

yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 29 Jun 2009 19:47

(any questions , insights & suggestions about this thread,feel free to email me at taryaga@gmail.com)

There are many reasons we need to be where we are and who we are,most are unknown.Why do we even have to be in a situation or have in our soul so much darkness and a pull toward self-destructing negative behaviors?

I saw once an amazing thought in a sefer.Moshe Rabeinu came from a union that after the Torah was given would have deemed him a mamzer(parents being an aunt & nephew).He could not boast of his lineage.This is one reason that let him be the greatest Anov that ever lived.

We who have to deal with the stuff that's in us that we would rather not have in the first place-this pain and shame over the course of time -makes us realize that even when we b'ezras Hashem pull out of the addictions-we will never look at another Yid that is struggling with this in a negative way

We catch a Yid looking where he shouldn't be looking and our hearts are full of compassion.We will daven for him,treat him with respect,gently try to get him out of it.We would never disgrace him-not even in our hearts-because we were there.We know what it's like.In our eyes he is a potential tzaddik.

This is surely one reason Hashem gave us this urge towards baseness with all it's shades of ugliness.Yes you are special-like every Yid is-but never ever judge harshly My son or daughter that is struggling-because I love him or her - he or she is part of Klall Yisroel.Just as indispensable as you are.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 28 Jun 2020 12:57

The pure righteous do not complain of the dark, but increase the light; they do not complain of evil, but increase justice; they do not complain of heresy, but increase faith; they do not complain of ignorance, but increase wisdom.

Abraham Isaac Kook

— *Arpilei Tohar* (1914), p. 2.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 05 Jul 2020 22:00

profound words from rav shlomo carelbach

If you love someone, never ignore him. When you love someone, it means you exist.

Ignoring someone means, "In my book you don't exist." If you love someone but in their book you don't exist, that really hurts.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 06 Jul 2020 23:35

some of you may have been told by your mother or father " I never wanted you" or " you were a mistake"

or you may sense that correctly or incorrectly this from your parents even if it wasn't told to you.

as painful as this may be-what your parents are saying to you is irrelevant

because God who is infinitely wiser than both your parents is telling you unequivocally "you are NOT a mistake. I brought you into this world , I love you, I need you here"

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 10 Jul 2020 10:00

"Finish each day and be done with it. You have done what you could. Some blunders and absurdities no doubt crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day. You shall begin it serenely and with too high a spirit to be encumbered with your old nonsense."

? Ralph Waldo Emerson

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by lhavestrength - 13 Jul 2020 03:52

[yechidah wrote on 10 Jul 2020 10:00:](#)

"Finish each day and be done with it. You have done what you could. Some blunders and absurdities no doubt crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day. You shall begin it serenely and with too high a spirit to be encumbered with your old nonsense."

? Ralph Waldo Emerson

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 17 Jul 2020 22:39

“You must live in the present, launch yourself on every wave, find your eternity in each moment. Fools stand on their island of opportunities and look toward another land. There is no other land; there is no other life but this.”

? Henry David Thoreau

(the above quote is true even as we believe in the world to come. because when he says "there is no other life but this" it means that Hashem gives us the gift of the present moment to the make the most of it)

“Our life is frittered away by detail. Simplify, simplify.”

? Henry David Thoreau, [Walden and Other Writings](#)

(there is a wealth of wisdom & practical application of this one line that can fill many books of wisdom. the truth this , in life, in marriage, in the way you learn Torah, is a universal & profound one.)

“As if you could kill time without injuring eternity.”

? Henry David Thoreau, [Walden](#)

(value time as the greatest gift . even resting, sleeping & taking a needed vacation, doing this for the right reasons, is also using your time wisely)

“Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads.”

? Henry David Thoreau, [Walden](#)

(you can make this world a Godly place)

“If we will be quiet and ready enough, we shall find compensation in every disappointment.”

? Henry David Thoreau, [I to Myself: An Annotated Selection from the Journal of Henry D. Thoreau](#)

(setbacks, as disappointing as they may be, have great value & lessons , have buried treasures within them to be discovered)

“A man is rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone.”

? Henry David Thoreau, [Walden](#)

(paradoxically, when you desire less, you actually have more).

“An early-morning walk is a blessing for the whole day.”

? Henry David Thoreau

(in our instant gratification & high tech world, we often overlook the great simple pleasures of life)

“I do believe in simplicity. It is astonishing as well as sad, how many trivial affairs even the wisest thinks he must attend to in a day; how singular an affair he thinks he must omit. When the mathematician would solve a difficult problem, he first frees the equation of all incumbrances, and reduces it to its simplest terms. So simplify the problem of life, distinguish the necessary and the real. Probe the earth to see where your main roots run.”

? Henry David Thoreau

(another powerful quote on the gift of simplicity)

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 24 Jul 2020 09:58

“It is not worth the while to let our imperfections disturb us always.”

? Henry David Thoreau

(working on flaws are very important but 24/7 focus on flaws is counterproductive & will hold back growth. a healthy balance need to be maintained)

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 31 Jul 2020 21:42

“The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.”

? Henry David Thoreau, [Walden](#)

(the above is one of his most well-known quotes & it very relevant today as we often get preoccupied & distressed about things that seem important but actually aren't)

“The most I can do for my friend is simply to be his friend.”

? Henry David Thoreau

(such as just being there for him & her & to listen with empathy)

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by Ihavestrength - 31 Jul 2020 22:02

[yechidah wrote on 31 Jul 2020 21:42:](#)

“The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.”

? Henry David Thoreau, [Walden](#)

(the above is one of his most well-known quotes & it very relevant today as we often get preoccupied & distressed about things that seem important but actually aren't)

Thanks for sharing!

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 12 Aug 2020 12:29

“It is not enough to be industrious; so are the ants. What are you industrious about?”

? Henry David Thoreau, [Letters to Various Persons](#)

(every middah-can be directed wisely. & we need to both pray as well as work hard to use each middah properly, the industrious aspects of ants is praised by Solomon in Mishlei & we are encouraged very much to learn from them. but at the same time we need to be diligent & industrious about the right things & in healthy balance. so while laziness is not healthy-neither is being a workaholic. A healthy balance is to be maintained)

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 13 Aug 2020 15:17

excellent article from rehovot.blogspot.com [Solutions for "scattered soul" syndrome \(Derashah, Rosh HaShanah 5772\)](#) I'm speaking at a minyan on the second day of Rosh HaShanah, before shofar; here's what I plan to say. Critiques very welcome. My derashah owes a lot to Dr. David Pelcovitz of Yeshiva University, and the comments he offered on the below-cited Yerushalmi and Chovos haLevavos during a visit to our Beit Midrash. Sources are listed at the end.

"When I stand in Shemoneh Esreih, I count birds," said one.

"I count the bricks in the wall!" said another

"I'm grateful for my head, because when I arrive at Modim it bows on its own", even if I'm not thinking about the words! said a third.

No, these weren't answers to a shul poll – all of these lines came from amoraim, sages of the gemara, in a Yerushalmi.

Some chachamim have offered alternative, less indicting ways to read this gemara, but as Tosafos said, the bottom line is that even our greatest sages had trouble concentrating.

Personally, I don't count birds or bricks. I count my kollel families and their needs. I think about my kids –not necessarily in a davening-for-their-welfare way. Shiurim. Problems. Disagreements. Jobs. And so on.

The gemara says ??? ??? ????? ??? ???, no one escapes distraction during davening, every single day. The distraction may start with something worthy, like Torah, but before you know it we're in the land of birds and bricks.

This problem of distraction has a source, named by Rabbeinu Bahya ibn Paquda in Chovos

haLevavos 950 years ago. It's ?????? (pizur hanefesh), scattering of the soul. Rabbeinu Bahya quoted an anonymous elder's daily prayer, "????? ?????? ?????? ?????," Gd save me from a scattered soul.

We scatter our souls when we embed pieces of ourselves in a million worthy causes, in work and spouses and colleagues and learning and kids and parents and cousins and friends and vacations and organizations and sports and hobbies and investments - this is ?????? ?????. Many of these are important – but collectively, they leave us drained and empty.

Henry David Thoreau saw the problem in the 19th century; his solution, as he wrote to Emerson, was, "Simplify, simplify, simplify!" [To which Emerson replied, "I think one 'simplify' would have sufficed."]

Think of Harry Potter and Lord Voldemort's horcruxes, pieces of his soul embedded in objects that had some significance to him, to the point that he drained his humanity.

Contrary to the counsel of many psychologists, today's multi-tasking didn't invent the problem; it's just made our ?????? ????? worse, and we need a way out.

When I first thought about speaking about this issue on Rosh haShanah, I worried it was too pedestrian compared to more momentous themes like the Day of Judgment, Israel and the UN, and the Leafs' playoff chances. But I believe this is up there with the most important of our concerns, because ?????? ????? is not a narrow issue; ?????? ????? drags down every aspect of our lives.

It kills relationships. Do you know that voice someone gets when he's talking to you but he's also scrolling through his email? The longer-than-expected pauses, the repeating of the last words you said while his conscious mind catches up with his subconscious? It's not just when we're checking email, either; we hold too many goals in our minds.

More - ?????? ????? means we have trouble sticking with projects and fulfilling commitments.

And ?????? fuels stress levels, with pressure from deadlines and concerns in too many diverse areas.

????? invades and undermines our spiritual, social and personal existence; it demands a voice on Rosh haShanah, when we chart our path for the year.

Fortunately, Rosh haShanah also offers antidotes for ?????: By reviewing three different roles of the shofar, we can learn three ways to treat our distraction.

First: The historical shofar, with its overpowering blast. The shofar of Jewish history is an overwhelming, ever-intensifying, limitless assault which brooks no disruption. From the start of our Jewish national existence at Sinai, to the end of history with the arrival of Mashiach, the shofar's voice resounds, a ??? ?????? ?? ??? ?????? This historical shofar crushes outside noise – specifically, the distractions and ambitions that drain our focus.

This means emulating Thoreau by simplifying our lives:

- Figuring out which involvements have become more of a drain than they are worth, and which ones we need to cut even though they are very worthy.
- Turning off our phones and external distractions whenever we need to focus.
- And here's an experiment which may sound a little odd, but it has worked for me: During davening on a weekday, or during telephone calls, or while learning with a chavrusa, keep a piece of paper and pencil nearby. As extraneous topics come to mind, jot them down - not during Shemoneh Esreih, of course. This will tell us what is occupying our minds. This will be the list of our horcruxes, the domains which hold hostage fragments of our souls, and it should give us some idea of what we need to drown out with our historical shofar.

Simplifying our lives is instrumental in reclaiming them.

And second: The halachic shofar, with its status as a mitzvas aseh, an action performed to fulfill the expectations of our Divine Creator. A mitzvah demands ?????, it demands focus. The sages of the mishnah offered us simple advice for developing that focus: Stop and think before the mitzvah. Ask: "What am I about to do?"

About fifteen years ago, I had the opportunity to hear lectures by Rabbi Maurice Lamm – author of "The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning" – on visiting the sick and grieving. For me, his greatest recommendation was actually the same advice from that mishnah: Before you enter the hospital room, before you enter the shivah house, stop and ask, "What am I going to say?"

Think of the ???? ???? ?????? or ??? ????? that some of us say before mitzvos or before berachos - it's that concept, expanded.

This is a step toward establishing dominance over our lives: Before any activity, the halachic shofar asks, "What am I about to do? What is my kavvanah?"

And third: The prophetic shofar, invoked by Hosheia and Amos and Yoel and other neviim, is a siren.

- As the Rambam put it, ????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????????, the shofar cries, "Wake up!"
- The Meiri added, "??? ????? ??? ????? ??? ????? ????????? ????? ?????? ??? ???," "Anyone who hears the sound of the shofar is moved to contemplation, for the shofar's blast is never without purpose."

The prophetic shofar is an alarm, calling us to cut our distractions and to concentrate before we act. But this prophetic shofar is insufficient; it's just one alarm clock, once a year, and thinking about distractions once a year will achieve nothing. If we are to eliminate our life-eroding distractions and restore our selves to ourselves, we will need such shofar reminders all through the year:

- A note for a particular day in our on-line calendar, or in our pocket calendar for those who still use such things.
- A message we write to ourselves in our siddur, "Are you still focussed?" or "This part is important." I write all over my siddur.

The prophetic shofar shows that reminders can accomplish a great deal in gaining our attention.

Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch noted that Tehillim 81 links the Shofar of Rosh haShanah with the harp used in the Beit haMikdash on Succos. Rav Hirsch explained, "Only the shofar leads to the harp."

Succos is ??? ?????, the time of our great joy and satisfaction – and in order to achieve those heights of rejoicing, we need to first use the Shofar to eliminate our ?????, the dispersion of focus that keeps us from fulfilling our spiritual and personal potential.

- To channel the historic shofar by eliminating the distractions which claim pieces of our souls.
- To channel the halachic shofar by thinking and planning before we act.
- To channel the prophetic shofar by sounding the alarm regularly, all year.

If we want to keep our minds from the birds and the bricks, if we want to bow for Modim because we feel humility and not because our heads are on springs, if we want to avoid the stress and disconnection of fragmented lives, if we want to earn a ????? ?????, let's learn from the shofar now, and so merit the joy of the harp in the future.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by Ihavestrength - 16 Aug 2020 03:55

Excellent, excellent, excellent.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 23 Aug 2020 14:02

"Men have become the tools of their tools."

? Henry David Thoreau

(this one is a favorite of mine & how powerfully true it is in our generation!! Thoreau was talking about the innovations of his time & how it can cause a person to become a slave to them. How much more so today when the I-phone or twitter or face book or Netflix controls us & we don't control them & indeed we have become a tool or the tools we invented!!)

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 30 Aug 2020 10:27

"You must live in the present, launch yourself on every wave, find your eternity in each moment."

? Henry David Thoreau

(working on this promotes menuchas hanefesh-peace of mind-& to utilize time in a healthy ways that is aligned with your purpose & mission in life)

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 04 Sep 2020 13:28

"To be awake is to be alive. I have never yet met a man who was quite awake."

? Henry David Thoreau

(to live fully every present moment. to bring out ones potential, her or she needs to be fully "awake" & aware of how to bring this potential into actuality)

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