



Inside and Out

Parshas Vayakhel recounts Moshe conveying Hashem's command to the Bnei Yisrael to construct the Mishkan. Betzalel, Moshe's nephew, has been chosen by Hashem to oversee the construction. The Aron Hakodesh, the Holy Ark, consists of three boxes. The innermost box was made of gold, enclosed within a wooden box, and the outermost box was also gold ensuring that it appeared solid gold. The sages teach us that the lesson of the Aron being golden both inside and outside alludes to the concept of Tocho Kibaro; a person must strive to be genuinely true to themselves, living a life of congruence.

Congruency

Carl Rogers defines congruency as a state where a person's actions, thoughts, and emotions align, promoting a sense of authenticity and wholeness. In other words, congruency occurs when an individual behaves, thinks, and feels per their core beliefs. Why is this alignment essential for an individual's overall well-being?

Human beings possess an intrinsic desire for self-unity, which encompasses the need to attain inner peace. When individuals hold healthy core beliefs about their surroundings and their role within that context, they actively seek to preserve their position and status in the world. The greater the alignment between a person's actions and beliefs, the more tranquility and serenity they experience. In periods of achieving this sense of completeness, individuals experience personal growth and a profound sense of fulfillment.

The wobbly three-legged table

Consider the analogy of a three-legged table missing one or more legs. While it may be possible to stabilize it, doing so requires significant effort. Similarly, human beings are supported by three foundational elements: actions, thoughts, and feelings. When one of these elements is not in sync with the others, it disrupts the individual's emotional equilibrium.

Most circumstances seem not to challenge an individual's fundamental value system. A person who considers themselves honest will not rob a store or steal a car. A kind and benevolent person would not humiliate or belittle another person. These scenarios would be considered well beneath a person's moral and ethical standards. Nevertheless, each day will present seemingly minor and often overlooked challenges that can illuminate whether a person is in harmony with their core self.

Being true to yourself

A person who sees honesty as a fundamental aspect of their character should reflect on their conduct in the workplace. Are they making the most of their time to complete the responsibilities for which they are compensated? Do they consistently arrive punctually, or do they tend to be late? Do they rely on the excuse of "it's just a couple of minutes"? As the saying goes are they "working hard or hardly working?"





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It is widely acknowledged that kindness and benevolence are essential qualities to cultivate. However, the true test of these traits arises when individuals are fatigued or under stress. How do they respond in inconvenient situations? While it may be simple to exhibit kindness towards those within our social circles, the challenge lies in our interactions with those who are different. This raises important questions about our interactions with spouses, colleagues, and subordinates.

A closer look

The answers to these questions will indicate whether the individual is authentically leading a life aligned with their values. What contributes to the challenge of adhering to one's core beliefs? Why do many people allow their emotions and feelings to dictate their behavior, even when such reactions conflict with their principles? The key lies in the ability to pause and recognize these moments.

This is when the real work starts. As individuals strive to lead a life characterized by congruence, they may discover several elements of their behavior that are out of alignment. Compiling a prioritized list based on personal conviction can work as a successful approach to achieving self-improvement goals. Begin by concentrating on a single area and monitor your advancement. Achievements tend to foster further success. The more you dedicate yourself to aligning your actions, emotions, and thoughts, the more natural this process will feel, ultimately becoming an integral aspect of your true self.

The balanced three-legged table

Revisiting the earlier analogy of the three-legged table. The components of a person—thoughts, emotions, and actions—constitute the entirety of their being, each representing a leg of the life table. When these elements are harmonized, the table of life becomes stable. Living life by one's fundamental values facilitates the attainment of the balance and harmony that many strive for.

Have a wonderful Shabbos,

Binyomin Stolov

