

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 - 22 Dec 2010 14:21

From Rav Kook

A very powerful yesod

Shemot: True Humility

"God's angel appeared to Moses in the heart of a fire, in the midst of a thorn-bush." (Ex. 3:2)

Why did God choose a sneh, a thorn-bush to reveal Himself to Moses?

A Cure for Fever

The Talmud (Shabbat 67a) prescribes a peculiar procedure for those suffering from a high fever. The patient is advised to take a thorn-bush, and each day make a cut in it using an iron knife. When cutting the bush, he should trim it near the ground, and say:

"Thorn-bush, thorn-bush! The Holy One did not let His Presence reside in you because you are the greatest of all trees, but because you are the lowliest."

What do thorn-bushes have to do with fevers? What is the purpose of this strange procedure?

Circumstantial and True Humility

Rav Kook wrote that there are two forms of humility. The first type could be called 'circumstantial humility.' Due to infirmity, poverty, or some lack of talent, intelligence, social standing, etc., a person may feel vulnerable and insignificant.

However, this is not genuine humility. Should circumstances change, newly-found strength or wealth or prestige may very well delude one into believing in his own prominence and self-importance.

True humility comes from a different, more objective source: awareness of our place in the universe. This humbleness is independent of the vagaries of life's circumstances. It is based on recognition of our true worth, on insight into the essence of the soul, and a clear understanding of the nature of reality.

Unfortunately, the fickle nature of the human mind allows us to be easily deluded into ignoring anything beyond our own egocentric world. How can we escape such delusions?

This trap may be avoided by recognizing the transitory nature of circumstances. Poverty, sickness, and so on, have the power to make us aware of our intrinsic vulnerability. Awareness of our inherent potential for weakness leads us to properly evaluate our true worth, and thus attain genuine humility.

The Lesson of the Thorn-bush

By all criteria, the thorn-bush is a lowly and unimportant plant. It grows in barren locations, providing neither food nor shade for others. It even rejects interaction with other living things by means of its prickly thorns. Yet, precisely because of its isolation, the thorn-bush may deceive itself into believing in its own greatness. Therefore, the Sages advised cutting the bush down to its very roots. We trim away all the superficial aspects, leaving only the bush's essential worth - its roots, its connections to the rest of the universe. God placed His Divine Presence on the sneh not because of its sense of self-importance, but because of its innate lowliness - the spirit of true humility which remains after the bush has been trimmed to the ground.

The thorn-bush procedure recommended by the Talmud enables the suffering individual to recognize the purpose of his illness: attainment of sincere humility. This trait is the remedy for all strange fevers and delusions.

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Re: yechida's reflections
Posted by frumfiend - 22 Dec 2010 17:03

Wow!

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Re: yechida's reflections
Posted by yechidah - 24 Dec 2010 18:08

Moshe the Faithful Shepherd by R' Shlomo Carlebach

Written by Reb Shlomo Carlebach zt"l

Imagine today, we would look for somebody to save the world, who would we look for?
Someone who looks very intelligent, very good looking, a good speaker... a real polished personality. But you see what it is, G-d is looking for somebody to take the Jews out of Egypt,

he was looking for something else.

You know why Moshe was chosen?

Listen to this. Moshe was a Sheppard, he used to take his father-in-law's sheep to Mount Sinai, because Yisro lived on Mount Sinai. One day a little sheep ran off. Moshe Rabbeinu is running after the sheep, calls it all kinds of sweet names, saying 'please come back, please come back'.

The sheep ran all the way up to the top of Mount Sinai. There was a tiny little lake, and it was drinking from the lake. So Moshe Rabbeinu was waiting until it finished drinking. Then he took the sheep, put it over his shoulders and he says to the sheep 'you must be so tired of running'.

Then he says 'oh, my sweetest sheep, I wish we could talk to each other'.

G-d mamesh says to the angles 'if he is taking such good care of sheep, can you imagine how much he will take care of my children as well?'.

So at that moment G-d appeared to him at the burning bush.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 29 Dec 2010 17:53

important Aish article

How to stop berating yourself and persevere in trying your best.

by Marnie Winston-Macauley

The other day, while browsing through a bookstore, I happened upon yet another tome promising "The 10 Ways To a Perfect –" something.

Here it is – perfection! If you want the perfect date, marriage, family, just buy the experts' books and poof! Get it down in three or 10 easy steps. We've all seen or read the plethora of blather mucking up the self-help shelves over the last 25 years. And while there are tips we can certainly glean, usually involving common-sense simplicity, the insidious offense is nonsense expectations.

Yet, it sells because the concept of perfection is seductive. Becoming numero uno has always been an American dream. Who doesn't want to make the perfect landing on the Olympic balance beam? Who doesn't want a "perfectly" happy mate or child? But "perfect" has become an American cultural pastime in the extreme. "Imperfect" means you can't swallow 100 earthworms in under 30 seconds on national TV.

I have faith in the human spirit to make things better. Just not "perfect." In human relationships, the danger is even greater. Surrounded by a culture of "perfectionism," the normal human can only reach one conclusion: We're all a bunch of failures. The very titles of these books imply we're a mess if we've failed to achieve personal Nirvana. So, like mad hatters, we buy this stuff. Then, by "Step Two," when despite our best efforts to follow the expert's "rules," our mates won't list their faults, our children are headed to Tijuana, our dog is eating our Family Values chart, and our in-laws are cutting us out of the will, what we're left with is: "We're failures."

All this because perfectionism is a bold-face impossibility.

The "perfect" child? Start saving for shrink bills.

The "perfect" mate? Check his (and your) blood pressure.

The "perfect" family? A nice thought. Look for signs to Stepford.

Before you call me a hopeless curmudgeon, I've spent my life offering hope and believing in change. I have faith in the human spirit to make things better. Just not "perfect."

So let's make a simple wording switch. Instead of "perfect," how about "good enough"? "Good enough" doesn't mean lying in a Barcalounger with a diet Pepsi in a stupor while the family runs amok, ignored. No.

"Good enough" is tough. It demands real work. It requires real commitment, not to a fantasy, but to developing the very best in us and making the very best choices for us, knowing life often deals us major muck-ups.

"Good enough," at its best, is a concept we Jews can well understand. Having lived in an "imperfect" world, who better than us have had to internalize the value of making things work as best we can? This doesn't mean "settling." To the contrary. It means forging ahead to create a better, if not "perfect" reality, given any situation and circumstance.

And the reality is: good parents sometimes have difficult children. Good wives sometimes get left behind. Good dads sometimes get downsized. And only some of the craziness is within our total personal control.

"Good enough" lets you do the things you can control without hacking your ego to hash.

Related Article: Jewish Secrets of Success

Effort vs. Results

- "Perfect" is results driven.

"Good enough" is effort driven – a far more realistic and important quality, regardless of outcome. Time and time again, we see that the truer measure of personal success is "in the trying."

- "Perfect" sets up unrealistic expectations. If we're not leaping with marital joy 24/7, or if our

child was born with the temperament of Genghis Kahn, we feel there's a party going on and our invite was lost in the mail.

"Good enough" lets us manage life in the Real Lane. We see potential and limits, evaluate them, forge strategies, and make solid choices based on effort and circumstances.

- "Perfect," means we've "failed" if we haven't achieved each lofty goal.

"Good enough" means we've tried our best. We can persevere or move on without self-flagellation.

- "Perfect" suggests a shopping list. A one-size-fits all M.O. and standard.

"Good enough" allows us to make life a custom job. It's not about "What's right for Dr. Bestseller" but what works for us and what we wish to achieve.

- "Perfect" suggests absolutes. Failure and success are rigidly defined.

"Good enough" embraces the very Jewish principle of forgiveness and acceptance of workable situations, even if they're imperfect. It requires understanding that there isn't one answer, but competing values that have to be assessed, debated, and factored in truth.

- "Perfect" becomes an impossible measurement of self-esteem. Mistakes and missteps become a devastating part of our personal self-definition.

"Good enough" allows us to separate our very human flaws and imperfections from our entire self-view. It not only puts other people's foibles in perspective, it permits us to continue to love ourselves, and each other, unconditionally, contributing to our psychological and spiritual well-being.

Life is a glorious work in progress. The next time you see some "expert" hawking "Ten Ways to the Perfect Marriage" or "How to Raise the Perfect Child," toss the book, and consider setting life by your rules, principles and realities. Try your best and celebrate the fact that yes, you're not "perfect," but you're striving to be "good enough."

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 29 Dec 2010 19:13

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 11 Jan 2011 15:00

The Two Faces of Your Spouse

Why is Marriage Compared to the Splitting of the Sea?

thanks Yechida for that great article, it is ~~perfect~~ 'good enough'

By Rabbi YY Jacobson

A wealthy Jewish man buys a fabulous home in Beverly Hills, California. He brings in a local workman to decorate the place. When the job is finished, the homeowner is delighted but realizes that he's forgotten to put mezuzahs on the doors (a mezuzah is usually a small wooden box containing within it a few sections of the Bible, that is put up on the doorposts of Jewish homes).

He goes out and buys 50 mezuzahs and asks the decorator to place them on the right hand side of each door except bathrooms.

When he comes back a few hours later he sees that the job has been carried out to his satisfaction. He is so pleased that he gives the decorator a bonus. As the decorator is leaving he says, "By the way, I took out all the warranties in the little boxes and left them on the table for you!

The Miracle of Matchmaking

This week's Torah portion (Beshalach) relates that dramatic moment when at the brink of being captured by the mighty Egyptian forces, the Red Sea parted before the Hebrews. The newly born nation of Israel crossed to the other side and embarked on its journey to freedom.

Do we have anything in our lives today that could even remotely reflect that unparalleled and stupendous miracle?

Yes, says the Talmud, and it is the miracle of a marriage that works. "To match couples together is as difficult as the splitting of the sea," states this ancient Jewish text written around 1700 years ago (1).

What is the meaning behind these words? Everybody knows that the process of finding a life's partner and maintaining the relationship may at times be excruciatingly difficult. But why, from all extraordinary miracles described in the Bible, does the Talmud choose specifically the miracle of the splitting of the sea to depict marriage?

Joseph's Casket

King David, in an exhilarating poem describing the exodus from Egypt (2), sums up the event of the splitting of the sea in brief words: "The sea saw and fled."

"What did it see?" asks the Midrash (3).

"The casket containing the remains of Joseph," is the answer of the sages. The sea, explains the Midrash (3), refused to part for the Jewish people. Only when it was shown the casket containing Joseph's bones did the sea acquiesce and part.

Why did the sight of Joseph's casket compel the sea to flee from its place, making way for the

Jews? Says the Midrash, "The sea remembered how Joseph fled from his master's wife who was seeking to violate him (4); the sea decided it would flee, too."

Yet there is something profoundly amiss here. The Midrash and the Zohar state (5) that the original creation of the sea was conditional upon its splitting for the sake of the Jewish people when they would escape the Egyptians, 2,448 years later. The sages teach that G-d made it clear with the sea that if it did not agree to change its nature at the moment of calling, He would not bring it into existence (6).

If that was the case, how did the sea breach its original agreement and refuse to split for the Jewish people until it saw the casket of Joseph? Why did the sea need to observe Joseph's casket in order to split, when this act of splitting was an old deal etched in stone at the moment of its creation?

Another question is, what was it about the righteous act of Joseph that affected the sea more than all the other noble and moral deeds performed by any of the Jews standing at the sea?

A Tale of Two Jews

The answer to all of these questions may lie in a stirring insight made by the saintly Chassidic master, Rabbi Aaron of Karlin (7).

When G-d cut the initial deal with the sea that it split before the Jewish people, the sea -- like any good businessman would do -- asked G-d to see one of those "Jews" for whom it would need to change its nature and split its "identity" many years down the line.

When the sea observed the souls of the Jews in heaven, it melted away in joy and ecstasy. Observing the unparalleled greatness and untold depth of a Yiddishe neshamah, of that Divine spark embodying the goodness, holiness, dignity and G-dliness of its Creator, the sea declared to G-d, "If it is for these souls that I need to split, it would be my greatest honor and pleasure. For these souls I'd remain split for 1,000 years. These are my type of guys."

That occurred during the time of creation, when the sea observed the souls of the Jewish people still in heaven, before they have made that quantum leap to descend into the physical world.

Now, let us travel forward 2,448 years.

The Jews have just left Egypt, after spending 210 years in the most morally depraved society on earth. For more than half of that time they were enslaved, abused, violated and tortured. Now,

upon liberation, they are exhausted, devastated and broken.

Seven days after their exodus, they are caught between the approaching Egyptians behind them and a large sea in front of them. After all the darkness and pain they have experienced, at the moment when they think their moment of liberty has arrived, they find themselves trapped between a cruel army and an indifferent sea.

At that moment, the Bible records (8), the people of Israel were overtaken by fright, and they began to holler. "They said to Moses," writes the Torah, "Were there no graves in Egypt so that you needed to take us out to die in the Wilderness? What is this that you have done to us to take us out of Egypt? Is this not the statement that we made to you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us be and we will serve Egypt, for it is better that we serve Egypt then die in the Wilderness!'"

In a very psychologically insightful interpretation, the Talmud relates (9) that the Jews at the time, horrified and frightened, divided into four groups, each calling for another plan of action. The first group advocated suicide, the second group wanted to surrender to Egypt. A third group pushed for all out war, while a fourth group suggested they begin to pray. Moses rejected all of the groups. He quoted G-d as saying (10), "Speak to the children of Israel and let them move on."

It was in this climate that the sea was now called upon to fulfill its longstanding obligation. According to Rabbi Aaron of Karlin, at this moment dialogue emerged.

"Why?" asked the sea. "Why should I split"?

"The Jews. They have, at last, arrived," came the answer. "It is time to fulfill your promise."

"Who arrived?" asked the sea.

"The Jews. Don't you see them right in front of you?"

"No, I don't," said the sea.

"What do you mean you don't see them? Look, they are standing right in front of you. All two million of them!"

"Sorry, but these are not the same people I have observed in the past. These are not the same souls I saw in heaven 2,448 years ago. The souls I saw then were limitless in their depth, splendid in their dignity, glorious in their spirit. They constituted sheer celestial beauty. These people in front of me are grouchy, frustrated, divisive, filled with anger, fear and a negative attitude."

The sea refused to part. Notwithstanding the agreement, the sea would not split. The sea claimed it was deceived: The Jews of heaven were not the Jews on earth. The sea had agreed to split before rich spirits; not before deprived bodies.

Until... until it saw the casket of Joseph.

Who Was Joseph?

"Joseph recognized his brothers but they did not recognize him," says the Bible (11). When his brothers, the tribes of Israel, descended to Egypt to purchase food, and they encountered their estranged brother who has since risen to become viceroy of the land, he recognized them but they did not recognize him.

But why? The mystics explain that Joseph's depth of morality and holiness was concealed behind the dense facade of an Egyptian statesman. On the outside, Joseph seemed no more than a tremendously handsome young man, charming and charismatic, skilled as a diplomat and politician with endless ambition. It was not easy to realize that beneath these qualities lay a soul on fire with spiritual passion, a kindred spirit for whom the moral legacy of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob remained the epicenter of his life; a heart in love with G-d.

Joseph easily identified the holiness within his brothers. After all, they lived most of their lives as isolated, spiritual shepherds, involved in prayer, meditation and study. Yet these very spiritual brothers lacked the ability to discern the Divine dignity etched in the depth of Joseph's heart. They never understood who their brother really was.

Even when Joseph was living with them in Israel, they saw him as an outsider, as a danger to the integrity of the family of Israel. They saw him as a worldly politician dreaming of power and fame. Certainly, when they encountered him in the form of an Egyptian leader, they failed to observe that beyond the mask of a savvy politician lay the soul of pristine nobility.

This dual identity that characterized Joseph's life played itself out in the most powerful way when his master's wife attempted to seduce him into intimate relations. On the outside, she thought, it would not be very difficult to entice young Joseph into sacrificing moral integrity for the sake of tremendous fun and gratification that would secure him a glorified position in the home of his master.

But, when push came to shove, when Joseph was presented with the test of tests, he displayed heroic courage as he resisted and fled her home. As a result of that act, he ended up in prison for 12 years, without any natural hope of ever being liberated from this hellish prison.

The Sea Remembers

When the sea remembered the story of Joseph, it understood that it had erred.

Yes, the souls it had encountered in heaven were far greater and loftier than the exhausted humans it saw at its shore. **But when the sea observed the life of Joseph it understood that it must not limit its vision to the external appearance of man, often flawed and distorted. It had to gaze deeply into the depths of the human spirit to encounter royalty.**

In a way, Joseph's casket was whispering this message to the sea: When you gaze at another human being, do not make the same error that others make when they gaze at you. Some simple folks look at you, dear sea, and assume that there is nothing beneath your bed of water. But who better than you knows the truth, that underlying your facade of water, lies an entire exquisite universe!

When the sea encountered Joseph's presence it understood its mistake. It grasped the truth that the great drama and beauty of human life lie not in our perfection and flawlessness, but rather in the human battle not to surrender to the external forces of darkness, despair and shallowness and to remain loyal to the light, hope and depth etched within. Upon this realization, the sea parted before the Jews.

Do You Remember Your Groom?

Before each of us was born, say the Kabbalists, we were shown, in heaven, the souls of our respective grooms and brides.

Now, when you saw the soul of your future husband in the spiritual realms, you were ecstatic. You were witness to an extraordinary spirit, a towering beacon of light, a great personality. **You thought to yourself: "For such a husband, I will do anything; I will be there for him in the deepest possible way; I am ready to 'split' for him any day."**

Conversely, when you encountered your future bride there in the sublime plane, you were just blown away. What a profound heart! Will I truly have the privilege of building a home with this human being? How will I ever be able to show enough gratitude for the joy of having a relationship with this woman?

Then, you were born. Twenty, 25, 30, 35, 45 years later, you feel an attraction to your spouse, to that soul that you were once so overwhelmed you. You take a look... But you do not recognize him or her. **"Him? You want me to respect him?" many a woman says. "He is an obnoxious, egotistical, self-centered man."**

"Her?" many a man exclaims. "You expect me to appreciate and honor her? A world renowned needy and insecure kvetch?"

Many of us fail to recognize in the face and personality of our spouses what we once-upon-a-time saw in their souls.

"To match couples together is as difficult as the splitting of the sea," states the Talmud. Marriage is the ability to recognize your true spouse, beneath the layers of "rubble" that may eclipse his or her true dignity and beauty.

A good relationships stems from the understanding that life is a battlefield in which we often stumble and fail and that the beauty and profundity of human life consists not of a continuous stream of light and perfection, **but rather of the light that emerges from amidst darkness, of the serenity that emerges from turmoil, and of the harmony that sprouts forth from strife** (12).

Or as Eliezar ben Nissan Hakohen put it in Anthem: **"Forget your perfect offering. There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in."**

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 11 Jan 2011 16:39

Here's a quote by Rumi:

"Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing there is a field. I'll meet you there"

that is where real Yidin meet each other

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 14 Jan 2011 16:41

Gifts of Life

by Emile M Tubiana

We should appreciate the gifts life, not take them for granted.

Gifts of Life

A moment of life

Cannot be kept

If we don't live it

Its loss we accept

The time we sleep

Is definitely lost

But gives us strength

For journey's length

Natural beauty

Has its value in store

Is self-sufficient

Needs no decor

Accept gifts of life

They are not in vain

Special for you,

Bringing only gain

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 14 Jan 2011 16:44

Master Mind

by Suzie Palmer

The mind is everything

You become what you think

The mind is everything

If you don't know this, you could possibly sink

Into deep depression

Moody and glum

Being around you no idea of fun

The mind is your master

Driving the bus

Be careful about what causes you to fuss

Is it worth unbalancing your mind?

Never ever become unkind

Your actions are precious

Your vibrations gold

Let us live mindfully before growing cold

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 17 Jan 2011 13:42

aish article

unfortunately, what is described below is quite common in our "frum" communities

My husband believes there's only one right way of doing things – his way.

by Rebbetzin Feige Twerski

I feel worn out trying to improve my marriage. We have had good times and done great things together – raised wonderful children, and realized our dream of moving to Israel.

But there have been bad times as well. My husband does not believe in the concept of a married couple making compromises. He believes that both halves of the couple should always do what is "right" to do. At times he is open to hearing my opinion about what is "right," and has changed his mind to agree with my way of thinking. But in the vast majority of cases, he sticks to what he thinks is right, and since he has the stronger personality, we usually do as he thinks.

Before we were married, I resolved (without telling him) to be flexible and go along with most of his ideas – because I thought that would be a good way to get along with a man with strong opinions, and because I genuinely am flexible in most matters. I don't have a problem with what I see as trivial matters. But sometimes an issue will come up with the children that is important to me. Since I am the one doing most of the child-raising, and I know them the best (he's away on business a lot), I have confidence in my methods. Yet he still insists on analyzing the question with "what is the right thing to?"

I have tried for years to do everything he asked of me. And it took me years to realize that the more I tried to act on his requests, the more disrespectful he became toward me.

And woe to anyone who fails to act in the "right way." He can become irritable, impatient, angry, and contemptuous. In our 22 years of our marriage, he got physically aggressive with me three times (two shoves and a punch). I don't fear he will ever hit me again. But he will blow up when I'm disagreeing (even politely, even calmly) with him, and shout at me nose to nose.

All this has left me in bad shape. I have basically given up on trying not to frustrate him, because I am constantly frustrated on several important matters, and he sees that frustration as being solely my problem.

So here I am. My oldest children are out of the house, but many younger ones are still at home. My youngest need extra help and attention because of some developmental issues. I do at least the minimum for them and I want to do more for them and for me, but where I used to always have another idea to try or some inspiration that kept me going, I'm all tapped out now.

I'm dependent financially on my husband because I've been a stay-at-home mom for years (though I was a professional for several years just after university). We've been trying to improve our marriage for years, and there have been improvements, but I am stuck in the reality that I can't talk to him without him shouting in my face.

I have done counseling at several different points in my life, while my husband despises social sciences and will never go to counseling, preferring to solve his own problems.

He feels that he has been making most of the changes, and that it's my turn to start carrying more of my share. That is the last thing I feel able to do right now. I'm worn out emotionally, and just want to spend mostly empty time in front of the computer. I have had enough.

Any wisdom on your part would be very, very welcome.

Dear Reader,

The first thought that comes to mind is that the definition of a healthy marriage relationship is a "harmonious" one. The term harmony is borrowed from musical arrangements where the sounds brought forth from the various instruments are not identical, but blend and resonate well with each other. Similarly, in a marriage, husband and wife can have differing opinions and different ways of looking at situations, and an accord can still be struck. As a matter of fact, different perspectives create balance. One spouse can have a more laid back view and the other a more intense orientation, and together they can reach the ideal middle of the road approach.

The critical factor, however, is that there has to be an inherent understanding and implicit contract to agree to disagree respectfully. Marginalizing the thinking or viewpoint of another is never in order. The assumption, of course, is that the issues at hand are not matters that challenge moral statutes or ethical behavior – e.g. murder, theft, gossip or Torah laws should not be up for discussion. Matters, however, of how to best deal with a given situation effectively, that is not written in stone, can be subject to discussion and varying opinions.

Doing the "right thing" does not give him permission to treat you dismissively. It appears from your account, dear reader, that your husband is adopting an excessively authoritarian and

autocratic posture. Even if the "right thing" that he insists on is based on an objective value system, it does not give him permission to treat you dismissively. A civil discussion is always mandated. It is not a question of being right or wrong; discourse should be engaged with a willingness to exchange thinking.

Physical abuse is absolutely and categorically never acceptable.

Respect and real listening are the key ingredients in positive communication. Sadly, we as a culture have lost the ability to listen effectively. Deep listening entails total focus and attention to what the other person is saying. Typically, we are so invested in our own thinking that even as the other is still speaking their mind, and trying to articulate their position, our minds are occupied with formulating our own response. We are not totally present. To divest ourselves momentarily of our personal bias and truly listen is a skill that takes practice, effort, and a true desire to acquire.

I gather from your remarks that if you would feel heard and respected, the final conclusion would not be such an issue for you. Yet when time and again one is treated dismissively, that can crush the spirit and destroy self esteem. All of us get a better sense of self when we sense that our thoughts are of value to others.

Though you refer to yourself as "flexible," you clearly bear a great deal of resentment for your many concessions. Sagely advice tells us that when any issue arises, we assess it on a scale of 1-5, and insist only on that which is highly important to us. It seems, dear reader, that you have done that and more, and alas even in areas the should be your domain – the house, the children, etc.

No Consent

Practically speaking, I would recommend the following:

(1) Sit down with your husband when there are no burning issues or bad feelings, and you are both in a good mood and kindly disposed to one another. Share your feelings with him. In a context of all the positive qualities that you appreciate about him, tell him that in the area of being heard and listened to he has not done the "right" thing by you. Express your hurt and

frustration. Ask him in advance to allow you to say your piece without interruption. Then let him respond without your interrupting him. Speak calmly. Begin your sentences with "I" messages, not "you" – e.g. "I feel such and such when you...", not "You make me feel..."

Remember to go for deep listening and not only for getting things off your chest. The objective is to try to open up lines of communication and to make it safe to share feelings. In the event that you feel a face-to-face discussion will not work, consider putting your feelings in writing.

(2) Recognize, dear reader, that women become accustomed to subtle forms of abuse over time and make excuses for the abuser – i.e. "He is so nice otherwise; he has such a great sense of humor," etc. Consider the example of the boiled frog. How is it, they ask, that a frog can be boiled in water? We would expect that as soon as a frog senses the very hot or boiling water, it would jump out and boiling it would be impossible. The key, however, is to begin with lukewarm water and slowly increase the flame, imperceptible to the frog, until it is too late and the frog finds itself boiled.

In cases of abuse, overt or subtle, a husband plays on a wife's vulnerabilities. Because the picture is not totally black, the wife tolerates it and at times becomes convinced that she deserves the abuse. Before she knows it, she is "boiled."

Eleanor Roosevelt's wisely commented: "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent." Your task, dear reader, at this point is not to give your consent.

Make it clear that you are not willing to suffer abuse any longer. If no change occurs, you will have arrived at the point of needing to identify a rabbi, mentor or other person that your husband respects. Offer that he can see anyone he chooses. If he refuses to go, however, perhaps you will need to go speak with that person directly and share your concerns. Mentioning this to your husband might give him the impetus to join you, or at the very least make him aware that consequences will now become part of the picture. It will become clearer to him that you are not willing to suffer even the most subtle of abuse any longer.

(3) Despite the fact that you have tried counseling in the past, I would strongly advise you to find a good objective party to talk to, regardless of whether your husband chooses to join. Divesting yourself of your pain and frustration will be therapeutic. Additionally, the perspective gained will hopefully clear your head and heart and energize you. The affirmation and validation of this process will acquire will make you emotionally healthier and far better equipped to handle the

heavy load you carry.

(4) Remember that it takes only one person in the relationship to affect the energy in the home. A more confident self will perform evoke an altered response from your family.

Finally, take care of yourself physically and spiritually. Instead of sitting in front of a computer, take a brisk walk, or better yet get a friend to join you for a consistent daily exercise program. It will boost your body chemistry and ward off depressive thinking. Fill yourself up with learning to whatever extent possible. You will feel more equal to life. And as in all situations that we are confronted or challenged by, pray for heavenly assistance.

May God bless you!

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 25 Jan 2011 14:36

Life is

God telling you

"I need you here"

and

deeper beyond those words,

lies the universal truth

that He loves you

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 25 Jan 2011 15:22

beautiful yechida, thanks!

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 26 Jan 2011 17:10

from Rav Kook

Mishpatim: Revealing Our Inner Essence

The ultimate moment of glory for the Jewish people — their greatest hour — occurred as God revealed His Torah to them at Mount Sinai. The Israelites made an amazing proclamation: Na'aseh VeNishma — "We will do and we will listen to all that God has declared" (Ex. 24:7).

They promised two things: to do, and to listen. The order is crucial. They promised to keep the Torah, even before knowing why. The Midrash (Shabbat 88a) says that, in merit of this pledge of loyalty, the angels rewarded each Jew with two crowns. And a Heavenly Voice exclaimed, "Who revealed to My children this secret that is used by the angels?"

What was so special about this vow, "we will do and we will listen"? On the contrary, would not fulfilling mitzvot with understanding and enlightenment be a higher level of Torah observance? And why is this form of unquestioning allegiance a "secret used by the angels"?

Intuitive Knowledge

While wisdom is usually acquired through study and reflection, there exists in nature an intuitive knowledge that requires no formal education. The bee, for example, naturally knows the optimal

geometric shape for building honeycomb cells. No bee has ever needed to register for engineering courses at MIT.

Intuitive knowledge also exists in the spiritual realm. Angels are sublime spiritual entities who do not need Torah studies in order to know how to serve God. Their holiness is ingrained in their very nature. It is only human beings, prone to being confused by pseudo-scientific indoctrination, who need to struggle in order to return to their pristine spiritual selves.

For the Jews who stood at Mount Sinai, it was not only Torah and mitzvot that were revealed. They also discovered their own true, inner essence. They attained a sublime level of natural purity, and intuitively proclaimed, "we will do." We will follow our natural essence, unhindered by any spurious, artificial mores.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 28 Jan 2011 17:35

No one

on this

earth

knows

me,

yet somehow

I am

known

and

deemed valuable

and loved

by the One

Who placed me here

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