yom Tov to revive him. Whereas, when someone doesn't feel alive during the year, but feels kind of dead, he needs Yom Tov to bring him back to life.

Yet, there is also a danger to someone who gets his vitality from consistency. When Yom Tov comes it is possible that he might derive so much vitality from the renewed feeling of Yom Tov that he will lose his vitality from consistency. Therefore, a person must learn how to balance these two abilities which takes a lot of wisdom.

Feeling The Constant Changes

Practically speaking, we always live with renewal. Every person goes through changes in life, some big and some small. The entire Creation is moving every second as well. We are always changing to some extent. All of Creation is like one big tumult.

If a person doesn't know how to connect to the power of consistency, he will suffer from changes. This can be compared to a tree that gets blown by the wind. If there is a firm root, the tree will be able to withstand strong winds. If we have consistency and we don't need renewal in order to live, we are connected to a firm root that can withstand changes.

We usually only feel changes when something extreme occurs, for instance a happy or sad occasion. When a person gets vitality from changes, his life becomes extreme. These types of people aren't satisfied with just having food. Rather, they need something exotic in their food and they need new things to make them feel alive. Such people seek changes that become more and more extreme, because the regular things that they are used to become boring. They seek new things and look for a change in their routine. The more they look for vitality, the more extreme the things become that they seek.

Others have the opposite problem: they are too grounded. They never seek anything new, not because they feel alive from a consistent lifestyle, but because they are lethargic and devoid of life. If one is balanced, he derives vitality from consistency and from changes that are small or big. A person can only derive vitality from changes when he mainly derives his vitality from the ordinary days of the year, which are without renewal. A person, who isn't balanced and never derives vitality from changes, has lost his sense of feeling alive. He slowly begins to become lethargic and disconnected from everything around him.

Sometimes one may become so lethargic that he begins to feel an inner emptiness and he is filled with all kinds of terrible thoughts that he can't escape. He might try to find himself by traveling to strange places in the world. This is all because he doesn't understand how life works. As soon as he encounters a problem, he is full of inner turmoil.

See Life As One Continuous Path

One needs to be aware that life is one continuous path! If he falls asleep in middle of a *shiur* that he cannot understand, it is because he doesn't see how all the details connect. A person can't wake up in the middle of his life and try to understand where he went wrong. One needs to see how every experience in his life up until this very moment is all part of a big picture.

If one would know himself and understand that all his experiences in life are all part of one big picture, many of his problems would be avoided. For example, there are people who complain that their children misbehave. Such people think that if not for this problem, everything else is good. But when you think about it, a child who misbehaves is not simply having a behavior problem. If the parent looks deeper, he will see that there is more behind the problem. The problem isn't that the child is misbehaving. That's a small part of the picture.

Since he doesn't know what causes the child to want to misbehave, he cannot solve his child's misbehavior. A person needs to become aware of what's going around him in his life in order to deal with any problem. He needs to look what happened before the problem and see what caused it. Otherwise, he will be very shocked every time he has a problem.

In order to understand life, one needs to see how life is one continuous path. To do this, he needs to pay attention to what's happening. One can only pay attention to his life when he is living life, when he is experiencing it. A waiter pays attention to those seated at the table, because his job depends on this. If a person realizes that his life depends on this, he will pay attention to what's going on.

When one experiences life and pays attention to everything that's going on, he won't fall apart as soon as he encounters a problem, because he will know how to deal with it. If one isn't paying

attention to what's going on his life, he will never know how to deal with problems. He needs to remember that there is a larger picture, and that every part of life is interconnected.

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