



Revealing the inner beauty of the Torah in a way that touches and inspires the Jewish soul

Beauty of a Sunset - THE "MAKEOVER"

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Many of us are reaching the age when we look into a mirror only at calculated moments - that is, after we are prepared to see only what we would like to see and are able to ignore the rest. In our adolescence we were taught that youth equals success and aging is what happens to someone else. Believing ourselves to be immortal, invincible and in control, we took the credit for G-d given gifts of intelligence, strength and attractiveness. Alas, we are now paying the emotional and spiritual price of these attitudes. The blush of youth has left our cheeks, our speed and vigor have diminished and we are more disillusioned than we ever dreamed we would be. So many people spend large sums of money on cosmetics, tonics and therapies of all sorts in the hope of restoring strength, loveliness and enthusiasm. Yet, for the most part, we are disappointed with the results.

We desperately need a "makeover" in this area, but how do we go about getting one - and how much will it cost? There must be a better way, we groan, as we are dragged kicking and screaming into our "twilight" years.

The essential "ingredient" for this "makeover" is to recognize that the Creator is the source of all energies and abilities.

When we begin to absorb this idea into our pores and circulate it in our systems and understand it intellectually and emotionally, then a heretofore dormant quality within us will begin to awaken. That quality is humility.

The acquisition of humility is not a matter of a brief exercise or meditation. It requires our wholehearted commitment and a determined plan of action. We must constantly examine and test our reactions to make sure that our "Thank you to G-d" is real and not rote because taking credit for one's endeavors can become a lifelong habit. Now, as we perceive ourselves losing our position and place in the world, if we are not careful, we may tend to clasp even more tightly to those moments of accomplishment and achievement. We may find ourselves, once again, taking credit for our achievements in a last ditch effort to win back some of our former honor and glory.

We must not do this. It is crucial that we recognize that it is this very need to take credit for our accomplishments that has created our downfall and not the aging process. And, ironically, it is often our "failures" and not our accomplishments that will pave the way to our success. Egos do not necessarily deflate by themselves. When a person, whose wealth has made him haughty, experiences financial disaster, his ego is deflated. Whether it is unsightly wrinkles or the forced retirement of a workaholic, when the "sun" sets and the "day" wanes, its decline helps us to achieve the feeling of humility that allows us to recognize the temporalness of life and allows us to focus upon the true and eternal values.

So now let us look in the mirror again, however this time, let us learn to appreciate the signs of aging as an indicator, notifying us that the time is measured. Through graciously accepting the portion the Creator has given us and using our experiences to nurture and teach, our faces will begin to shine with an inner expression of beauty. When we no longer feel embarrassed about aging, then we can communicate, without awkwardness or fear, the crucial message that time is short and the work is long and acts of kindness are potentially many. We can then teach our younger counterparts that we must use the daylight hours as golden opportunities to choose to do the Creator's Will.

When we reach this higher consciousness, we are instantly transformed. We will no longer see ourselves as old and useless, but as servants of the Creator who have a special message to deliver that is uniquely crafted from the very lessons we learned during our lives. When we wholeheartedly accept our new roles as messengers, we will experience a renewed sense of purpose even greater than the purpose we felt when we were raising our children or building our businesses.



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Relating this message to the persons who will most need to hear it and benefit from it, provides spiritual nourishment for us that is kosher and that allows us to thrive and grow.

If we live with this attitude we will age like fine wine - becoming more valuable with each passing year. We will mature. We will never cease to educate. We will become a living embodiment of the Creator's message. Torah principles will displace the secular view of aging and we will become shining beacons transforming what might have been a dark and overcast "twilight" into the splendor of a "sunset". We will become enlightened beings who are truly happy with our portion [sameach b'chelko]. Our praise of the Creator in acknowledgment of His perfect creation will bring a personal, deep inner peace and tranquility during our visit through the "evening hours" of life and the next generation will then be able to learn this important lesson from us. If we strive to achieve this positive attitude during our "sunset" years, thereby acknowledging the Will of the Creator as perfect, then the true light of day will eternally shine for us in the world of truth - (haolam shekulo tov) the world that is completely good.

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