yechida's reflections
Posted by yechidah - 29 Jun 2009 19:47

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(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 indispensible as you are.

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Re: yechida's reflections
Posted by yechidah - 30 Nov 2020 15:02

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some meforshim comment (see orach chaim) that because Rachel's bed was in Yaakov's tent, & she was his main wife (in regard to intimacy as well) -_ this --was a reason that could have caused a **decrease** in both desire & love -because it is a known fact that familiarity & constant contact could diminish love & the excitement of it-so the possuk tells us that despite the constant connection-the love did not diminish-it remained strong & fresh

this is the goal & also challenge in marriage-every often-because of familiarity-we tend to take our spouses for granted -both in a general sense but also in regards to intimacy-because something constant is less novel & thus the excitement & freshness can diminish.

& therefore it is important to refocus & realign out thoughts & feelings & realize that we do have the ability to work towards keeping our marriages fresh & exciting despite the familiarity & not take anything for granted.-not the intimacy & not any of the thousands of gifts that are there because of your spouse that Hashem sent to you-because they are all gifts.

we will explain in later posts BH how even the challenges are gifts-but sometimes that isn't easy to internalize (although we have to try to do that as well)

but the clear cut open gifts-They ARE easy to internalize -even if they are constant & familiar-& that is something we can all work on...

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Re: yechida's reflections
Posted by yechidah - 30 Nov 2020 15:06

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“Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, today is a gift of God, which is why we call it the present.”

? Bill Keane

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Re: yechida's reflections
Posted by yechidah - 10 Dec 2020 17:08

In a sense, this week's parsha is a most difficult one, because the brothers were all tzaddikim & yet there was a great rift & separation that created a lot of pain & suffering for Yosef, for Yaakov & ultimately for all the brothers as well. .There are many meforshim that try to explain the dispute & the inner workings of Hashem's deep plan. It was certainly meant to be. but at the same time, the estrangement between Yosef & his brothers **was not an intrinsically positive thing according to all accounts**. The Ten Holy Martyrs in the Tannaic period was to atone for Yosef's Sale.

It is very difficult thing to understand the deep divisions & estrangements that take place between even real tzaddikim. & I will not attempt to do so here (though I have some theories) .But it is clearly part of Hashem's plan, because these rifts have taken place all through the generations. It is clear from history, that we could very well sustain the effects of the essence of arguments among tzaddikim themselves, b**ut when the multitude of followers get embroiled in those controversies, it leads to terrible things-breaking up of families, chillul Hashem & many being turned off from Torah life altogether.**

But even as these complex rifts take place-t**he multitude of us need to separate ourselves from this & not involve ourselves in such disputes-because it leads to deep rifts, sinas chinam, & needless suffering.** One can & should follow the ideology of whichever tzaddik that he is connected to-**but to avoid at all cost anything that creates more rifts & anger-here is where it is clear that a strong shemirah is required.**

May we see all rifts be healed-including those between true tzaddikim.

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Re: yechida's reflections
Posted by yechidah - 14 Dec 2020 15:29

“**When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves.”**

? Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning

This is a very important point in life. The change need not be a drastic action -but rather baby steps of building your character from within.

prayer as well is a very powerful tool-to connect with Hashem to help you deal with any situation in a healthy way-even those situations that you cannot actively do much to change

though externally-we may not be able to correct the situation we are in-but internally-in our hearts & minds-we can.

we can reframe internally out perspective on the situation & develop a certain calm & confidence-even as the tests are still there.

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Re: yechida's reflections
Posted by yechidah - 28 Dec 2020 17:37

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great poem on the power of speech

Another lesson

by Chanti Niven

Darkness only takes over

in the absence of the light

And evil manifests

when people start to fight

Fear is a weapon

that takes captive the mind

but if we walk in love

then peace is what we'll find.

The power is in our tongues

and in what we choose to say

Every careless word

may exact its pay

Those times I've been impulsive

and spoken out of turn

have always caused regret

and in this I've had to learn.

Just as a tiny stone

causes ripples that then spread

So has the impact

of all those careless things I've said.

Though my intent was always good

and I never meant to cause folk harm

Once I'd caused a stir

it was hard to restore the calm

We can't undo the past

and what is done is done

but if we learn our lessons

then a victory is won

The past is left behind

as we face the rising morn

with the wisdom we acquire

in a sense we are reborn

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Re: yechida's reflections
Posted by yechidah - 13 Jan 2021 14:17

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A**ish Article on Jealousy**

very powerful crucial words here. please read again & again until its internalized.

one of those quotes is right below-please remember this...

Y**ou shall not covet" is another way of saying "love yourself, because G?d has created you in such a way that you are perfect for your job**

Dear Rachel,

I'm fourteen-years-old and I am having an issue I hope you can help with. I'm happy most of the time, I like my group of friends, and I'm excited that we're going to be starting high school this fall.

The problem is - I can't help being envious of my younger sister, because she is prettier than me. I love her, but I can't help feeling jealous towards her sometimes, even though I know it's stupid and I feel angry with myself for this. I just don't know how to stop feeling this way.

Jealous Sister

Dear Jealous Sister,

First off, the fact that you're mature enough to understand that it is inappropriate to feel this way, and the fact that you are seeking help to deal with these feelings, are signs that you are a very together young lady - and so, you're already ahead of the game.

R**ecognize your positive qualities** The Torah tells us to "Love your fellow *as yourself*." The implication here is that you love yourself first, and then you love your fellow as you love yourself. This teaches us a vitally important lesson. We must love ourselves—have proper self-esteem and self-appreciation—in order to properly love another. **Before you can look at your sister without jealousy, you need to look at yourself more honestly. Recognize your positive qualities: your strengths; your physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual attributes.** Sure, it's nice to be pretty - but there are a lot of things that are way more important: to be caring, mature, sensitive, compassion, intelligent, loyal. By asking your question you have already demonstrated that you possess these vitally important qualities.

You should also know- as the old saying goes, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. You and your sister, like any two human beings, each have your own unique—and uniquely attractive—face. Still, that isn't the main quality that either of you has.

Back to the topic of loving ourselves and our fellows: why should we love ourselves?

Our rabbis have equated the commandment "Love your fellow as yourself" to the Tenth Commandment - "You shall not covet." What exactly is the connection between these two? On the surface, we can say that if we truly love someone we will be happy for them, and we will not be jealous of what they have.

But the connection goes much deeper. Why, in fact, is it wrong to be envious of someone's looks, talents, abilities, possessions, anything?

T**o understand the answer to that, we first need to understand - truly and deeply know - that G?d created each and every one of us for a unique purpose in this world. This is the root and the reason for our self-love. If G?d created us, then we are important. And if you could fulfill my mission in life, then one of us is unnecessary – but nothing that G?d creates is unnecessary.**

Nothing that G?d creates is unnecessary S**ince each person has his own, individual, one-of-a-kind mission in life, it stands to reason that each person is sent down here with the unique combination of talents and capabilities that he or she needs to fulfill that mission**. If you have artistic ability and I don't, that means that artistic ability is somehow necessary for you in order to do accomplish what you need to on this earth; for me, artistic ability is totally extraneous - sort of like a tail, or an extra ear. There are two sides to the coin- valuing my own uniqueness means both loving me with all my qualities, and loving the fact that those around me possess the qualities they possess.

"Y**ou shall not covet" is another way of saying "love yourself, because G?d has created you in such a way that you are perfect for your job."** Once we learn this lesson, the Torah

further tells us "Love your neighbor as yourself." Now that you understand your own uniqueness, and that you are vital in G?d's infinite plan for the world - understand that your fellow is also vital in the grand scheme of things, and is also endowed with the exact measure of physical, intellectual, and emotional attributes that he requires for his job.

I hope this has been helpful. Please feel free to contact me if you want to discuss this any further.

Rachel

"Dear Rachel" is a bi-weekly column that is answered by a rotating group of experts. This question was answered by Chaya Sara Silberberg.

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Re: yechida's reflections
Posted by yechidah - 08 Feb 2021 13:53

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Vilna Gaon on Tikkun Hamiddos

His name was Eliyahu. By early adulthood he had become known as ‘the Hasid’. Sometime later he ?was called ‘the Gaon, the Hasid, Rabbenu Eliyahu’. Future generations referred to him as the ‘Gra’ ??(rhymes with raw), an acronym that stands for ‘Gaon Rav Eliyahu’. Some call him the Gaon of Vilna. ?But he is usually referred to by the simple word ‘Gaon’. Judaism has had many more than its ?proper share of gaonim (geniuses). There have literally been thousands. But there is only one ?person who is called the ‘Gaon’. ?

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The Gaon was born in 1720 in the city of Vilna to a family that was poor but steeped in rabbinic ?tradition. The stories about his diligence in Torah study from an early age almost beg skepticism. ?They are so ridiculous that one immediately thinks they are an exaggeration. The only problem is ?that these aren’t miracle stories. They are told by so many first hand observers that one begins to ?get the feeling that they actually happened. At the age of three he had mastered the Bible. At the ?age of seven he was giving lectures on deep topics of Talmudic learning to accomplished scholars. ?By eight he was immersed in Kabbala. By ten, even the greatest scholars considered him their ?equal. ?

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Lithuania was a rabbinic scholars’ paradise. Around the time of the Gaon, Lithuania, and the rest of ?the vast region of Eastern Europe that Ashkenazi Jews lived in was entering into a

century or so of ?Talmudic, halachic, and mystical intensification that may have never been experienced in all of ?Jewish history. There was plenty of controversy – with Hasidim, with the Haskalah, with gentiles – ?but the scholarship was extraordinary. There were hundreds of major scholars found all over ?Eastern Europe writing on every imaginable nuance of Judaism. Almost every one of them looked ?to Vilna, and the Gaon, for the answers to the really tough questions. ?

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He wrote on almost all existing works of Judaism. But he wrote briefly, as if he either expected his ?reader to get it without much explanation, or as if he was only revealing what he wanted to. **His ?commentary to Mishle (Proverbs), is profound and far-reaching.** His explanation of a verse of the ?book (4:13) is particularly illuminating on his view of the purpose of life. The verse states: 'Be ?strong in Mussar (ethical instruction) and do not slacken, guard it – for it is your life'. **The Gaon ?found in this rather typical verse a jewel: 'For it is your life – because a person lives in order to ?break whatever trait he hasn't broken up to now, therefore he needs to perpetually strengthen ?himself, because if he doesn't – why is he alive?' ?**

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Analysis ?

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The first thing we notice about this little comment is that the Gaon did not say the purpose of life is ?to study Torah. This is extremely surprising in light of the fact that he studied virtually every single ?waking moment of his entire life. And he studied hard. He wasn't just memorizing verses or fooling ?around with numerical equivalents of words. He wouldn't eat for a few days when he was working ?on a tough question. He wrote repeatedly on the value of Torah study – its obligation and its ?benefits both in this world and the next. But when given an opportunity to reveal the meaning of ?life he didn't push Torah study. Why not? ?

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The answer is that Torah study is a means to an end. It is a mitzvah, perhaps the most important ?mitzvah, but not the purpose of life. That elite title he reserved for one thing and one thing only, ?for Mussar - the perfection of character traits and inner work on the personality. So what is Mussar ?doing in the yeshiva section? The answer is that this is really where it belongs, in the Beit Midrash ??(study hall) with all the Talmud and Halacha. **All that stuff is challenging and illuminating and highly ?intellectual, but it's nothing without tikkun hamiddot. ?**

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Tikkun hamiddot – fixing the traits of the personality – is the Holy Grail of Talmud study. **It is the ?ultimate end goal of the Talmud student, though for most not only is it never attained, but never ?even seriously attempted**. It can be amazingly difficult to change even a single aspect of the ?personality. Alterations of the personality do happen, that much is obvious, but

they usually occur ?through natural ‘life processes’ such as aging, experience, or situational changes. Self-induced ?changes are an entirely different matter. This is the process of tikkun hamiddot. ?

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Why is it so tough to do this? Nobody really knows the answer, though plenty of people have ?made guesses. The usual answer is that it has something to do with the subconscious which is so ?deeply embedded in the mind that we have almost no access to it. The Mussar people, by and ?large, agree with this approach. They concentrated their efforts on ways of dealing with this ?obstacle – tricks, inspirational pep talks, threats, meditation. The Gaon, while predating the Mussar ?movement by a few generations, probably would have agreed with much that they had to say. The ?verse quoted here even contains the word ‘Mussar’. But he approached the issue from a different ?angle. ?

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F**or the Gaon, tikkun hamiddot was not merely an extremely difficult lifelong task. It was life itself.** ?This is the reason we were given life to begin with. His focus is not on technique but on essence. ?The task of changing the personality, of each person molding his or her self into something better ?than it was previously, is the purpose of our being created. How is one to accomplish this? The key ?word is ‘break’. ?

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To change the personality, to make oneself into something other than what one is currently, ?requires breakage. Something has to go - there is no way to become a different person and still ?hold on to those nasty habits. It’s a battle in there, no different than the battle that goes on when ?germs invade the body. The antibodies don’t negotiate with the germs and work something out. ?They kill, or else they will be killed themselves. The mind is no different. The negative traits, ?whatever they may be, have to be broken and defeated, or else they will take over. ?

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The Gaon was keenly aware of the complex nature of the mind. **He certainly did not consider ?tikkun hamiddot to be as easy as cleaning the house or fixing a broken gadget, though the ?comparison is not without merit.** The common element that all processes of tikkun share is that all ?require willpower. It simply won’t happen without the will. ‘Therefore he needs to perpetually ?strengthen himself’ – this is the constant application of the will in this battle. There are other tools ?we have at our disposal, but the matter hinges on the will. If there is will there is a battle, if not, ??‘why is he alive?’ ?

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What is this battle all about? It is about breaking those characteristics that we were born with, that ?are genuine forces within the mind, and subduing them to the power of the will. T**ake any one of ?those forces, anger for instance, and try to see what it does. It takes over the**

mind in situations ?that allow it to come out and distracts the mind from all else. It is almost as if the mind has a mind ?of its own. Breaking this force means overpowering the anger, both on the spot when it arises and ?beforehand so that it does not arise to begin with. It is no easy task to break the power of anger. It ?is so natural to us that we rarely see it as a force invading the mind and not the mind itself. The ?difficulty in trying to control anger gives an idea of the nature of this battle. ?

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It is easy to see that anger is a ‘foreign’ force. What is not so clear is the trait of arrogance. This is ?the ego itself at work, and it is not at all clear where the line should be drawn between the ego and ?the self. To modern psychologists they may be one and the same thing. But to one engaged in the ?battle of tikkun hamiddot the distinction must be made. The nature of life is to protect itself. But ?we also have a higher agenda to go with self-preservation - to understand why we are here to ?begin with. To do this we need feel the presence of God. But God has no place in a mind filled up ?with itself. Breaking the power of the ego may not be fun or pleasant, but it is essential for anyone ?who truly wants to live. ?

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These are two examples of middot that need reshaping and fixing in the lifelong process known as ?tikkun hamiddot. There are other middot that are positive which do not need to be broken down, ?but they do need to be broken in. They need to be strengthened and refined so that they can be ?used as the valuable tools that they are. Love and joy are examples of this. They are both part of ?human nature but we may not have learned to use them in a manner that is conducive to spiritual ?growth. This is what the Gaon meant that breaking the middot – either by breaking them down or ?by breaking them in – is the core task of a human being and the reason he or she was given such a ?complex mind, complete with a set of powerful forces that are so challenging to control. We and ?we alone, have the innate ability to perfect ourselves. ?

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Practical ?

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Most people don’t really want to go about this business of tikkun hamiddot. They have either ?settled on the old ‘this is the way I am and there’s nothing I can do about it’ concession, or they ?have figured that it is just too difficult a task and not worth the effort. This is a colossal obstacle ?that must be overcome. ?

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The first step is just doing it. Start small, with one little thing that you want to change. Make it an ?easy one that you stand a good chance of winning, like getting a little more exercise. Once you ?have realized that you can actually get somewhere, try something a little tougher, like changing ?eating habits. These are behavioral changes and not really changes in the personality, but they get ?you going in the right direction. When you are ready, try a real

middot change like not blowing up ?at people who annoy you. It may be difficult to sort out the necessary times from the unnecessary ?ones, but experience will guide you. Keep adding more and more to your repertoire. **Try a new ?one every week.** After a while it starts getting a little enjoyable. This is the wonderful and life-?giving process of spiritual growth. ?

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With time, you will want to get into your own mind and attack the problems at their source. This is ?more advanced inner work and it requires great patience and diligence. It may require a spiritual ?mentor. These are available to those who truly seek them. Some find that the process works best ?with a group of fellow seekers who want to use each other as sounding boards and inspirations. ?Will-boosters such as physically or mentally demanding habits can also be a great help. This is ?where a strong discipline such as Torah study comes in. There are plenty of books out there that ?specifically guide those who genuinely want to get somewhere in tikkun hamiddot. It's tough and ?it's challenging. For every success, there will be a failure. But as the verse in Proverbs wrote and ?the Gaon emphasized, 'It is your life'. ?

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Food for Thought ?

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Changing any aspect of the personality is enormously difficult. If it is so tough, and only a very small ?percentage of people even attempt it, let alone actually succeed in it, how could it be the purpose ?of life??

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Re: yechida's reflections
Posted by yechidah - 01 Apr 2021 18:36

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Friendship tips

Here are 10 tips on how to make and keep good friendships.

Be friendly

There is a secret to friendship: try to like, rather than try to be liked. Try to be liked, and you'll be a 'try-hard' who misses it. Genuinely like others, and give friendship, and it will all come back to you in time. Friendship is boomerang shaped. Fire it at people, and it usually comes straight back at you.

Remember names

People love it when you use their name. It says that you're interested in them and it's a great way to help build a friendship.

Listen

Listen. Not just for a gap in the conversation where you can say your bit, but really listen. Ask questions that show that you're interested. Listen with your eyes. And don't fall asleep.

Stick to the bottom line

Be honest and tell the truth in your friendships. Dishonesty causes unnecessary problems. Sooner or later it always catches up on you and can break friendships down.

Say a good word

Put-downs and nick-names can be funny, but they cut straight to the ego, and the ego has no sense of humour. Instead, pass around a few compliments. People sometimes don't know how to handle them (they probably don't get many) but no-one ever minds getting a genuine compliment. Love is an action not a feeling.

"I can live three months on one good compliment." – Mark Twain.

Keep secrets

When your friends tell you their secrets it means that they trust you, respect you and think highly of the friendship. Be privileged enough to keep secrets. The only time you wouldn't keep a secret is if it involved harm to yourself or another person. The best thing to do is go and tell an adult, even better take your friend with you. Check out our SOS page for help!

Remember special times

Birthdays, Anniversaries, Mothers or Fathers day, if it's a special day take time out to celebrate it. If it's your friend's birthday maybe you could pitch in and buy your friend lunch or even better get them a birthday cake.

Respect space

Nothing kills a friendship faster than suffocation. Give your friends some space. People hate to feel manipulated, boxed in or 'owned'. Especially beware of showing offence if your friend wants to spend time with others or on their own. Can you be too friendly? Maybe – you can scare people off if they think that you are coming on too fast.

Be yourself

Everyone likes to make a good impression, but sometimes that means people pretend to be someone that they are not. Drop the mask, let people see the real you. In actual fact, masks repel people. You are far more likely to be well liked when people know that you are 'transparent' – open and honest.

The art of self disclosure

You've got layers. There are parts to you near the surface that you don't mind people seeing and knowing about – things like your taste in music, your choice of sports, hobbies etc. But you also have deeper levels – your fears, feelings, beliefs… deep personal stuff that you don't just share with anyone.

Part of being socially skilled is knowing how to manage your layers. Some people let people into their inner layers far too quickly. You meet someone on the bus and the next minute they're telling you about some deep personal problem. Whoah! Too fast. This sort of confidential stuff can be embarrassing to new friends and scare them off.

Some problems you go through you need to talk to someone you really trust like your mum or dad or a counsellor. Other things you go through you can just talk to a friend, or maybe you need to talk to a teacher.

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Re: yechida's reflections
Posted by yechidah - 15 Apr 2021 14:43

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Here are some quotes about friendship

(t**his i think became an uncle moshe song but here is the original quote)**

"Don't walk in front of me… I may not follow

Don't walk behind me… I may not lead

Walk beside me… just be my friend"

? Albert Camus

(a true friend knows our flaws deeply & accepts us anyway. that doesn't mean a friend cant give constructive criticism-but its done with an acceptance & love)

"A friend is someone who knows all about you and still loves you."

? Elbert Hubbard

(This I should really put in the marriage section. Best marriages is when

a husband & wife commit to try to be best friend to each other)

“It is not a lack of love, but a lack of friendship that makes unhappy marriages.”

? Friedrich Nietzsche

(the reverse of the quote below is also true. having a true friend can

make even unpleasant places you may be in become calm & soothing & a lot kinder)

“Life is an awful, ugly place to not have a best friend.”

? Sarah Dessen, Someone Like You

(from one of my favorite children's books)

“Why did you do all this for me?' he asked. 'I don't deserve it. I've never done anything for you.' 'You have been my friend,' replied Charlotte. 'That in itself is a tremendous thing.”

? E.B. White, Charlotte's Web

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Re: yechida's reflections
Posted by yechidah - 04 May 2021 20:04

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Creation is God's unfinished symphony and He has entrusted its completion to us (Jonathan Sachs)

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Re: yechida's reflections
Posted by Shaul5781 - 05 May 2021 21:51

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I wanted to see inappropriate things, but I discovered the beautiful things written in your thread! Thank you, keep posting more often, we want to hear more!

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Re: yechida's reflections
Posted by yechidah - 04 Jun 2021 15:59

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“It's not that we fear the place of darkness, but that we don't think we are worth the effort to find the place of light.”

? Hugh Prather, Notes to Myself: My Struggle to Become a Person

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Re: yechida's reflections
Posted by yechidah - 24 Aug 2021 13:33

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link to informative sholom bayis shiurim as well as shiurim on many important life topics

shalom-bayit.castos.com/

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Re: yechida's reflections
Posted by yechidah - 26 Sep 2021 13:44

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(taryaga@gmail.com)

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Bereishis

4 major insights in this weeks parshah

1. There is order in the universe;
2. Humanity is the pinnacle of creation;
3. We need both work and rest; and
4. There is great power in the creative word.

This applied not only to the world at larger-but each one of us as individuals

Our lives are nor random. We have a Divine purpose-each & every one of us.

This is true even in the most mundane aspects of life.

We are here to work-to accomplish.

But at the same time, we are to value rest, calm, Oneness with our Creator.

And we must now underestimate the great power of our words-we can literally build & we can literally destroy with our words

The ability for us to use words-is our greatest gift as well as responsibility

So we pray to Hashem to help us see His Hand in our lives, to balance healthy work & rest & to build ourselves & others with our words

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Re: yechida's reflections
Posted by yechidah - 03 Oct 2021 13:48

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Noach

(taryaga@gmail.com**)**

Remember the well known saying from the Bal Shem Tov on “Bo El Hateivah”-come into the words of Torah & Tefillah-that is our Teivah-that is our comfort & protection from the “Mabul” of the temptations of this world.

& then we bring light into the Teivah-Light into our words of Torah & Tefillah

Truth be told-we have an innate ability to put light into every word we say-even seemingly mundane words-& infuse them with warmth , with vitality & with an inner wisdom

We can use our words as light-to illuminate , inspire & encourage others

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