

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](mailto: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 Dov - 23 Dec 2009 18:03

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Dear yechida - Thanks for these posts. We read the one about the gold watch in the box, at the kitchen table last night. A special bit of quality time was had by all.

Yivorech'cha Hashem v'yishm'recha!!

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by imtrying25 - 23 Dec 2009 18:05

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Yechida once again i want to say thanks for sharing. Beautiful. As beautiful as our very own Yechida.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 23 Dec 2009 19:49

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Thank you dear friends,

In truth, practically nothing on this thread is my own, and it is truly a zchus to collect here the gems of many that I have learned from. There are a lot of gems spread out all over this forum, and perhaps one day I will collect from there too. I always felt that Hashem sends us messages to learn from and to inspire others, and I have learned a lot from many many of the posts on the forum, and I am grateful for that, and I am grateful that I can do this too.

and I think sometimes about this quote

Personality is only ripe when a man has made the truth his own.

(Soren Kierkegaard)

I discovered that sometimes I need to learn truth from others and then make it my own. I learn not to be embarrassed to emulate others in certain ways, not to be "copy cat" but because it is something of value that I wish to incorporate into myself. I think Hashem send us these messages so that we can learn from them.

So in truth I am not worthy of teaching others. that is why I like when you say thank you for "sharing". because actually I am sharing with you things that I am trying to teach myself. and I thank you for the opportunity, because as I sift through stories or poems or quotes or shiurim or articles, you actually are helping me learn and grow.

And for that, I am eternally grateful to you.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by Dov - 23 Dec 2009 23:02

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Bitteh!

And here's one for you that I like a lot, :

The real moment of success is not the moment apparent to the crowd.

-George Bernard Shaw

Love it!

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 24 Dec 2009 13:46

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dov,that's a great one

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 24 Dec 2009 14:43

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4 items related to the Tanya .The second article especially read the last paragraph. the last 2 have a lot of gems in them so please read it carefully.read also the comment before the 4th.There is great truth in that 4th article.

Tanya-Part 4

Where does depression come from? Is it in any way positive? In the following letter the Rebbe addresses a student who was going through difficult times that it's all in the mind, and in that the mind can change more easily than we think. Included is a newly released photo, courtesy of the Rebbe Archive.

By the Grace of G-d

27th of Teveth,

5721 Brooklyn, NY

Mr. ----- 5265 Park Avenue Montreal 8, Que.

Greeting and Blessing:

I received your letter and enclosures.

It is explained in many places in Chasidus, beginning with the Tanya, about the negative

aspects of all forms of sadness, depression, despondency, etc. It is also clear from experience that these attitudes belong to the bag of tricks of the Yetzer Hora in order to distract the Jew from serving G-d. To achieve this end the Yetzer Hora sometimes even clothes itself in the mantle of piety.

The true test, however, is what the results are, whether these attitudes bring about an improvement in, and a fuller measure of Torah and Mitzvos, or the reverse. This should be easy to determine.

On the other hand we have been assured that "He who is determined to purify himself receives Divine help." The road to purity and holiness, however, is one that should be trodden step by step, and by gradual and steady advancement.

Needless to say, the idea of your continuing at the Yeshivah for some time is the right one. As for the question how and what to write to your parents, I suggest that you consult with Rabbi Joseph Weinberg, who knows them personally, and who could give you some useful suggestions.

Hoping to hear good news from you in all above,

With blessing,

(signature)

Good Shabbos

Menachem.

From askmoses.com

I would think that mingling boys and girl would cause problems with morality and having thoughts of, but it seems that depression (and from what I've read in other articles-anxiety) is a major major issues and in many cases a DIRECT result of commingling.

Why are orthodox Jews so strict about boys and girls not mingling?

by Rabbi Yossi Marcus

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Rabbi we have progressed. Schools are coed, boys and girls dance together at proms, and they enjoy it. Why is traditional Judaism so fearful of early romance and mingling?

Answer:

A wise man once said: "Not everything that is new is good and not everything that is old is mold."

Judaism values modesty, appreciates that girls should be girls and boys should be boys, and prefers romance when the time is ripe.

It is true modern society has progressed as you accurately describe. But it has progressed further than your description. It hasn't stopped at mingling. It continued into the ugly world of teenage promiscuity, pregnancy, depression, and more than an occasional suicide.

And it doesn't take an Einstein to correlate the obvious connection between the "progression" of coed activities and the increased rates of promiscuity, pregnancy and depression etc.

But since you put your faith in modernity, I will point you to an article written in a most modern periodical. Apparently whilst Judaism's perspectives have been around for a while, they have not expired. These ideas are quite alive in many "progressive" circles as well.

For example, in the April 16, 2001 issue of Time Magazine there was an article titled Puppy Love's Bite. The article examined the dangers of early romance.<sup>1</sup> It warned:

"A recent study of 8,000 adolescents in the Journal of Health and Social Behavior shows that

love can be hell, especially when it strikes young. Although steady romantic attachments tend to increase the health and well-being of adults, those relationships are a great source of stress for adolescents and can lead to depression, the study says... Dr. Miriam Kaufman, a pediatrician and author..., says... "I advise kids not to jump into romances too early, because young adolescence is a time for girls to cement their friendships, and strong friendships--and a strong sense of self--help kids through the tough times".

From [www.meaningfullife.com](http://www.meaningfullife.com) (brother of R Jacobson who gave the Tanya shiur)

Terumah: Joy Amidst Turmoil

Dear Rabbi Jacobson,

I was very uplifted by your last class, The Secret of Finding Joy, which I viewed over the web (by the way, these classes are brilliant, one of the best kept secrets online; I tell everyone I know about them. You must find ways to distribute them widely). The way you explained the power of joy resonated deeply. Yet, I find it extremely difficult to implement these principles into my daily life. I was just laid off my job, my long-term savings have been depleted due to the economic turndown (or whatever name they call it), to boot I grew up in a dysfunctional home, which I am always healing from, and there are many other factors in my life that are hardly a cause for happiness. Indeed, I feel as if I am perpetually sad, with a few sporadic spurts of short-lived joy bouncing up here and there. I often feel as though I have been hardwired without joy or happiness. Some people seem to be naturally cheerful. And some of us seem to be inherently despondent if not miserable.

Pray tell me that I am wrong.

Respectfully,

M.

Dear M.,

Thank you for your kind, yet also sad words.

Let me get straight to the point. You are wrong. Very wrong.

Have you ever seen a newborn child sad? Every child ever born is always happy and joyful. Joy is hardwired in our hardware and in our software. Sadness is a superimposed state that we acquire once we begin to grow and experience disappointment and duplicity. Children learn to be sad from their parents and the "mature" world that they become exposed to.

You may argue that children are naturally happy because they are naive and have yet to witness "reality" – the harsh and cruel world in which we live, where people hurt each other and the many hardships that life presents us.

In truth, however, it is the other way around. A child is our most natural and quintessential state. The child's innate cheer comes from an inner peace and contentment which results from a lack of dichotomy in the child's life.

Seamlessness is the operative world. A child's consciousness is not split into parts. A child is not torn between its needs and its behavior. We adults are constantly torn between demands upon us and our own needs, between what we truly want and what we must do to survive, between who we essentially are and what we do. Between the needs of our bodies and the needs of our souls. Who among us can say that our daily work and activities reflect our deepest inner aspirations? Is there a person that has no conflict of interest between a personal life and a



professional one, between the demands of your job and those of your home and family? Has anyone not compromised some of their idealism and values due to the pressures of the struggle for survival?

When there is a split there is tension. And where there is tension there is sadness. A measure of angst is always healthy – to keep us reaching and growing. But when the angst spills over into anxiety, despondence and depression are not far behind.

Children are the most perfect model of seamlessness: A smooth flow between the inner and the outer; where identity meets expression. Imagine that your outer expressions were always reflecting your inner needs, and your deepest aspirations always had an outlet of expression.

It is only from adults that children learn to be sad. Yes, we adult project our feelings on our children and as they develop and enter maturity that too learn the world of envy and greed, of selfishness and instant gratification, of struggling between what we know to be true and what we indulge in for our own pleasure.

You may then say, that all this is fine and good as long as we are children. But now that we have grown into adults, our childhoods lost, we no longer can access that inner contentment and happiness that is the domain of the child.

That may sound logical and... sad, but it is unequivocally wrong. The way we were born, the way we were hardwired always remains with us. Our inherent joy becomes concealed under many layers and veils, but it is embedded in our consciousness if not unconsciousness.

The question is how do we access it, especially once "paradise" has been seemingly lost? The answer goes back to the root of joy and happiness: Seamlessness. How does one achieve the seamless state, where there is no conflict between competing forces?

We can find our answer in an unlikely place – and one that is not even so popular today: Business.

The first cardinal rule of every venture is defining its mission statement. Without a concise and clearly stated purpose, everything that follows will be scattered and confused. Goals will be hard to set, and success will be difficult if not impossible to measure. The mission aligns all the steps of the operation from start to finish – from concept to final product, from the strategies and plans, to the actions and goals. It brings together and coordinates the entire enterprise into one seamless unit.

If so, you may ask, how is it that so many very focused businesses fail? Look around today, and we witness the collapse of numerous revered institutions, that had powerful mission statements and highly capable stewards at the helm. How did that happen? Read on.

So the secret of seamlessness – which lies behind the secret of happiness – is thus dependent on discovering the mission of our lives. Without that mission, our activities, involvements and investments – all our times and energy – will inevitably be unfocused, hence leading to tension and discord.

The mission of our lives is stated in this week's Torah portion. In perhaps the shortest and most concise mission statement ever made, the verse states: V'osu li mikdash v'shochanti b'socham, Build Me a sanctuary and I will dwell among you.

Five words – V'osu li mikdash v'shochanti b'socham – define the purpose of existence and the mission and goal of each and every life: Take all the elements of your life, all your physical materials and material activities, direct all your faculties, gifts and opportunities toward one goal: Build Me a sanctuary and I will dwell among you.

Align all your energy and activities toward this one seamless goal, and you will find seamless happiness. It may be difficult to tackle every aspect of our lives, but we can always begin with aligning some areas toward the stated mission. You will find that joy is directly proportionate to the amount of focus of one's life toward fulfilling the higher mission.

And now a word about our current economic crisis. Even if one were to argue that some of our failed companies stuck to their missions – which is not necessarily the case; many clearly strayed from their own missions and sound strategies, taking unsound risks, due to greed and other selfish incentives, betraying the trust in them – they definitely did not live up to the larger mission of our entire system: Integrity. The only way that capitalism, which is driven by personal gain, can survive is through a fundamental trust (which incidentally is stated in many financial

company's mission statements: Investments you can trust, "securities," take Prudential's "rock").

It surprises me that with all of our best minds at work trying to find a solution to the decaying economy, no one has suggested revisiting the initial "mission statement" of the United States of America – the driving ethos that gave birth in the first place to this mighty nation and created the climate for its thriving economy.

In the Declaration of Independence – which one can say is the USA's "mission statement" – the Founding Fathers, in their wisdom (and apparent study of the past failed systems and governments), understood that the key to this country's success lies only if it stands on a solid bedrock, an unwavering foundation: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

They did not make economic prosperity the mission or goal of this country. Free commerce and financial success is a symptom, not a cause of freedom. They clearly knew that the driving mission of this country must be based on the absolute Divine equality endowed on all human beings. Governments are instituted to secure and protect the Divine unalienable rights of man, not the other way around. This is the only basis of trust, freedom and all the components necessary to allow for healthy relationships and successful businesses. Without faith, without accepting higher authority that gave us all the gift of life and liberty, what is there to protect one greedy man from another?

Socialism's argument against capitalism was always that we cannot trust people driven by personal gain and greed. Thus the need for deprivatization, eliminating all private property and ownership. The problem with this approach is that by the same argument we also cannot trust the socialists and the ones taking charge of the socialist revolution (as history has proven only too well). In days of old, a few monarchs controlled capital, with the same argument, that left on their own people's self-interests will destroy them. But could we trust the monarchs? One could argue perhaps, that less damage is possible if we isolate the abuse to a few people than to many. But a contrary argument can also be made.

Regardless, all these arguments make it absolutely clear and necessary that the only hope for capitalism to succeed is fundamental integrity and trust. You can create all the regulating you like – as if the SEC was doing its job – but without a deeper sense of faith and the feeling that

we have to answer to a higher authority, no system could be trusted.

All our economic experts must do – all that the President must do – is look at the money in their own pockets. Engraved on every coin, etched on every bill, are the words "In God we trust."

The only antidote for human greed is the acceptance, respect and obligation to a higher calling, which in turn allows for trust of each other.

Our leaders today ought to simply echo and reiterate this nation's original mission statement – declaring the core base of our union is the Divine gift of life that we were all given equally, that "In God we trust" and with that trust "E Pluribus Unum," from the many, one, and we can thus trust each other, and become one despite our diversity. That without this common bond our system – our government, economy, politics and all our institutions – cannot endure. Without answering to a higher calling and authority, we will end up in the same place as so many mighty empires before us: History.

Our leaders must declare that integrity is good for business. Greed may work short-term, but can never endure.

Of course, this alone will not solve our problems. We need to rebuild (or create new models for) our institutions and structures. But without this essential trust – without the foundation – the structure cannot stand.

The turmoil and turbulence surrounding us today presents a unique opportunity to revisit our "point of departure:" Our initial missions. Which in turn allows us to realign our lives accordingly.

My suggestion to you, M., is to begin asking yourself: "What is my mission? Why was my soul sent down to Earth?" Though this may not be a short-term solution, I assure you that if you are persistent in your search, in time you will find your calling, and as you do you will become a happier person. Remember, you have joy inside of your soul. As a newborn child it was active. Then it may have retreated as you faced various challenges. But the happiness it is still in there somewhere. Perhaps locked, perhaps trapped – but waiting for you to release it.

Connect your active life to a deeper mission, reintroduce seamlessness into your existence, and you will begin releasing the joy within you.

What better time to begin than in this joyous month of Adar? Join a Purim celebration, sing and dance with others, celebrate with people who are connecting to something higher than themselves. Celebrate the joy of Purim, which is called "ad d'lo yoda" – unbridled joy to the point beyond consciousness; the joy deeply embedded in the subconscious soul.

Finally this 4th piece

READ ESPECIALLY WHAT HE TOLD THE 30 YEAR DAUGHTER THAT FELT REJECTED BY HER MOTHER.

AND SEE HOW HE REPLIED TO HER.

I BELIEVE WHAT HE INCIDENTALLY EMPHASIZED TO HER IS TRUE. WHAT CAUSED HER PAIN WAS IN PART A INNER GIFT THAT COULD BE CULTIVATED AND BRING GREAT BLESSING INTO HER LIFE

## JOY AND DEPRESSION

Dear Rabbi,

I appreciated your last article, Joy Amidst Turmoil, but I wonder about your take that “every child ever born is always happy and joyful. Joy is hardwired in our hardware and in our software. Sadness is a superimposed state that we acquire once we begin to grow and experience disappointment and duplicity. Children learn to be sad from their parents and the "mature" world that they become exposed to.”

My experience is that there are children who seem to have sadness, fear and sensitivity hardwired into their systems, more than others. Some of my own kids seemed to be that way from a very young age, at age three or even younger, and they even remembered having such feelings.

As someone who has had many very difficult challenges, and also having struggled at times with depression, I feel that despite the passing years, decades of learning Chassidus and working on trying to be in a space of menuchas hanefesh (inner peace) and joy, at times it really is not my choice. It's like being pinned under a 10,000-pound boulder, which I cannot move even if I tried really, really hard?

Don't you think it's possible that some people have despondence hardwired into their moods and feelings more than others? And notwithstanding our ability to control it at times to a degree, we really don't have much choice?

Dear,

Your question is excellent and reflects some other comments we received to last week's article. Being that we are in the month of joy (Adar), and preparing for the most joyous day in the year (Purim), it is very appropriate to address your words. Especially considering that many others struggle with the issue of joy in their lives, and how they can celebrate when they simply feel depression running through their veins.

The real question is this: Simcha (joy) is a mitzvah in the Torah at all times, especially on holidays in general and Purim in particular, as well as Sukkot and Simchat Torah. If some people are hardwired with sadness, how can the Torah command and expect joy from all people across the board?

A fundamental axiom in Torah thought is that every Torah obligation is something that can be expected of humans. G-d told Moses “I do not ask according to My abilities; only according to their abilities.” Torah cannot and does not demand that we do something that we are unable to accomplish. This is based on the principle that the Torah is a blueprint of life given to us by the cosmic architect of life. How can the Creator of life ask us to do something that we do not have the power and are not hardwired to do?

The Torah's universal injunction of joy is a clear statement that every one of us has the power

to be joyous. This is the basis of my article last week that joy is embedded in our souls and in our genes, even if may be deeply concealed, and we have the power to access this reservoir.

How do we reconcile this with your observation and those of many others that depression seems to be the destiny of some people?

So let's take a closer look at the question: Are there depressed genes? Is sadness a product of nature or nurture?

Just as some children are tragically born with various diseases, there are children who seem to be born with a pre-disposition to melancholy, if not outright chronic depression.

But it's not that simple. Current medical research is sparse and inconclusive on the subject. Some researchers suspect that depression in preschoolers is likely biological and environmental. Some kids, they speculate, may be born with a genetic predisposition to depression, just as some children are born with autism, or Asperger's syndrome or attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder. But they really don't know. Nor do they know what triggers the depression.

Pediatric psychiatrist Dr. Charles Zeanah, director of the Institute for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health at Tulane University in New Orleans, says that though some depressed kids clearly come from parents who are depressed or have other psychiatric disorders, other depressed children have been abused or neglected, sometimes from infancy. But not all abused kids end up with depression. Nor do all the children of parents suffering depression end up depressed. Some preschoolers, Dr. Zeanah says, seem to be depressed for no apparent genetic or environmental reason.

Dr. Jess P. Shatkin, director of education and training at the NYU Child Study Center and assistant professor of psychiatry at the NYU School of Medicine, states the following: "The epidemiological studies that have been done on childhood depression have generally been small and too few in number to be definitive about the precise prevalence of childhood depression. Furthermore, it is often not easy to diagnose depression in a child, and as a field we are relatively new at making this diagnosis ourselves. Having said that, those studies that have been done are fairly consistent and suggest that about 1% of preschool, 2% of school age, and 4-8% of adolescents will at some point be depressed.

"We believe the causes to be multifaceted, but we don't really have a good answer to the question of etiology. We accept that depression, like many mental illnesses, tends to travel in families and therefore has some genetic basis. However, it does not run exclusively in families, and we expect that neurodevelopment, neurochemistry, and environment all play significant roles in the final common pathway of what appears to be depression."

In other words, we really have no clue whether children are born with a "depressed" gene. We also know that often a very early-childhood experience, a trauma at birth or even in the womb, can impact the child as if it was an innate trait. Certain experiences in life, especially in the earliest formative years, etch a permanent scar in the psyche, to the point that it can even rewire our systems, so that we cannot even distinguish whether our behavior is a result of nature or nurture.

Recently I counseled a special soul who always, from her earliest memories, was repelled by her mother. And indeed, her mother confirmed the fact that almost from birth her daughter refused to be held by her and would pull away every time her mother would reach for her. The mother was convinced, as was the daughter, that the girl was pre-wired to hate her mother.

Upon further observation and analysis it turned out that from the moment of conception and throughout pregnancy the mother never wanted this child. And she made it abundantly clear in her words, feelings and actions. So: What impact did her negative feelings have on her child? If a developing fetus senses for nine months on end and incessant rejection, and then again, when the child emerged from the womb, how does that affect the child's wiring? Is this nature or nurture, and can we even differentiate between the two?

One of the things that I incidentally emphasized to the daughter, who is now a thirty-year-old adult, is that she must be an unconventionally sensitive soul to have picked up on her mother's rejection, causing her to recoil every time her mother would reach for her even at birth! This ultra-sensitivity, when channeled properly, can be a tremendous asset in life.

With all this being said, whether sadness, anger, depression and the range of negative feelings we carry, are inborn or acquired, natural or man-made, the fact is that the soul also contains tremendous wellsprings of joy. So even we were to say that some more than others have sadness hardwired into our systems, we at worst have a battle on our hands: Which voice will prevail – our sad one or our happy one?

And who amongst us does not have this battle? Even if you were born with the happiest genes, into the happiest family, life itself can be quite cruel and our presenting challenges can often bring even the mightiest spirits down.

The Torah's mitzvah of joy is a combination of a challenge, a commandment, an expectation, a gift and an empowering statement to each one of us, telling us what we are truly capable of, making us aware of our soul's enormous potential: We have the power and ability to bring true and lasting joy into our lives, despite all circumstances.

In Tanya (chapter 17) Rabbi Schneur Zalman explains, that the mitzvah of loving G-d is not an easy one. Living in this material world, he says, most people immersed in their material desires, cannot be expected to burst with conscious love for the Divine. However, we can expect from everyone actions that are commensurate with love. Through meditating on our gifts and blessings and acting accordingly, we in effect are accessing the inherent, subconscious love in the soul that may be concealed. The same can be said of joy. Through cognitive exercises and respective positive actions, the inherent joy of the soul can be realized.

Obviously, each of us has our unique challenges in this regard, and we won't always rise to the occasion. That too should not be cause to further sadden us. Life is a battle fraught with sudden twists and turns, and sometimes we prevail and sometimes it's more difficult. It's vital to learn how to navigate and pace ourselves. Not every battle has to be waged head on. At times, like a good swimmer in a stormy sea, we need to lay back and let the choppy waves carry us instead of fighting them to exhaustion.



Those born into sad homes, or even with sad genes (should that be the case), or genes that were deeply impacted by a dysfunctional environment, clearly have very particular obstacles to overcome. But they too have souls and as such, have much joy, which is inherent to every soul.

Even those souls that have severe challenges from birth (not due to anything man-made) also have other tremendous resources – if only we were able to see beneath the surface. So even if one were to argue that certain children are hardwired with sadness that they cannot control, they have other areas which they can control, and they have joy in their souls that can always be accessed.

And those of us that grew up in happy homes and have happy genes, or genes that were nourished and stimulated in a nurturing environment, have our share of challenges.

The fact is – something I have witnessed time and again – there are people who were handed the harshest “set of cards” and they have learned to become, with strenuous work, highly evolved, refined and yes, joyful human beings, who shine and illuminate everyone they meet. And there are, sad to say (and I would have preferred not to articulate it), those who grew up in very privileged homes and environments, dealt the best possible “set of cards,” and have become spoiled brats, indulgent and arrogant human beings, bitter, angry and yes, very sad, who bring gloom wherever they go.

But the latter too have the ability to turn things around. Because the soul and its innate joy never dies. “I may be asleep, but my heart is awake.” And with the proper effort – and prerequisite honesty and humility – every one can access the deeper joy

That is what Purim is about. Discovering the profound joy in our hearts and souls, that often emerges, as it did in the Purim story, from the brink of the abyss. And this type of joy is the greatest and most permanent: A joy born out of pain cannot be destroyed by pain.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by kutan - 24 Dec 2009 15:38

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GYE will be offering speedreading courses for all those who enjoy Yechida's posts and find themselves without enough time to read them.

Stay tuned.

:( :( :(

sigh.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by imtrying25 - 24 Dec 2009 16:14

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[kutan shel hachabura wrote on 24 Dec 2009 15:38:](#)

GYE will be offering speedreading courses for all those who enjoy Yechida's posts and find themselves without enough time to read them.

Stay tuned.

:( :( :(

sigh.

Will they offer another set of eyes for when you lose them trying to read everything? YECHIDA  
YECHIDA YECHIDA YOUR A YOCHID B'DORO!!

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by letakain - 24 Dec 2009 16:38

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i lately don't have time to read everything but what i do read i always enjoy!

i always make sure to read what you write about yourself, yechida! to me, that is most

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 24 Dec 2009 20:46

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important. i cant' wait to see YOU coming out and sharing OF YOURSELF!  
thank you again for all your kind encouragement

letakain

and here is one of my favorites

The Beautiful Flower In The Broken Pot

Author Unknown

Our house was directly across the street from the clinic entrance of Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. We lived downstairs and rented the upstairs rooms to out patients at the clinic.

One summer evening as I was fixing supper, there was a knock at the door. I opened it to see a truly awful looking man. "Why, he's hardly taller than my eight-year-old," I thought as I stared at the stooped, shriveled body. But the appalling thing was his face, lopsided from swelling, red and raw.

Yet his voice was pleasant as he said, "Good evening. I've come to see if you've a room for just one night. I came for a treatment this morning from the eastern shore, and there's no bus 'til morning."

He told me he'd been hunting for a room since noon but with no success, no one seemed to have a room. "I guess it's my face... I know it looks terrible, but my doctor says with a few more treatments..."

For a moment I hesitated, but his next words convinced me: "I could sleep in this rocking chair on the porch. My bus leaves early in the morning."

I told him we would find him a bed, but to rest on the porch. I went inside and finished getting supper. When we were ready, I asked the old man if he would join us. "No thank you. I have plenty." And he held up a brown paper bag.

When I had finished the dishes, I went out on the porch to talk with him a few minutes. It didn't take a long time to see that this old man had an oversized heart crowded into that tiny body. He told me he fished for a living to support his daughter, her five children, and her husband, who was hopelessly crippled from a back injury.

He didn't tell it by way of complaint; in fact, every other sentence was preface with a thanks to God for a blessing. He was grateful that no pain accompanied his disease, which was apparently a form of skin cancer. He thanked God for giving him the strength to keep going.

At bedtime, we put a camp cot in the children's room for him. When I got up in the morning, the bed linens were neatly folded and the little man was out on the porch.

He refused breakfast, but just before he left for his bus, haltingly, as if asking a great favor, he said, Could I please come back and stay the next time I have a treatment? I won't put you out a bit. I can sleep fine in a chair." He paused a moment and then added, "Your children made me feel at home. Grownups are bothered by my face, but children don't seem to mind." I told him he was welcome to come again.

And on his next trip he arrived a little after seven in the morning.

As a gift, he brought a big fish and a quart of the largest oysters I had ever seen. He said he had shucked them that morning before he left so that they'd be nice and fresh. I knew his bus left at 4:00 a.m. and I wondered what time he had to get up in order to do this for us.

In the years he came to stay overnight with us there was never a time that he did not bring us fish or oysters or vegetables from his garden.

Other times we received packages in the mail, always by special delivery; fish and oysters packed in a box of fresh young spinach or kale, every leaf carefully washed. Knowing that he must walk three miles to mail these, and knowing how little money he had made the gifts doubly precious.

When I received these little remembrances, I often thought of a comment our next-door neighbor made after he left that first morning.

"Did you keep that awful looking man last night? I turned him away! You can lose roomers by putting up such people!"

Maybe we did lose roomers once or twice. But oh! If only they could have known him, perhaps their illnesses would have been easier to bear.

I know our family always will be grateful to have known him; from him we learned what it was to accept the bad without complaint and the good with gratitude to God.

Recently I was visiting a friend, who has a greenhouse, as she showed me her flowers, we came to the most beautiful one of all, a golden chrysanthemum, bursting with blooms. But to my great surprise, it was growing in an old dented, rusty bucket. I thought to myself, "If this were my plant, I'd put it in the loveliest container I had!"

My friend changed my mind. "I ran short of pots," she explained, and knowing how beautiful this one would be, I thought it wouldn't mind starting out in this old pail. It's just for a little while, till I can put it out in the garden."

She must have wondered why I laughed so delightedly, but I was imagining just such a scene in heaven. "Here's an especially beautiful one," God might have said when he came to the soul of the sweet old fisherman. "He won't mind starting in this small body."

All this happened long ago - and now, in God's garden, how tall this lovely soul must stand.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 24 Dec 2009 21:55

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A Great Stream by R Kook

There are various causes of depression. They must all be overcome by the joy of performing a mitzvah. This is a constant joy that suits Israel, because of the spiritual light that always rests upon the Jews.

One cause of depression is the surrender to a desire for coarse pleasure. When one does so, one's soul is drawn to a place of darkness, where it grieves over its descent. It is only right that this great woe be turned to joy, for when the soul rises from the yoke of exile that had burdened it, a great stream of joy rises up from below, and the refined, pure content grows ever richer in its spirituality.

Arpelei Tohar

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Re: yechida's reflections  
Posted by Dov - 24 Dec 2009 22:05

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Wow, again, thanks yechida (and rav Kook).

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Re: yechida's reflections  
Posted by bardichev - 24 Dec 2009 22:06

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[yechida wrote on 24 Dec 2009 14:43:](#)

4 items related to the Tanya .The second article especially read the last paragraph. the last 2 have a lot of gems in them so please read it carefully.read also the comment before the 4th.There is great truth in that 4th article.

Tanya-Part 4

Where does depression come from? Is it in any way positive? In the following letter the Rebbe addresses a student who was going through difficult times that it's all in the mind, and in that

the mind can change more easily than we think. Included is a newly released photo, courtesy of the Rebbe Archive.

By the Grace of G-d

27th of Teveth,

5721 Brooklyn, NY

Mr. ----- 5265 Park Avenue Montreal 8, Que.

Greeting and Blessing:

I received your letter and enclosures.

It is explained in many places in Chasidus, beginning with the Tanya, about the negative aspects of all forms of sadness, depression, despondency, etc. It is also clear from experience that these attitudes belong to the bag of tricks of the Yetzer Hora in order to distract the Jew from serving G-d. To achieve this end the Yetzer Hora sometimes even clothes itself in the mantle of piety.

The true test, however, is what the results are, whether these attitudes bring about an improvement in, and a fuller measure of Torah and Mitzvos, or the reverse. This should be easy to determine.

On the other hand we have been assured that "He who is determined to purify himself receives Divine help." The road to purity and holiness, however, is one that should be trodden step by step, and by gradual and steady advancement.

Needless to say, the idea of your continuing at the Yeshivah for some time is the right one. As for the question how and what to write to your parents, I suggest that you consult with Rabbi Joseph Weinberg, who knows them personally, and who could give you some useful suggestions.



Hoping to hear good news from you in all above,

With blessing,

(signature)

Good Shabbos

Menachem.

From askmoses.com

I would think that mingling boys and girl would cause problems with morality and having thoughts of, but it seems that depression (and from what I've read in other articles-anxiety) is a major major issues and in many cases a DIRECT result of commingling.

Why are orthodox Jews so strict about boys and girls not mingling?

by Rabbi Yossi Marcus

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Rabbi we have progressed. Schools are coed, boys and girls dance together at proms, and they enjoy it. Why is traditional Judaism so fearful of early romance and mingling?

Answer:

A wise man once said: "Not everything that is new is good and not everything that is old is mold."

Judaism values modesty, appreciates that girls should be girls and boys should be boys, and prefers romance when the time is ripe.

It is true modern society has progressed as you accurately describe. But it has progressed further than your description. It hasn't stopped at mingling. It continued into the ugly world of teenage promiscuity, pregnancy, depression, and more than an occasional suicide.

And it doesn't take an Einstein to correlate the obvious connection between the "progression" of coed activities and the increased rates of promiscuity, pregnancy and depression etc.

But since you put your faith in modernity, I will point you to an article written in a most modern periodical. Apparently whilst Judaism's perspectives have been around for a while, they have not expired. These ideas are quite alive in many "progressive" circles as well.

For example, in the April 16, 2001 issue of Time Magazine there was an article titled Puppy Love's Bite. The article examined the dangers of early romance.<sup>1</sup> It warned:

"A recent study of 8,000 adolescents in the Journal of Health and Social Behavior shows that love can be hell, especially when it strikes young. Although steady romantic attachments tend to increase the health and well-being of adults, those relationships are a great source of stress for adolescents and can lead to depression, the study says... Dr. Miriam Kaufman, a pediatrician and author..., says... "I advise kids not to jump into romances too early, because young adolescence is a time for girls to cement their friendships, and strong friendships--and a strong sense of self--help kids through the tough times".

From [www.meaningfullife.com](http://www.meaningfullife.com) (brother of R Jacobson who gave the Tanya shiur)

Terumah: Joy Amidst Turmoil

Dear Rabbi Jacobson,

I was very uplifted by your last class, The Secret of Finding Joy, which I viewed over the web (by the way, these classes are brilliant, one of the best kept secrets online; I tell everyone I know about them. You must find ways to distribute them widely). The way you explained the power of joy resonated deeply. Yet, I find it extremely difficult to implement these principles into my daily life. I was just laid off my job, my long-term savings have been depleted due to the economic turndown (or whatever name they call it), to boot I grew up in a dysfunctional home, which I am always healing from, and there are many other factors in my life that are hardly a cause for happiness. Indeed, I feel as if I am perpetually sad, with a few sporadic spurts of short-lived joy bouncing up here and there. I often feel as though I have been hardwired without joy or happiness. Some people seem to be naturally cheerful. And some of us seem to be inherently despondent if not miserable.

Pray tell me that I am wrong.

Respectfully,

M.

Dear M.,

Thank you for your kind, yet also sad words.

Let me get straight to the point. You are wrong. Very wrong.

Have you ever seen a newborn child sad? Every child ever born is always happy and joyful. Joy

is hardwired in our hardware and in our software. Sadness is a superimposed state that we acquire once we begin to grow and experience disappointment and duplicity. Children learn to be sad from their parents and the "mature" world that they become exposed to.

You may argue that children are naturally happy because they are naïve and have yet to witness "reality" – the harsh and cruel world in which we live, where people hurt each other and the many hardships that life presents us.

In truth, however, it is the other way around. A child is our most natural and quintessential state. The child's innate cheer comes from an inner peace and contentment which results from a lack of dichotomy in the child's life.

Seamlessness is the operative world. A child's consciousness is not split into parts. A child is not torn between its needs and its behavior. We adults are constantly torn between demands upon us and our own needs, between what we truly want and what we must do to survive, between who we essentially are and what we do. Between the needs of our bodies and the needs of our souls. Who among us can say that our daily work and activities reflect our deepest inner aspirations? Is there a person that has no conflict of interest between a personal life and a professional one, between the demands of your job and those of your home and family? Has anyone not compromised some of their idealism and values due to the pressures of the struggle for survival?

When there is a split there is tension. And where there is tension there is sadness. A measure of angst is always healthy – to keep us reaching and growing. But when the angst spills over into anxiety, despondence and depression are not far behind.

Children are the most perfect model of seamlessness: A smooth flow between the inner and the outer; where identity meets expression. Imagine that your outer expressions were always reflecting your inner needs, and your deepest aspirations always had an outlet of expression.

It is only from adults that children learn to be sad. Yes, we adults project our feelings on our children and as they develop and enter maturity that too learn the world of envy and greed, of selfishness and instant gratification, of struggling between what we know to be true and what we indulge in for our own pleasure.

You may then say, that all this is fine and good as long as we are children. But now that we have grown into adults, our childhoods lost, we no longer can access that inner contentment and happiness that is the domain of the child.

That may sound logical and... sad , but it is unequivocally wrong. The way we were born, the way we were hardwired always remains with us. Our inherent joy becomes concealed under many layers and veils, but it is embedded in our consciousness if not unconsciousness.

The question is how do we access it, especially once "paradise" has been seemingly lost? The answer goes back to the root of joy and happiness: Seamlessness. How does one achieve the seamless state, where there is no conflict between competing forces?

We can find our answer in an unlikely place – and one that is not even so popular today: Business.

The first cardinal rule of every venture is defining its mission statement. Without a concise and clearly stated purpose, everything that follows will be scattered and confused. Goals will be hard to set, and success will be difficult if not impossible to measure. The mission aligns all the steps of the operation from start to finish – from concept to final product, from the strategies and plans, to the actions and goals. It brings together and coordinates the entire enterprise into one seamless unit.

If so, you may ask, how is it that so many very focused businesses fail? Look around today, and we witness the collapse of numerous revered institutions, that had powerful mission statements and highly capable stewards at the helm. How did that happen? Read on.

So the secret of seamlessness – which lies behind the secret of happiness – is thus dependent on discovering the mission of our lives. Without that mission, our activities, involvements and investments – all our times and energy – will inevitably be unfocused, hence leading to tension and discord.

The mission of our lives is stated in this week's Torah portion. In perhaps the shortest and most concise mission statement ever made, the verse states: V'osu li mikdash v'shochanti

b'socham, Build Me a sanctuary and I will dwell among you.

Five words – V'osu li mikdash v'shochanti b'socham – define the purpose of existence and the mission and goal of each and every life: Take all the elements of your life, all your physical materials and material activities, direct all your faculties, gifts and opportunities toward one goal: Build Me a sanctuary and I will dwell among you.

Align all your energy and activities toward this one seamless goal, and you will find seamless happiness. It may be difficult to tackle every aspect of our lives, but we can always begin with aligning some areas toward the stated mission. You will find that joy is directly proportionate to the amount of focus of one's life toward fulfilling the higher mission.

And now a word about our current economic crisis. Even if one were to argue that some of our failed companies stuck to their missions – which is not necessarily the case; many clearly strayed from their own missions and sound strategies, taking unsound risks, due to greed and other selfish incentives, betraying the trust in them – they definitely did not live up to the larger mission of our entire system: Integrity. The only way that capitalism, which is driven by personal gain, can survive is through a fundamental trust (which incidentally is stated in many financial company's mission statements: Investments you can trust, "securities," take Prudential's "rock").

It surprises me that with all of our best minds at work trying to find a solution to the decaying economy, no one has suggested revisiting the initial "mission statement" of the United States of America – the driving ethos that gave birth in the first place to this mighty nation and created the climate for its thriving economy.

In the Declaration of Independence – which one can say is the USA's "mission statement" – the Founding Fathers, in their wisdom (and apparent study of the past failed systems and governments), understood that the key to this country's success lies only if it stands on a solid bedrock, an unwavering foundation: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

They did not make economic prosperity the mission or goal of this country. Free commerce and

financial success is a symptom, not a cause of freedom. They clearly knew that the driving mission of this country must be based on the absolute Divine equality endowed on all human beings. Governments are instituted to secure and protect the Divine unalienable rights of man, not the other way around. This is the only basis of trust, freedom and all the components necessary to allow for healthy relationships and successful businesses. Without faith, without accepting higher authority that gave us all the gift of life and liberty, what is there to protect one greedy man from another?

Socialism's argument against capitalism was always that we cannot trust people driven by personal gain and greed. Thus the need for deprivatization, eliminating all private property and ownership. The problem with this approach is that by the same argument we also cannot trust the socialists and the ones taking charge of the socialist revolution (as history has proven only too well). In days of old, a few monarchs controlled capital, with the same argument, that left on their own people's self-interests will destroy them. But could we trust the monarchs? One could argue perhaps, that less damage is possible if we isolate the abuse to a few people than to many. But a contrary argument can also be made.

Regardless, all these arguments make it absolutely clear and necessary that the only hope for capitalism to succeed is fundamental integrity and trust. You can create all the regulating you like – as if the SEC was doing its job – but without a deeper sense of faith and the feeling that we have to answer to a higher authority, no system could be trusted.

All our economic experts must do – all that the President must do – is look at the money in their own pockets. Engraved on every coin, etched on every bill, are the words "In God we trust."

The only antidote for human greed is the acceptance, respect and obligation to a higher calling, which in turn allows for trust of each other.

Our leaders today ought to simply echo and reiterate this nation's original mission statement – declaring the core base of our union is the Divine gift of life that we were all given equally, that "In God we trust" and with that trust "E Pluribus Unum," from the many, one, and we can thus trust each other, and become one despite our diversity. That without this common bond our system – our government, economy, politics and all our institutions – cannot endure. Without answering to a higher calling and authority, we will end up in the same place as so many mighty empires before us: History.

Our leaders must declare that integrity is good for business. Greed may work short-term, but can never endure.

Of course, this alone will not solve our problems. We need to rebuild (or create new models for) our institutions and structures. But without this essential trust – without the foundation – the structure cannot stand.

The turmoil and turbulence surrounding us today presents a unique opportunity to revisit our "point of departure:" Our initial missions. Which in turn allows us to realign our lives accordingly.

My suggestion to you, M., is to begin asking yourself: "What is my mission? Why was my soul sent down to Earth?" Though this may not be a short-term solution, I assure you that if you are persistent in your search, in time you will find your calling, and as you do you will become a happier person. Remember, you have joy inside of your soul. As a newborn child it was active. Then it may have retreated as you faced various challenges. But the happiness it is still in there somewhere. Perhaps locked, perhaps trapped – but waiting for you to release it.

Connect your active life to a deeper mission, reintroduce seamlessness into your existence, and you will begin releasing the joy within you.

What better time to begin than in this joyous month of Adar? Join a Purim celebration, sing and dance with others, celebrate with people who are connecting to something higher than themselves. Celebrate the joy of Purim, which is called "ad d'lo yoda" – unbridled joy to the point beyond consciousness; the joy deeply embedded in the subconscious soul.



Finally this 4th piece

READ ESPECIALLY WHAT HE TOLD THE 30 YEAR DAUGHTER THAT FELT REJECTED BY HER MOTHER.

AND SEE HOW HE REPLIED TO HER.

I BELIEVE WHAT HE INCIDENTALLY EMPHASIZED TO HER IS TRUE. WHAT CAUSED HER PAIN WAS IN PART A INNER GIFT THAT COULD BE CULTIVATED AND BRING GREAT BLESSING INTO HER LIFE

## JOY AND DEPRESSION

Dear Rabbi,

I appreciated your last article, Joy Amidst Turmoil, but I wonder about your take that "every child ever born is always happy and joyful. Joy is hardwired in our hardware and in our software. Sadness is a superimposed state that we acquire once we begin to grow and experience disappointment and duplicity. Children learn to be sad from their parents and the "mature" world that they become exposed to."

My experience is that there are children who seem to have sadness, fear and sensitivity hardwired into their systems, more than others. Some of my own kids seemed to be that way from a very young age, at age three or even younger, and they even remembered having such feelings.

As someone who has had many very difficult challenges, and also having struggled at times with depression, I feel that despite the passing years, decades of learning Chassidus and working on trying to be in a space of menuchas hanefesh (inner peace) and joy, at times it really is not my choice. It's like being pinned under a 10,000-pound boulder, which I cannot move even if I tried really, really hard?

Don't you think it's possible that some people have despondence hardwired into their moods

and feelings more than others? And notwithstanding our ability to control it at times to a degree, we really don't have much choice?

Dear,

Your question is excellent and reflects some other comments we received to last week's article. Being that we are in the month of joy (Adar), and preparing for the most joyous day in the year (Purim), it is very appropriate to address your words. Especially considering that many others struggle with the issue of joy in their lives, and how they can celebrate when they simply feel depression running through their veins.

The real question is this: Simcha (joy) is a mitzvah in the Torah at all times, especially on holidays in general and Purim in particular, as well as Sukkot and Simchat Torah. If some people are hardwired with sadness, how can the Torah command and expect joy from all people across the board?

A fundamental axiom in Torah thought is that every Torah obligation is something that can be expected of humans. G-d told Moses "I do not ask according to My abilities; only according to their abilities." Torah cannot and does not demand that we do something that we are unable to accomplish. This is based on the principle that the Torah is a blueprint of life given to us by the cosmic architect of life. How can the Creator of life ask us to do something that we do not have the power and are not hardwired to do?

The Torah's universal injunction of joy is a clear statement that every one of us has the power to be joyous. This is the basis of my article last week that joy is embedded in our souls and in our genes, even if may be deeply concealed, and we have the power to access this reservoir.

How do we reconcile this with your observation and those of many others that depression seems to be the destiny of some people?

So let's take a closer look at the question: Are there depressed genes? Is sadness a product of nature or nurture?

Just as some children are tragically born with various diseases, there are children who seem to be born with a pre-disposition to melancholy, if not outright chronic depression.

But it's not that simple. Current medical research is sparse and inconclusive on the subject. Some researchers suspect that depression in preschoolers is likely biological and environmental. Some kids, they speculate, may be born with a genetic predisposition to depression, just as some children are born with autism, or Asperger's syndrome or attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder. But they really don't know. Nor do they know what triggers the depression.

Pediatric psychiatrist Dr. Charles Zeanah, director of the Institute for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health at Tulane University in New Orleans, says that though some depressed kids clearly come from parents who are depressed or have other psychiatric disorders, other depressed children have been abused or neglected, sometimes from infancy. But not all abused kids end up with depression. Nor do all the children of parents suffering depression end up

depressed. Some preschoolers, Dr. Zeanah says, seem to be depressed for no apparent genetic or environmental reason.

Dr. Jess P. Shatkin, director of education and training at the NYU Child Study Center and assistant professor of psychiatry at the NYU School of Medicine, states the following: "The epidemiological studies that have been done on childhood depression have generally been small and too few in number to be definitive about the precise prevalence of childhood depression. Furthermore, it is often not easy to diagnose depression in a child, and as a field we are relatively new at making this diagnosis ourselves. Having said that, those studies that have been done are fairly consistent and suggest that about 1% of preschool, 2% of school age, and 4-8% of adolescents will at some point be depressed.

"We believe the causes to be multifaceted, but we don't really have a good answer to the question of etiology. We accept that depression, like many mental illnesses, tends to travel in families and therefore has some genetic basis. However, it does not run exclusively in families, and we expect that neurodevelopment, neurochemistry, and environment all play significant roles in the final common pathway of what appears to be depression."

In other words, we really have no clue whether children are born with a "depressed" gene. We also know that often a very early-childhood experience, a trauma at birth or even in the womb, can impact the child as if it was an innate trait. Certain experiences in life, especially in the earliest formative years, etch a permanent scar in the psyche, to the point that it can even rewire our systems, so that we cannot even distinguish whether our behavior is a result of nature or nurture.

Recently I counseled a special soul who always, from her earliest memories, was repelled by her mother. And indeed, her mother confirmed the fact that almost from birth her daughter refused to be held by her and would pull away every time her mother would reach for her. The mother was convinced, as was the daughter, that the girl was pre-wired to hate her mother.

Upon further observation and analysis it turned out that from the moment of conception and throughout pregnancy the mother never wanted this child. And she made it abundantly clear in her words, feelings and actions. So: What impact did her negative feelings have on her child? If a developing fetus senses for nine months on end and incessant rejection, and then again, when the child emerged from the womb, how does that affect the child's wiring? Is this nature or nurture, and can we even differentiate between the two?

One of the things that I incidentally emphasized to the daughter, who is now a thirty-year-old adult, is that she must be an unconventionally sensitive soul to have picked up on her mother's rejection, causing her to recoil every time her mother would reach for her even at birth! This ultra-sensitivity, when channeled properly, can be a tremendous asset in life.

With all this being said, whether sadness, anger, depression and the range of negative feelings we carry, are inborn or acquired, natural or man-made, the fact is that the soul also contains tremendous wellsprings of joy. So even we were to say that some more than others have sadness hardwired into our systems, we at worst have a battle on our hands: Which voice will prevail – our sad one or our happy one?

And who amongst us does not have this battle? Even if you were born with the happiest genes, into the happiest family, life itself can be quite cruel and our presenting challenges can often bring even the mightiest spirits down.

The Torah's mitzvah of joy is a combination of a challenge, a commandment, an expectation, a gift and an empowering statement to each one of us, telling us what we are truly capable of, making us aware of our soul's enormous potential: We have the power and ability to bring true and lasting joy into our lives, despite all circumstances.

In Tanya (chapter 17) Rabbi Schneur Zalman explains, that the mitzvah of loving G-d is not an easy one. Living in this material world, he says, most people immersed in their material desires, cannot be expected to burst with conscious love for the Divine. However, we can expect from everyone actions that are commensurate with love. Through meditating on our gifts and blessings and acting accordingly, we in effect are accessing the inherent, subconscious love in the soul that may be concealed. The same can be said of joy. Through cognitive exercises and respective positive actions, the inherent joy of the soul can be realized.

Obviously, each of us has our unique challenges in this regard, and we won't always rise to the occasion. That too should not be cause to further sadden us. Life is a battle fraught with sudden twists and turns, and sometimes we prevail and sometimes it's more difficult. It's vital to learn how to navigate and pace ourselves. Not every battle has to be waged head on. At times, like a good swimmer in a stormy sea, we need to lay back and let the choppy waves carry us instead of fighting them to exhaustion.

Those born into sad homes, or even with sad genes (should that be the case), or genes that were deeply impacted by a dysfunctional environment, clearly have very particular obstacles to overcome. But they too have souls and as such, have much joy, which is inherent to every soul.

Even those souls that have severe challenges from birth (not due to anything man-made) also have other tremendous resources – if only we were able to see beneath the surface. So even if one were to argue that certain children are hardwired with sadness that they cannot control, they have other areas which they can control, and they have joy in their souls that can always be accessed.

And those of us that grew up in happy homes and have happy genes, or genes that were nourished and stimulated in a nurturing environment, have our share of challenges.

The fact is – something I have witnessed time and again – there are people who were handed the harshest “set of cards” and they have learned to become, with strenuous work, highly evolved, refined and yes, joyful human beings, who shine and illuminate everyone they meet. And there are, sad to say (and I would have preferred not to articulate it), those who grew up in very privileged homes and environments, dealt the best possible “set of cards,” and have become spoiled brats, indulgent and arrogant human beings, bitter, angry and yes, very sad, who bring gloom wherever they go.

But the latter too have the ability to turn things around. Because the soul and its innate joy never dies. “I may be asleep, but my heart is awake.” And with the proper effort – and prerequisite honesty and humility – every one can access the deeper joy

That is what Purim is about. Discovering the profound joy in our hearts and souls, that often emerges, as it did in the Purim story, from the brink of the abyss. And this type of joy is the greatest and most permanent: A joy born out of pain cannot be destroyed by pain.

GUARD CAN THIS WIN THE LONGEST POST ON GUE??

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 25 Dec 2009 13:35

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The Wise Sage

Author Unknown

There once was a wise sage who wandered the countryside. One day, as he passed near a village, he was approached by a woman who told him of a sick child nearby. She beseeched him to help this child.

So the sage came to the village, and a crowd gathered around him, for such a man was a rare sight. One woman brought the sick child to him, and he said a prayer over her.

"Do you really think your prayer will help her, when medicine has failed?" yelled a man from the crowd.

"You know nothing of such things! You are a stupid fool!" said the sage to the man.

The man became very angry with these words and his face grew hot and red. He was about to say something, or perhaps strike out, when the sage walked over to him and said: "If one word has such power as to make you so angry and hot, may not another have the power to heal?"

And thus, the sage healed two people that day.

"Language does have the power to change reality. Therefore, treat your words as the mighty instruments they are - to heal, to bring into being, to nurture, to cherish, to bless, to forgive." - Daphne Rose Kingma

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