

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 - 30 Dec 2009 19:08

Keep Swimming

by: Author Unknown,

Two frogs fell into a deep cream bowl.

One was an optimistic soul.

But the other took the gloomy view.

"We'll drown," he lamented without much ado,

and with a last despairing cry,

he flung up his legs and said "Goodbye."

Quote the other frog with a steadfast grin,

"I can't get out but I won't give in,

I'll just swim around till my strength is spent,

then I'll die the more content."

Bravely he swam to work his scheme,

and his struggles began to churn the cream.

The more he swam, his legs a flutter,

the more the cream turned into butter.

On top of the butter at last he stopped,

and out of the bowl he gaily hopped.

What is the moral? It's easily found...

If you can't hop out, keep swimming around!

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 30 Dec 2009 19:32

Modesty by R kook

The trait of modesty brings about many important aspects of goodness in the world. Because it is so worthwhile, it sets aside other things, even though they are intrinsically good. A person's drive and weak self-control could destroy the trait of modesty, which maintains the world, both spiritual and physical.

Love and friendship, with all their pleasant characteristics and words, should really have been equal between man and woman.

But the great worth of modesty takes precedence. And so politeness is set aside-even to the point that a man should not inquire of another how his wife is doing (Kiddushin 70a).

A modest person realizes that it is not disparagement of women that leads to this distance and these boundaries. It is rather the focus on the ultimate, worthy goal.

We see something similar in our exposure to ideas. We maintain a fitting distance, with an almost instinctual sense, from ideas that would damage our sense of ethics. It might at times appear that we are rejecting freedom of thought. But when we are aware of our goal, we will recognize the great worth of our self-limitation and accept it lovingly.

Midot Harayah, p. 90

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by letakain - 30 Dec 2009 21:08

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cool. thanks, Yechida! i love when i have an extra second to read ur posts! always worth it!

Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 30 Dec 2009 21:53

Thank you letakein

and here is another thought

Set Yourself Free

Edmund O'Neill

Set yourself free from anything that might hinder you in becoming the person you want to be. Free yourself from the uncertainties about your abilities or the worth of your dreams, from the fears that you may not be able to achieve them or that they won't be what you wanted.

Set yourself free from the past. The good things from yesterday are still yours in memory; the things you want to forget you will, for tomorrow is only a sunrise away. Free yourself from regret or guilt, and promise to live this day as fully as you can.

Set yourself free from the expectations of others, and never feel guilty or embarrassed if you do not live up to their standards. You are most important to yourself; live by what you feel is best and right for you. Others will come to respect your integrity and honesty.

Set yourself free to simply be yourself, and you will soar higher than you've ever dreamed.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 30 Dec 2009 21:55

Be that self which one truly is.

(Soren Kierkegaard)

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by Elya K - 30 Dec 2009 22:10

Here are some reflections I read daily:

Keep it simple

First things first

Do the next right thing

If you don't know what to do, do nothing

Take things one day at a time

Don't give up

The only way around is through - Robert Frost

Until one is committed there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness.

Concerning all acts of

Initiative and creation, there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans. The moment one definitely commits oneself, all sorts of things begin to happen that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the committed decision, raising in one's favor all matter of incidents, meetings and material assistance, which no man could have dreamed would come his way. Whatever you can do, or dream, you can begin. Boldness has genius, power and magic on it. Begin it now... Goethe.

The world is a better place because I'm here.

Do I want to continue this or not? Do I want to be angry or right?

I wonder how quickly I will release the pattern in my consciousness that is creating resistance to my good.

The event does not determine your fate. It's your coping with the event.

To have more of what you've got, you've got to change who you are in relation to what you want more of... If you haven't

Changed who you are in relation to what you want, you'll always be the one who wants it, not the one who has it.

If you ever feel scared and losing faith in a higher power to lead you through difficult times. I never fail to be amazed, gratified, and reassured, when I remind myself of the synchronicities in my life, those intersections and turning points that seem divinely guided. When I go back in time and review my life with this lens, I am always reassured that I am not alone, and that eventually, it will all work out as it is supposed to. Yes, we have free will, but haven't all of us experienced moments where it feels as if our life is predestined after all?

"That man is a success who has lived well,

Laughed often and loved much;

Who has gained the respect of intelligent men and the love of children;

Who has filled his niche and accomplished his task;

Who leaves the world better than he found it,

Whether by a perfect poem or a rescued soul,

Who never lacked appreciation of the earth's beauty or failed to express it;

Who looked for the best in others and gave the best he had."

--Robert Louis Stevenson

When you relinquish the desire to control your future, you can have more happiness.

Humor is a rubber sword - it allows you to make your point without drawing blood... Mary Hirsch

The reward for conformity was that everyone like you except yourself...Rita Mae Brown

It's a sign of mediocrity when you demonstrate gratitude with moderation...Roberto Benigni

You're only given a little spark of madness. You musn't lose it... Robin Williams

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 31 Dec 2009 13:38

Thank you Elya

I particularly enjoyed the ones by Frost and Stevenson

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 31 Dec 2009 13:44

Tanya 26 part 9

Here are 2 accounts that relate to what was discussed above

Account # 1

From Aish.com part of article Asking the right question by Cheryl Berman (please read the full account there)

I had suffered a severe concussion in addition to my other injuries. Later I would be grateful for those sharp headaches and temporary amnesia. It put off the larger religious issues that would eventually plague me. It was the wedding of a close friend that ultimately brought out the questions. My friends had gone off to dance with the bride leaving me at the table with my leg, encased in its fiberglass cast, resting on the chair next to mine. I sat there half listening to the energetic music, but mostly feeling completely and utterly alone. And then, at the height of my depression, I allowed myself to question. Why did God do this to me? Did I do something wrong?

I desperately needed some answers. Fortunately, as a philosophy major in college I had the tools with which to begin my excavation. I scrounged the writings of Saadya Gaon, Rambam, and others, gleaning a tremendous amount from their works, but something was still missing. I learned so much about faith and the philosophical problem of evil, and yet I was still so utterly alone. Everyone around me functioned as if nothing had happened...and yet something did. And my philosophers could not make the pain go away.

It took one particular Jewish thinker to make me understand why my search for answers left me feeling cold and empty. I needed to grasp the concept that no intellectual answer would ever

suffice. It was acceptance that I needed to embrace, not intellectual satisfaction. And I needed to understand that these types of situations should be perceived as communications from God; not punishments. They are God's way of trying to tell us something.

In his essay Kol Dodi Dofek, the 20th century Jewish thinker Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik describes two different types of people -- the Man of Fate and the Man of Destiny. The Man of Fate responds to tragedy by questioning. He wonders how a God who is all good could cause evil. He comes up with solutions to his queries, but the philosophical solutions don't address the real issue.

If we perceive suffering as a message from God, we can begin to ask the question: what can I do to respond?

The Man of Destiny responds very differently. He doesn't ask, Why? He asks, What? He doesn't ponder the philosophical ramifications of evil, which do nothing to further him as a person. Instead he asks: What can I do in face of this evil? How can I respond to it?

The Man of Destiny creates a life altering experience out of his suffering; while the Man of Fate sits on his brown leather couch and continues to ponder. If we perceive suffering as a message from God, we can begin to ask the question of the Man of Destiny: what can I do to respond? Only then can we redeem the tragedy; only then can we find meaning in suffering; and only then can we begin to sense the true hand of God.

So that's what I did. I started to ask myself new questions: What can I do with this experience? How can I transform it into a positive force within myself and the world at large?

The answers to those questions were not simple. They required a deep understanding of myself and my relationship with God. The difference between this search and my former search however, was that this one brought me what I had really sought from the beginning: a deeper connection to God. Finally, I felt no longer alone.

Account # 2

My name is Brian Boyle, and I am living

proof that miracles happen.

A month after I graduated high school in 2004,

I was coming home from swim practice and was involved in a near fatal car accident with a dump

truck. The impact of the crash violently ripped my heart across my chest, shattering my ribs/clavicle/pelvis, collapsing my lungs, causing damage to every single organ, failure of my kidneys and liver, removal of spleen and gallbladder, resulting in the loss of 60% of my blood, severe nerve damage to my left shoulder, and leaving me in a coma where I was on life support for over two months at Prince Georges Hospital Center in Cheverly, MD.

I don't have a memory of the accident, or the few days before the day of the accident. The first thing that I remember after the collision, which is still so vivid in my mind even today, is being in this very large white tube. In this tube was a boy sitting to my left, and many other boys and girls on my right side (I use the term "boys and girls" because they appeared to be my age.) I didn't know why I was there or how I even got there in the first place. The more I sat there, the more I was able to visualize my surroundings. The boy to my left had a cell phone, and he asked me if I needed him to call anyone for me. I told him "yes, can you call my parents and tell them that I love them." The next thing that I remember is waking up in a hospital bed, chemically paralyzed and hooked up to all these machines. Through all the buzzes and beeps going off from the medical equipment that was saving my life at that instant, I could hear my mom and dad telling me in between dramatic pauses of crying hysterically that I was going to be okay. Only moments before I believe I was waiting in line to meet my final judgment, but it must have not been my time. Moments later, I had come back to life. This was just the beginning of my suffering.

I died eight times while I was in the intensive care unit and even when I woke up from my coma, I couldn't talk or communicate. No one knew for sure if I would leave my room in a wheelchair or a body bag. As far as the future, it didn't exist. Walking was never going to happen again due to all the extreme injuries and because of the shattered pelvis. The thought of swimming was just that, only a thought. Just like my body, my dreams were shattered. But, I didn't give up because I knew that God had a plan for me.

After spending two months in a coma, 14 operations, 36 blood transfusions, 13 plasma treatments, I lost a total of 100 pounds and had to go to a rehabilitation center in Baltimore. I had to learn how to talk, eat, walk, shower, and live independently again. After that agonizing experience, I had to go to outpatient therapy in Waldorf, MD. After spending a few months in a wheelchair, I took baby steps to walk on my own. It was a miracle that I could walk again, but I wanted to prove the doctors wrong and not only walk, but run. After I accomplished that, I wanted to get back in the pool again. After a few lung tests, I was able to go in the pool a little bit each week.

Before the accident I had three goals: to go to college, swim on the team, and compete in an ironman triathlon one day. After a few months of swimming a few laps here and there with my training partner and good buddy, Sam Fleming, I decided that I was not going to let my injuries stop me from living my dream. Six months after that I began my freshman year at St. Mary's College of Maryland - and became a proud member of the swim team.

It's very easy to go through and list these facts and make it look like everything just seemed to easily fall in it's own perfect little place, but the truth of the matter is that it didn't. It wasn't easy, not then, and not now. The pain and the agony was real and it existed all the way through - in the good times and the very bad.

It was not an easy situation to be laying in a bed, staring at the ceiling, knowing that your life is over while you're looking at a priest give you the last rights. I thought to myself over and over, why did this happen to me. I was always a good kid, received good grades in school, and went to church. Why would something as horrific as this happen to me? Why would God allow this? I went on and on for days asking why? And, then it hit me. All that thinking and pondering on the what-if scenarios and the questionable doubt only stirred up another question - why was I saved? I didn't have anymore questions after that. I finally understood my purpose in life.

With the 50 year life expectancy I was given from the doctors, I am now just trying to live each day to the fullest and motivate and hopefully inspire other people in their lives and faith. Some people say I am like 'Lazarus' because God brought me back to life. All I know is that I want to take full advantage of the precious time we are given.

My story is about the recovery and the comeback, but I want to make it much more than that. I want to make a positive impact on the world. I want to motivate and hopefully inspire other people through my endeavors to never give up on their dreams and to never stop believing in their faith in God no matter how bad a situation may appear.

Update: Brian recently completed the Steelhead 70.3 half-ironman race in Michigan and was also given the inspirational athlete media slot to compete in the 2007 Ford Ironman World Championship where his story appeared on NBC's 'Ironman' show as the main feature.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 31 Dec 2009 15:45

kanesher has a beautiful insight in yesterday's chizzuk e-mail

and that beautiful melody continues on despite some bumps on the road....

Hang In There

by: Author Unknown, Source Unknown

Nicolo Paganini was a well-known and gifted nineteenth century violinist. He was also well known as a great showman with a quick sense of humor. His most memorable concert was in Italy with a full orchestra. He was performing before a packed house and his technique was incredible, his tone was fantastic, and his audience dearly loved him. Toward the end of his concert, Paganini was astounding his audience with an unbelievable composition when suddenly one string on his violin snapped and hung limply from his instrument. Paganini frowned briefly, shook his head, and continued to play, improvising beautifully.

Then to everyone's surprise, a second string broke. And shortly thereafter, a third. Almost like a slapstick comedy, Paganini stood there with three strings dangling from his Stradivarius. But instead of leaving the stage, Paganini stood his ground and calmly completed the difficult number on the one remaining string.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 31 Dec 2009 16:29

I decided to post this because of last two sentences she wrote .the root of the problem lies there, and the root of the healing lies there, and despite many causes and many effects and many manifestations of many hurtful behaviors, the root is the broken heart, yes, a very overused term ,yes, a cliché?, and often the term “broken heart” is thrown around lightly and wrongfully, and vaguely, misused as an excuse for bad behavior, for laziness, for moping, for not living life, but there are times where this “broken heart” is really is the worst hell that is felt within a person, the worst hell, when you have to be there all alone, by yourself. In that hell, they are lost and alone and broken, and will remain that way until they feel that warm and comforting hand finding its way into their own, giving them hope and love and the will to go on. When two people in hell who truly love each other embrace, it is no longer hell---it's the beginning of a journey towards healing

Prozac Nation - by Elizabeth Wurtzel

I guess the cutting began when I started to spend my lunch period hiding in the girls' locker room, scared to death of everybody around me. I would bring my functional black and silver Panasonic, meant for voice recording and not music, and I would listen intently to the scratchy sounds of the tapes I'd accumulated, mostly popular hard rock like Foreigner, which, trashy as it was, sounded like liberation to me. I'd sit there with my tape recorder, eating cottage cheese and pineapples from a stout thermos I brought from home (I was, by this time, also certain that I was fat), and it was a peaceful relief from having to deal with other people, whether they were teachers or friends. Every so often, I would sit in the locker room on the floor, leaning against the concrete wall while my tape recorder sat on the bench, and I would fantasize about going back to the person I had always been. The reverse transformation couldn't be that much of a leap. I could just try talking to people again. I could get the astonished look off my face, as if my eyes had just been exposed to a terrible glare. I could laugh a bit. I would imagine myself doing the things I once did, like playing tennis. Every so often I would make a decision, first thing in the morning as I headed out the door for the school bus, that I was going to be bright-eyed and bushy-tailed that day; I would be friendly, I would smile, I would raise my hand in math class from time to time. I remember those days, because I could see how my friends got this look of relief on their faces. I would walk toward them, standing in a huddle in the blue-carpeted hall outside of the classroom, and they would half expect me to say something like 'Everything's plastic, we're all gonna die' and instead I would just say, Good Morning, And suddenly, their bodies would relax, their shoulders would drop comfortably, and sometimes they would even say, Oh wow, you're the old Lizzy again, kind of like a parent who has finally accepted that his oldest son has become a Shiite Muslim and is moving to Iran when, suddenly, the kid returns home and announces that he wants to go to law school after all. My friends, and my mother for that matter, would be relieved to find that I was more the me they wanted me to be. The trouble was, I thought this alternative persona I had adopted was just that: a put-on, a way of getting attention, a way of being different. And maybe when I first started walking around talking about plastic and death, maybe then it was an experiment. But after a while, the alternative me really just was me. Those days that I tried to be the little girl I was supposed to be drained me. I went

home at night and cried for hours because so many people in my life expecting me to be a certain way was too much pressure, as if I'd been held against a wall and interrogated for hours, asked questions I couldn't quite answer any longer. I remember being in a panic one day at school when I realized that I could not even fake being the old Lizzy anymore. I had, indeed, metamorphosed into this nihilistic, unhappy girl. Just like Gregor Samsa waking up to find he'd become a six foot long roach, only in my case, I had invented the monster and now it was overtaking me. This was what I'd come to. This was what I'd be for the rest of my life. Things were bad now and would get worse later. They would. I had not heard the word depression yet, and would not for some time after that, but I felt something very wrong going on. I felt that I was wrong - my hair was wrong, my face was wrong, my personality was wrong - my God, my choice of flavors at the Haagan Dazs shop after school was wrong! How could I walk around with such pasty white skin, such dark, doleful eyes, such straight anemic hair, such round hips and such a small clinched waist? How could I let anybody see me this way? How could I expose other people to my person, to this bane to the world? I was one big mistake. And so, sitting in the locker room, petrified that I was doomed to spend my life hiding from people this way, I took my keys out of my knapsack. On the chain was a sharp nail clipper, which had a nail file attached to it. I rolled down my knee socks (we were required to wear skirts to school) and looked at my bare white legs. I hadn't really started shaving yet, only from time to time because my mother considered me too young, and I looked at the delicate peach fuzz, still soft and untainted. A perfect, clean canvas. So I took the nail file, found its sharp edge, and ran it across my lower leg, watching a red line of blood appear across my skin. I was surprised at how straight the line was and at how easy it was for me to hurt myself in this way. It was almost fun. I was always the sort to pick scabs and peel sunburned skin in sheets off my shoulders, always pestering my body. This was just the next step. And how much more satisfying it was to muck up my own body than relying on mosquitoes and walks in the country among thorny bushes to do it for me. I made a few more scratches, alternating between legs, this time moving the file more quickly, less cautiously. I did not, you see, want to kill myself. Not at that time, anyway. But I wanted to know that if need be, if the desperation got so terribly bad, I could inflict harm on my body. And I could. Knowing this gave me a sense of peace and power, so I started cutting up my legs all the time. Hiding the scars from my mother became a sport of its own. I collected razor blades, I bought a Swiss Army knife, I became fascinated with different kinds of sharp edges and the different cutting sensations they produced. I tried out different shapes - squares, triangles, pentagons, even an awkwardly carved heart, with a stab wound at its center, wanting to see if it hurt the way a real broken heart could hurt. I was amazed and pleased to find that it didn't.

Elizabeth Wurtzel

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 31 Dec 2009 16:49

Love Is Action –Jason Westlake

Love is found in action, not in our feelings

Love is found in doing, not in our thoughts

Love based only in feelings cannot last

Love without action is no love at all

If a couple in love falls out of love

If we don't feel we love them any more

If there are people in this world we detest

If we can't forgive some people for their misdeeds

To save a marriage, to save a friendship

To rekindle that flame lost long ago

To maintain a spark within a relationship

Don't assume the opportunity is lost

Because we must love them to regain that feeling

Listening, serving, and understanding

Help to open our hearts to retrieve that feeling

Which comes only after the action is taken

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 31 Dec 2009 16:56

Dear friends

signing off until Monday

have a wonderful Shabbos , my wonderful brothers and sisters

Being Polite

Sidney J. Harris

I walked with a friend to the newsstand the other night, and he bought a paper, thanking the owner politely. The owner, however, did not even acknowledge it.

"A sullen fellow, isn't he?" I commented as we walked away.

"Oh, he's that way every night," shrugged my friend.

"Then why do you continue being so polite to him?" I asked.

And my friend replied, "Why should I let him determine how I'm going to act?"

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by habib613 - 31 Dec 2009 17:12

good shabbos!

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by Dov - 31 Dec 2009 21:34

Yechida - read your stuff - loved it again - thanks very much, and more power to you.

Love,

Dov

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