



The M.A.P.S Page

Empowerment Through Personal Guidance

BS"D
Parshas Tzav 5785
April 9, 2025

לע"נ אבי מורי משה אהרן בן יהודה ואמי מורתי פערל לאה בת יצחק הכהן סטאלאו

It's the Thought That Counts

In Parshas Tzav, the Torah addresses the prohibition of "Pigul." It states, "If any of the flesh of his peace offering is consumed on the third day, it will not be accepted; it will not be credited to the one who offers it; it will be rejected, and the individual who eats from it will incur guilt." This restriction addresses the motives that could render a sacrifice invalid. For example, if during one of the four primary parts of the offering of a sacrifice, the Kohen has the intention to eat the meat of the animal past the time limit, even if he were to end up eating the meat during the prescribed time, the sacrifice is still invalid.

The Torah conveys the critical role that a person's thoughts play through this law. A common belief is that thoughts belong to the individual and that one has the freedom to think as they wish, provided their actions are proper. However, this Mitzva emphasizes that, just as actions must be appropriate, so too must one's thoughts and intentions be righteous.

Thoughts Drive Actions

The phrase "perspective is reality" is often attributed to Lee Atwater, who played a significant role in its popularization. According to a November 2001 article in **Psychology Today**, negative thoughts have a substantial impact on brain function. Not only does negative thinking make it more difficult for you to think logically, but the fear of failure that is often associated with negativity slows down activity in the cerebellum. This results in a reduced ability to find creative solutions to the problems you face.

An individual's perception of any situation or event is primarily guided by their past experiences and the actions they have taken. Those who prioritize discovering the positive elements and making the best of every circumstance tend to develop a "positive world lens." Engaging in positive thought patterns increases serotonin production in the brain, a key factor for growth and development, enabling individuals to tackle challenges and manage the intricacies of life. Conversely, negative thoughts can disrupt the stable production of cortisol, which in turn hampers cognitive processes and may increase the risk of depression.



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Mind Control

The initial step for an individual aiming to regulate their thoughts about positive versus negative thinking is to assess whether the present circumstances are within their control. Should they conclude that they can influence the circumstances, they must practice self-honesty regarding their abilities. They must then gather the emotional and physical fortitude necessary to initiate the changes that will lead to improvement, while reassuring themselves that they possess the capability to transform the situation positively.

However, there will occasionally be circumstances that are beyond the person's control. Situations that may be the result of someone else's decision, and now they are left to pick up the pieces. Having someone to confide in or a mentor can be extremely helpful in seeking advice and guidance when navigating such circumstances. Yet, there is always something that the person can do. A person can control their reaction to the situation being presented. Believing in themselves and their ability to persevere has a profound effect on overcoming challenging situations. Viewing this challenge as merely a single facet of their comprehensive life experience allows individuals to maintain a more expansive perspective and foster a positive outlook on life.

Pigul and You

Hashem sought to demonstrate the profound effect that thoughts can have on a person's life. They can either foster growth or lead to destruction. This vital lesson was conveyed through the framework of sacrifices. The English term "sacrifice" does not fully capture the essence of the Hebrew word "korban," whose root is the word "karov," which is defined as coming close, as sacrifices provide a pathway for individuals to enhance their closeness to G-d.

Just as when it comes to the Service of Hashem, a person must be aware and careful with their thoughts so that the "korban" does not become invalid, a person must ensure that their thoughts don't interfere with their ability to serve G-d by having negative or misplaced thoughts.

Have a wonderful Shabbos,

Binyomin Stolov



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