

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 ZemirosShabbos - 03 Dec 2010 15:41

wow, yechida, that is beautiful, thanks!

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 03 Dec 2010 15:47

Dear Dov,

I know you may not look at things this way, and I have a feeling that it is possible that you may feel that it would be **unhealthy** for you to look at things this way, but the fact for all of us here is that Dov, as a recovering addict, is a great gift to all of us here, way way beyond what would have been if you would have been as you may say "normal" or "healthy" all your life.

So as painful as the memory of those dark years are to you, it was a great gift to all of us here; and if it wouldn't have been for all those dark times, many of us here would be very lost.

it was all a very painful training to a wonderful mission in life that perhaps you would have preferred not to have chosen. It pains me very much when you call yourself "sick" from time to time. But the truth is that we have all gained a great great deal from this "sickness" of yours, and your open honesty about it, that has helped many of us in many ways, and for that I thank you as we all do, because we are healthier because of it.

and this is why we have great appreciation towards your wife for allowing herself to grow in life together with you, because this is a great gift to us. A healthy and happy Dov will lead us on a path of being our healthy and happy selves.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 03 Dec 2010 17:51

CARRYING A WOMAN

Two monks travelling together reached a river where they met a young woman. Wary of the current, she asked if they could carry her across. One of the monks hesitated, but the other monk picked her up onto his shoulders, transported her across the water, and put her down on the other side of the river. She thanked him and departed.

As the monks continued on their way, the monk who had not carried the woman was brooding and preoccupied. Unable to hold his silence, he at last spoke out. "Brother, our spiritual training teaches us to avoid any contact with women, but you picked that one up on your shoulders and carried her!"

"Brother," the second monk replied, "Yes, I carried her then and I set her down on the other side, while you are still carrying her after such a long time."

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 03 Dec 2010 18:10

True Love

Spiritual Story by Unknown

It was a busy morning, about 8:30, when an elderly gentleman in his 80's arrived to have stitches removed from his thumb. He said he was in a hurry as he had an appointment at 9:00 am.

I took his vital signs and had him take a seat, knowing it would be over an hour before someone would be able to see him. I saw him looking at his watch and decided, since I was not busy with another patient, I would evaluate his wound. On exam, it was well healed, so I talked to one of the doctors, got the needed supplies to remove his sutures and redress his wound.

While taking care of his wound, I asked him if he had another doctor's appointment this morning, as he was in such a hurry.

The gentleman told me no, that he needed to go to the nursing home to eat breakfast with his wife. I inquired as to her health.

He told me that she had been there for a while and that she was a victim of Alzheimer's Disease.

As we talked, I asked if she would be upset if he was a bit late.

He replied that she no longer knew who he was, that she had not recognized him in five years now.

I was surprised, and asked him, 'And you still go every morning, even though she doesn't know who you are?'

He smiled as he patted my hand and said,

"She doesn't know me, but I still know who she is."

(there is so much to write about this one, because there is alot of discussion about "Sholom Bayis" on the external aspects and situations, but alot of it is an internal mindset that needs to be developed within a person. For example, by the Shabbos table tonight, there can be that gift of love and respect internally that is there, no matter what the external manifestation is. So that even if your wife may be in a bad mood, tired, stressed etc., your internal perspective of her is very accepting and loving. This actually could be practiced, and lead to very positive results. And one is developing ones own character in the process, and in time one's wife will notice and

appreciate this positive change within you.)

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 06 Dec 2010 19:54

The Pearl

by Emile M Tubiana

The Pearl

They topple mountains, valleys they scour

Searching for the beloved pearl with power

They cross the seas and the rivers

Their voyage only dust delivers

They think they are big and smart

The value of the moment they discard

Happy those who in silence remain

From touching embers they refrain

The wise ones just stay home

To find the pearl in their inner dome

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 07 Dec 2010 20:21

Be Calm and Wise

by Emile M Tubiana

This is about unpleasant situations, which normally could have been avoided.

Conclusion: be wise and wait calmly, and let the water settle, so you can drink it clean.

Be Calm and Wise

Every human being can once in a while

Get upset or even angry without a smile

There are situations which create a malaise

Some have a long fuse and some get ablaze

When we deal with human frustration,

We have to take this into consideration

For misunderstandings, illness or unknown factors

We should not jump to conclusions as fast reactors

If a friend gets nervous and acts in a strange way

First wait, don't rush to act, rather think and pray

He could be tired or have a fatigue within

As a human being, he is like a fine violin.

Humans are affected by every word, written or said

In a positive or negative way, they will embrace or dread

Wait and try to understand what created his mood.

Any harsh reaction is quite unnecessary and rude.

This is about unpleasant situations, which normally could have been avoided.

Conclusion: be wise and wait calmly, and let the water settle, so you can drink it clean.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 08 Dec 2010 19:34

The Power of Love

by Emile M Tubiana

To understand the power of love that our ancestors knew about.

The Power of Love

We speak freely of the feeling we call love

Do we know what are the real love and its power?

Love is different from sex between women and men.

It is a sacred beauty that dwells within each of us,

It is our responsibility to discover it.

Beautiful things need to be pursued,

If we want to discover them.

In the case of flowers we can discover their beauty,

If we pull up the weeds that hide them from us.

Numerous treasures are buried in the earth,

We need to dig them up before we can enjoy them.

The same is the feeling and the power of love

Blessed are those who discover the power of Love.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 08 Dec 2010 19:59

beautiful!

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 10 Dec 2010 15:26

dvar torah on this weeks parshah

have a wonderful Shabbos!!

Weekly Parasha Insights by Rabbi Eli Mansour

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Description: Parashat Vayigash- Squeaky Clean

Parashat Vayigash tells the dramatic story of Yosef revealing his identity to his brothers, after which he sent them to Canaan and instructed them to bring their father, Yaakov, to Egypt. The entire region was ravaged by a severe drought and food shortage, and Egypt was the only country with grain. Yosef therefore invited his father and brothers to settle near him in Egypt, where he, as the country's vizier, could support them and their families.

One might wonder why Yosef decided to bring his father and brothers to Egypt, instead of just shipping food packages to them in Canaan. Yaakov was already an old man; it must not have been easy for him, at this stage of life, to move to a different country. And certainly Yosef had the stature and authority in Egypt to send food to his aged father in Canaan. Why, then, did he have Yaakov relocate in Egypt, instead of supporting him through shipments of food?

The Ramban (Rabbi Moshe Nahmanides, Spain, 1194-1270) explains that Yosef was concerned about how such an arrangement would appear to the Egyptian people. Yosef ran the country's economy during a time of crisis. If it became known that he was sending food shipments out of Egypt, all kinds of suspicions would be raised. They would think that he has "off shore accounts," or some kind of secret, black market business that he was running outside the country's borders. Yosef was not prepared to run this risk, and so he did not entertain the possibility of shipping food to his father and brothers. Instead, he had them move to Egypt.

Yosef's meticulous care to ensure a reputation for integrity did not go unnoticed. When Pharaoh heard that Yosef's brothers had come to Egypt, he commanded them to bring wagons and food supplies to their father so he would be able to travel comfortably to Egypt. The Ramban notes that Pharaoh did not simply offer this to Yosef's brothers; he issued a command, a royal edict. The reason, the Ramban explains, is that Pharaoh knew Yosef, and he knew that Yosef would not want to take advantage of his position to send goods to Yaakov. Pharaoh commanded the brothers to bring supplies to their father because he realized that otherwise, Yosef, in his impeccable honesty, would not allow his brothers to take anything.

When considering Yosef's handling of these situations, we cannot help but notice something remarkable. Yosef had single-handedly saved Egypt from economic ruin and its people from starvation. He was the one who foresaw the drought years and capably oversaw the grain storage program which not only saved the country, but also made it the wealthiest nation on earth, as the surrounding peoples came en masse to purchase provisions from Egypt. Wasn't he entitled to some modest "kickbacks"? Wouldn't it have been justified for him to "siphon" small amounts of food for his famine-stricken family in Canaan?

Yosef understood the importance of being not only honest and clean, but "squeaky clean," not

giving any impression of any kind of impropriety. This is especially important for Jews in important positions, who have risen to financial or political success. Famous people are always under the public's watchful eye, but Jews all the more so. A Jew must exercise extreme care in his financial dealings to not only be honest, but to always appear honest, not to do anything that could be mistaken for corruption.

Unfortunately, the media has been far too busy in recent years covering stories of high-profile scandals involving Jews, incidents that have tarnished our reputation and have desecrated God's Name in the world. From the moment Yosef rose to power in Egypt, he was involved in "Kiddush Hashem," in glorifying the Name of God through his honesty and integrity. This must be the model we follow while living among non-Jews. Every move must be carefully weighed to ensure that it is proper and that it appears proper. This way, we will bring honor to the Jewish people and to the Torah, rather than the opposite, Heaven forbid.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 10 Dec 2010 15:44

and from Reb Shlomo

We are all still under the holy impression of Chanukah, especially from the last day, ZOS CHANUKAH, the final candle that combined all eight together to such a lasting shine. This is very deeply connected to this weeks Parsha. Yosef hatzadik was despised for so long, then finally, suddenly, became second to the throne in Mitzrayim, something the brothers didn't even think of. As Dovid Hamelech says, Even Mo'asu Haboinim Hoysa leRosh Pinoh, the stone despised by the builders become the centrepiece of the building.

So will be with us Yidden, although we are now in exile, in a way Hashem is hiding from us. But, when Moshiach comes, let it be tonight, we will be the centrepiece of the world, of the holy temple, we will look back and see that Gevald! We were never alone for one split second, as all the borders will disappear, Let it be soon, Omein.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 10 Dec 2010 17:58

From Rav Kook

Vayigash: The Shepherd-Philosopher

The 4th-century scholar Rabbi Zeira once found his teacher Rav Yehuda in an unusually good mood. Realizing that it was a propitious time to ask whatever he wanted, Rabbi Zeira posed the following question:

"Why is it that the goats always stride in front of the herd, to be followed by the sheep?"

Perhaps the last thing we would expect Rabbi Zeira to ask about would be a mundane fact of animal husbandry. Rav Yehuda, however, wasn't fazed. Good-humoredly, he explained that this phenomenon reflects the order of Creation. "It is like the creation of the universe: first there was darkness (the goats, who are usually black), and afterwards light (the white sheep)" (Shabbat 77b).

A treasure-trove of wisdom had opened up for Rabbi Zeira — he had the opportunity to inquire into the deepest secrets of the universe! — and instead he quizzed his master about goats and sheep?

The Shepherd-Philosopher

In fact, Rabbi Zeira's query was not so out of line. The great leaders of the Jewish people in ancient times were shepherds. As Joseph's brothers informed Pharaoh, "Like our fathers before us, we are shepherds" (Gen. 47:5). Moses and David also worked in this profession. There must be a reason that our ancestors chose to herd goats and sheep.

Shepherding is a lifestyle that allows for reflection and inner contemplation. The labor is not intensive. Unlike farming, one does not need to immerse all of one's energies in physical matters. At the same time, the shepherd remains in constant contact with the real world. His reflections are sound, based on reality. He does not delve in artificial philosophies detached from life. For this reason, our forefathers, the great thinkers of their time, worked as shepherds.

Development of Thought

Rabbi Zeira's observation about flocks makes a connection between the external focus of the shepherd — his goats and sheep — with his internal focus — his thoughts and ideas.

Ideas first come to us as vague thoughts, obscured by the blurry mist of our imaginative powers. Hidden in the murky fog, however, lies a great treasure. In time, our thoughts are refined and clarified, and from the shrouded darkness comes forth light and wisdom.

The pattern of traveling animals corresponds to the development of thought in the shepherd's mind. The dark goats break out in front of the white sheep — a metaphor for the inspired but hazy notions that surge forth in our thoughts. These streaks of insight are followed by a flock of clarified ideas that have been examined by our faculties of reason. In this way we develop the concepts that form the basis for our intellectual and spiritual life.

The Need for Opacity

As Rav Yehuda pointed out, this order is inherent to the nature of the world. The light in the universe was created out of the darkness. This phenomenon is also true on a personal level. We cannot completely dismiss the illusory aspects of our minds, for they inspire us to originality of thought. Our imagination dominates our thought processes; it is only through its opaque insights that we can arrive at the path of enlightened wisdom.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 13 Dec 2010 19:28

Quotes from Coach John Wooden

a coach is someone who can give correction without causing resentment.

Ability is a poor man's wealth.

Adversity is the state in which man mostly easily becomes acquainted with himself, being especially free of admirers then.

Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are.

Be prepared and be honest.

Consider the rights of others before your own feelings, and the feelings of others before your own rights.

Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.

Don't let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.

Don't measure yourself by what you have accomplished, but by what you should have accomplished with your ability.

Failure is not fatal, but failure to change might be.

I'd rather have a lot of talent and a little experience than a lot of experience and a little talent.

If you don't have time to do it right, when will you have time to do it over?

If you're not making mistakes, then you're not doing anything. I'm positive that a doer makes mistakes.

It isn't what you do, but how you do it.

It's not so important who starts the game but who finishes it.

It's the little details that are vital. Little things make big things happen.

It's what you learn after you know it all that counts.

Material possessions, winning scores, and great reputations are meaningless in the eyes of the Lord, because He knows what we really are and that is all that matters.

Never mistake activity for achievement.

Success comes from knowing that you did your best to become the best that you are capable of becoming.

Success is never final, failure is never fatal. It's courage that counts.

Success is peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you did your best to become the best you are capable of becoming.

Talent is God given. Be humble. Fame is man-given. Be grateful. Conceit is self-given. Be careful.

The main ingredient of stardom is the rest of the team.

The worst thing about new books is that they keep us from reading the old ones.

There are many things that are essential to arriving at true peace of mind, and one of the most important is faith, which cannot be acquired without prayer.

Things turn out best for the people who make the best of the way things turn out.

What you are as a person is far more important than what you are as a basketball player.

Winning takes talent, to repeat takes character.

You can't let praise or criticism get to you. It's a weakness to get caught up in either one.

You can't live a perfect day without doing something for someone who will never be able to repay you.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 15 Dec 2010 14:44

Inspiring Story

The Kohen Pals

"The Forbidden City"

Rabbi Shimon Freundlich, the Rebbe's 'Shliach' (emissary) in Beijing China, and his wife run a successful and very busy Chabad House catering to the Jews that live, visit or come to do business there. His approach is so genuinely friendly that everyone that comes in contact with him or spends any time in his Chabad House is effected.

In 2007, while on a visit to New York, he was invited to be the personal guest of honor at the Tish (public meal) of the Rebbe of Satmar in the Williamsburg district of Brooklyn. Satmer is a very large, wealthy, and influential group of Chasidim that was for a long time at odds with Chabad for various reasons. Nevertheless, because of the many Satmar Chasidim that had benefited from the Beijing Chabad House, the invitation was extended.

Hundreds of Satmar Chasidim were present as their Rebbe whispered something to one of his assistants, whereupon the man pounded on the table and announced: "The Rebbe requests that 'the Lubavitcher' guest should speak."

Rabbi Freundlich began by thanking the chasidim and their Rebbe for inviting him. He discussed an interesting idea from the weekly Torah portion, as is traditional and then asked permission to tell a story, something that had recently occurred in his Chabad House. The Rebbe nodded yes and he began.

"A lot of people come to visit our Chabad House for Shabbat, as you know. Well, one Shabbat evening a few months ago, an older man, maybe about eighty years old, who didn't look very religious, appeared in the company of a younger man in his forties.

"The old fellow found a seat and just minutes after we began the prayers he put his face in his hands and began to cry. He kept it up for almost an hour; he would calm down for a few minutes, dry his eyes and blow his nose and then begin again.

"I quietly approached him and asked him if everything was all right. He told me not to worry. After the prayers he and his friend joined us all for the Shabbat evening meal.

"There were over fifty people there. I sat him next to me and after he calmed down he asked if he could speak. He wanted to explain the reason for his weeping.

I stood, and after only a few words I introduced him. He cleared his throat and began,

"My name is Sam Katz (pseudonym). The reason that I want to speak now is because I became very emotional this evening and I want to tell you about it. The last time I was in a Synagogue was over sixty years ago in Poland. I was a young man then when the Germans came and took the entire Jewish population of my city to Buchenwald. I was there for four years and in that time I lost everyone; my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, my friends; all killed, some of them before my eyes. But I survived and when the war ended I spent a few years searching for family or friends with no results. Finally, I moved to Australia.

"I was totally alone and angry at G-d. I managed to succeed at business and make a lot of

money, and to marry and have children. But my wounds and anger were so deep that I swore to never go into a Synagogue or have anything to do with Judaism again. Nothing!

"But then just yesterday I came to China with my friend and he said we should visit the Chabad House. At first I didn't want to come of course, but he said that he'd been here before and the food is good and anyway there was no better alternative, so I shrugged and agreed.

"But as soon as the prayers began everything suddenly came back to me. I remembered how good it is to be a Jew; how proud and happy my father and mother were. Suddenly it was as if a wall of ice just melted. That's why I cried. I thought I'd never forgive G-d again, but now I feel like a small child that just wants to be home. All thanks to this Chabad House and the Rabbi here.'

The crowd clapped, wiped tears from their eyes and congratulated him for the beautiful story. A one woman stood up and asked:

"Tell me Mr. Katz. If you were in Buchenwald until the end, maybe you knew my father. His name is Naftali Kogen (pseudonym); he also was in Buchenwald."

Mr. Katz's jaw dropped, his eyes bolted open and he held his head in wonder "Naftali Kogen!? What? Naftali is still alive?! Why we were the only two Kohanim in the camp and we were always together. We risked our lives for each other, and not just once. We were like brothers! Oy! Naftali!

"There was such total confusion in those days; everything was upside down. We were put in different recovery camps and got separated. I searched for him for a long time after the war but finally I gave up. I thought he was dead. Now you say he is alive and you are his daughter! It's a miracle!!"

Rabbi Freundlich finished his story by saying that after Shabbat a meeting was arranged between the two old friends, and this is only one example of the miracles that happen in Beijing thanks to the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

At that point, much to everyone's surprise, a head of a Yeshiva in the Satmar community by the

name of Rav Yaakov Kaplan (pseudonym) who had listened intently to the story called out! He raised himself in his seat a bit and fell back, his face pale as chalk and his eyes staring wildly at the ceiling. The others were startled and those seated near him rose to help him, but he came to himself in just seconds. He stood up to his full height and yelled aloud to all those present, "Tell them that Yaakov is still alive!"

In the midst of an emotional hurricane, he continued to call out: "There weren't just two Kohanim in Buchenwald, there were three! Sam Katz, Naftali Kogan and me too!"

He was obviously experiencing some sort of emotional hurricane.

"There weren't just two Kohanim in Buchenwald." He continued, "There were three; Sam Katz, Naftali and Me!

"We stuck together like brothers.... more than brothers. But just a few days before the end of the war I was moved to another camp. They probably thought I was dead, and I almost was, and I was sure that they were. I never considered it possible that they could still be alive even now!"

Needless to say, soon after this story there was yet another joyous reunion.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 17 Dec 2010 14:01

The power of beginnings

A unique point of this unusual Friday fast day, of which Chazal say we would potentially fast even on Shabbos-is as follows:

We must see and learn the significance of the beginning point

In a certain sense, the siege to Yerusholayim was more profound, unique, significant than the subsequent breach of the wall, and even more significant than the actual destruction of the Bais Hamikdosh itself!!

Why is this so?

Because the source of it all is the nekudah

the root, the beginning of things, the point where there is that shift, that awareness that something significant has taken place and though not yet tragic, it is alarming.

It tells us to wake up and get with the program

The seige lasted several years. If the nation would have at the very beginning of the seige had the vision of a burning Bais Hamikdosh, dead bodies of loved ones in the streets, then it would have been just that. A nightmarish vision. Not a nightmarish reality. The churban would not have occurred

If this is true with a nekudah of evil, how much more so is it true with the nekudah of good.

As damaged as a relationship may be, or actually is, the way to repair it is to start with the nekudah, the source, the beginning, which are very very small steps, a sincere thank you, your welcome, I appreciate this, I am grateful for that.

Most of us are clueless as to how sincere words are that nekudah that repairs and heals beyond our comprehension.

Its those very small "insignificant" steps

A siege is a major event. But at the beginning there was no disruption of daily life. There was food, money, animals for korbonos. The rich had thier stocks and bonds. the kollel guys were still learning with yishuv hadaad supported by thier rich or non-so-rich-and-stressed-heart attack prone shvers who supported them. The evil doers kept on doing what they have been doing before.

The siege did not mean much to them

and that was thier mistake

The lesson to us is never to discount an event that Hashem set up for us, even if it personally has not affected us (yet)

and never discount a kind word to your estranged wife or child, even if you personally do not see any positive results (yet)

That is the lesson of this fast

The power of the small steps, the power of the small beginnings.

the nekudah that is very tiny, and yet contains a universe within it

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