

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 - 04 Feb 2010 17:36

Tanya 27 part 7

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Concerning this Job said to G d: 4 “You have created wicked men,” as though it were preordained that one man be wicked, and another righteous.

In the first chapter, the Alter Rebbe pointed out that this is contradicted by the statement in the Gemara that before a child is born, G d decrees whether he shall be wise or foolish, strong or weak, and so on, but does not determine whether he will be righteous or wicked — this is left to one’s own choice. The meaning of Job’s statement becomes clear, however, in light of the above discussion. True, G d does not ordain whether man will act wickedly, but He does “create wicked men,” in the sense that their minds work like the mind of the rasha, with evil thoughts constantly occurring to them. G d created them in this way so that they will engage in battle with these thoughts, and thereby subjugate the sitra achra — as the Alter Rebbe now goes on to say.

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The implication of Job’s statement is not that they were created to actually be wicked, G d forbid, i.e., sinful in thought, speech and action,

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but that there should occur to them, in their thoughts and musings alone, that which occurs to the wicked, 5 i.e., that evil thoughts should enter their mind, as they do in the mind of the wicked,

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and they shall eternally wage war to avert their minds from them in order to subjugate the sitra achra,

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yet they will never be able to annihilate the sitra achra in their souls completely, for this is accomplished by tzaddikim.

A tzaddik subjugates his animal soul to such a degree that it is unable to arouse temptation in his heart. His mind is therefore untroubled by evil thoughts. Those, however, of whom Job said that they were “created wicked,” cannot rise to this level. It is always possible for evil thoughts to enter their minds; their task is not to give them free rein.

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For there are two kinds of Divine pleasure:

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one, from the complete annihilation of the sitra achra, and the conversion of bitter to sweet and of darkness to light (— the former referring to the emotional faculties of the animal soul, and the latter to its mental faculties), which is accomplished by tzaddikim;

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and the second: when the sitra achra is subdued while it is still at its strongest and most powerful, soaring like an eagle,

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and from this height G d topples it in response to human initiative i.e., as a result of one's efforts at subduing the sitra achra in his soul. This is accomplished by Beinonim.

Each of the two aforementioned categories — those who were “created righteous” and who were “created wicked” — brings about one of these two kinds of Divine gratification.

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This is alluded to in the verse, 6 “And make me delicacies, such as I love,”

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where the word matamim (“delicacies”) is written in the plural, indicating two kinds of pleasure.

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These words are the charge of the Shechinah to its children, the community of Israel, as explained in Tikkunei Zohar — that with these words G d asks of the Jewish people to please Him with their divine service.

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Just as with material food, there are two kinds of delicacies—

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one of sweet and luscious foods, and the other of sharp or sour articles which are unpleasant to eat in their natural state,

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but have been well spiced and prepared so that they become delicacies which revive the soul — so too are there two kinds of spiritual delicacies.

One is provided by tzaddikim, who are occupied solely with matters that are “good” and “sweet” — holy matters. Having conquered the evil of their animal soul, they no longer need grapple with the sitra achra. Their divine service consists of increasing the light of holiness. The second kind of delicacy is provided by Beinonim, who are occupied with “bitter” matters, with battling against the sitra achra in their soul, and with the evil thoughts that it spawns.

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This is indicated in the verse, 7 “The L-rd has made everything for His sake; even the wicked for the day of evil.”

How can it be said that the rasha was created for G d’s sake?

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This means, however, that he should repent of his evil, and turn his evil into “day” and light above,

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when the sitra achra is subdued, and the glory of G d is uplifted on high.

Thus, the meaning of the words “even the wicked for the day of evil” is that the purpose of the wicked is to transform the “evil” into “day”.

Remember this

Tzaddikim are Jewish Supermen. Even Kryptonite won't affect them

A Tzaddik is repulsed by unhealthy wrong urges. He will vomit when confronted by it.

Seeing an evil act is to him like seeing someone eating glass.

We are not like this.

We will never maintain that spiritual equilibrium

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For perhaps this is what he was created for, and this is the service demanded of him — to subdue the sitra achra constantly.

Hashem needs a 2 course meal

1-of a sweet tasty pleasant variety

2-the sour spicy variety

Type 1 is understood

But why Type 2?

But ask any chef.

Onions, Salt, Pepper, Garlic, Lemon

You can't eat this stuff the way it is. Try eating bags of salt or a raw onion or a cup of lemon juice. It cannot be eaten this way.

But every chef of any good or exotic restaurant knows that ALL these ingredients are needed to create very special dishes of exquisite variety.

To use the sharpness or bitterness or sourness of the onion , salt ,garlic , pepper and lemon.

And from that comes forth an unbelievably delicious meal.

this is the dish the Beneni

the music produced by his soul

music of tension , or resistance

music against a backdrop of turmoil and strong movement

some great pieces are of that type of tension.

True, we did not ask for this type of music in our soul

But Hashem knows better.

He wants this type of music from us.

He wants this type of dish

Yes , there is that bitterness and sourness in your soul.

Now make that exquisite dish for me from that turmoil.

Hashem likes the dish of that variety as well

Sometimes even more than the first type of dish.

Your are as indispensable as the Tzaddik

You make not look as pretty

But looks are deceiving.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 04 Feb 2010 21:26

Drowning by Jason Westlake

I was enjoying a glorious bright sunny day

Strolling along a nice tropical beach

I was taking in nature's beauty and relaxing my mind

When, WHAM! A wave hit me and knocked me right down

I felt a tugging sensation as I slowly came to

While the undertow was dragging me straight out to sea

Irritated and determined, I quickly got up

Right as another wave came and knocked me back down

So I decided to fight even harder than before

Only to be beaten and battered quite a bit more

I realized the ocean was winning an unfair fight

A fight I didn't want, a fight I didn't start

I pleaded and begged with my unrelenting foe

What did I ever do to deserve such a chore?

Can I please just return to where I was before

Back on that beautiful faraway shore?

The ocean, not caring, went in for the kill

And I slowly, but surely, lost all my will

I began to tread water, hoping not to drown

And I noticed people relaxing on that faraway shore

I flailed my arms, I hoped they would notice

But my faith soon left me as time quickly passed by

Why can't they see me? Why don't they help?

Do I not matter? Is my predicament unreal?

I continued to struggle in quiet desperation

Knowing I had no way back to the beach

Why had I been given such unbeatable problems?

So hard and unfair, so difficult to bear

When I could not possibly take any more

Something brushed my leg and wrapped around tight

Slimy seaweed was enjoying its prey

Clamped on like handcuffs, latched on like a noose

The seawater trickled into my unwilling nose

Invading my lungs as I slowly sank down

I tasted the salt, and I angrily thought

Who could design such a cruel series of events?

My body went limp, and my mind went numb

I closed my eyes and gave up in defeat

I sent out one last plea before I would die

Lord, please save me, you're the only One left

Something then brushed my leg once again

I said, "Thanks a lot, more kelp like before"

But this time I felt a lifting sensation

I was bewildered and shocked, and I shot a glance down

A gliding dolphin had come to save me from death

And it carried me all the way back to the shore

Holding on for dear life was all I could do

But He asked no more, and it was enough

Even though my life can seem overwhelming at times

And I might not be ready for those giant pounding waves

I may not even see any possible way out

Yet a divine hand is still there, steady and sure

Always pulling me through when I'm at my wit's end

He finds the way when it seems I do nothing

And all that He fairly asks in return

Is for all that I can do, and He'll do the rest

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by imtrying25 - 04 Feb 2010 22:31

Thanks Yechida!! As long as we do ours, "HE" will do his!!

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 05 Feb 2010 13:25

The Good Treasure by R Kook

Everything that is said about the greatness of man as well as everything that is said about his insignificance is true. If he is worthy, he takes precedence over Creation. If he is unworthy, a flea is more important than he.

Thus, we must always use these opposite points of view for the good.

When it comes to divine, supernal teachings, when it comes to pouring forth our spirit for the sake of glorious and elevated ideals, we must draw power from the perspective of our greatness: of how man is the central point of the most primal creations, of how all acts of creation are included within him. When man rises, everything rises; when he falls, everything falls.

But when it comes to concerted action and societal endeavors (communal or private) within the secular sphere, then "Go to the ant, lazy one; look at her paths and grow wise." We must then make use of the perspective that "a flea is more important than you."

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 05 Feb 2010 13:28

keep on trying,my friends

and with Simcha

Exhausted from the battle, but Exhausted Wonderfully

But on Shabbos you rest.

Have a wonderful Shabbos

Exhausted Wonderfully by Jasom Westlake

Exhausted wonderfully I am

At the end of every day

Satisfied with the work I've done

Accomplishing the day's vision

Today I can say I gave my all

Today I fought and won the war

Today I overcame resistance

With a clear conscience I can sleep

That warming feeling of tiredness

Envelops and soothes my muscles

Confirming the actions I took

Infusing my soul with energy

Life is the sum of many days

We tend to repeat in habit

The actions we take every day

And thus, our stories are written

Another kind of exhaustion

Plagues a good many people

The feeling of being tired of life

Grating the soul, energy sucking

I used to know that kind of tired
Until purpose bashed me in the head
My life became full in an instant
Of all the things I've dreamed of doing

Today I did what I said I would
So I don't have to live with regret
My integrity is still intact
I know I can still trust myself

Fulfillment and meaning abound
As I fight evil by laboring
Apathy was killed long ago
Work and action triumph supreme

I crash into bed, energy spent
Tomorrow the battle starts again
A new day is yet to be conquered
Time to rest to go do it again

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Re: yechida's reflections
Posted by yechidah - 05 Feb 2010 18:45

Dear friends, Never ever give up

And All These Beautiful Things by Shalom Freedman

AND ALL THESE BEAUTIFUL THINGS

And all these beautiful things,

And all these great people,

Are too our world and our life

And all this beauty,

So so much beauty

Is too our life and our world.

So in the pain and in the doubt and in the suffering and in the worry and in the fear and in the great great sadness and difficulty,

We should also know the Beauty

And the Love

And the Goodness

Of our world

Is too our life

And never give up

Never never never give up.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by Steve - 05 Feb 2010 20:18

have a great Shabbos, Yechida.

May HKB"H keep showering you with the inspiration that you share with us.

You're the BEST!!!

It's an honor to know you.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by imtrying25 - 06 Feb 2010 21:10

R Yechida. Please keep on posting. You never know, you never know.....

A gutte voch!!

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by Dov - 08 Feb 2010 01:58

Thanks again Yechidah!

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 08 Feb 2010 13:14

Thank you dear friends,

your chizzuk keeps me going!!!

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 08 Feb 2010 13:18

This article was mentioned in the site before.

knowing this will help alot of people because it gives a deep undestanding to alot of the underlying causes to these problems

it is worthwhile to look at that whole website

It has alot of valuable information here

Psychological factors in sexual acting out

Dr. Benzion Sorotzkin, Psy.D.

www.DrSorotzkin.com

January 2006

Some may protest the above title. "Why do we need to look for psychological explanation when someone acts out sexually?" they protest. There is a simple explanation. It's called taivah (lust) and yetzer hara (evil inclination). Looking for psychological explanations, they assert, merely serves as an excuse to act out.

Perhaps we can address this legitimate concern with the following example. If a frum person occasionally transgresses the prohibition against lashon hara (slandorous speech) we can indeed attribute this to the yetzer hara (evil inclination). The appropriate treatment would be learning mussar. What about someone who incessantly speaks lashon hara without a break? How likely is that to be purely an expression of an over-active yetzer hara? It is far more likely to be a result of a deep sense of inferiority which often induces a need to put other people down in a desperate attempt to bolster one's self-image.¹ If this person tries to deal with the problem just by learning mussar, it will likely just make his problem worse, since it would further depress his self-image thus increasing his impulse to speak lashon hara. Psychological help is needed to repair the inferiority complex that is feeding the excessive need to put others down. Only then can he deal with the "normal" yetzer horah for speaking lashon hara via mussar.

The same is true of kedusha issues. There are certainly the normal taivah impulses that necessitate the learning of mussar in order to control these impulses. But there are often psychological factors that cause the problem to reach levels way beyond the bounds of normal taivah.² In such a situation, it is often imperative to first use psychological means to deal with these extraordinary impulses to bring them down to normal levels where they can be effectively addressed via mussar.³

In a recent report on a Nefesh sponsored workshop on "Understanding Internet Addiction" Dr. Rachel Sarna cites similar comments made by two leading experts in the field, David Delmonico, Ph.D. and Elizebeth Griffin, M.A.:

While it may appear that addictions are pleasure-seeking behaviors, the roots of any addiction are usually traceable to suppression and avoidance of some kind of emotional pain. Addiction is a way to escape from [a] reality, too full of sadness, or too devoid of joy. Emotional trauma in early life may be the source of most addictions. Everyone is [potentially] at risk. However, people who suffer from low self esteem, distorted body image and ADHD are even at greater risk than others. [p.14, emphasis added] ⁴

The frustrated emotional need of a vulnerable person can hijack his normal sexual drive in a desperate attempt to assuage its pain. The fact that the acting out involves his normal instinctual need - and may, for example, intensify when his wife is a niddah - can fool people

into thinking that it is simply an exaggeration of a normal drive. This is why well meaning advisors will often push marriage as a cure for sexual acting out.⁵ The many married men with this problem provide irrefutable evidence that the intimate relationship of a loving couple bears only the most superficial resemblance to the acting out behavior and therefore, this "cure" is doomed to failure.

What are the early emotional traumas that may make it more likely for someone to develop an addiction to sexual acting out? There are many different possibilities, of course, but the following is a small sampling. A young child in an emotionally supportive home, when dealing with frustration, anxiety, alarm, fear, or dread will feel comfortable turning to his parents for comfort and support. They will protect, reassure, soothe and guide him, thus teaching him by their reactions that; 1) The world is not such a frightening place; 2) Most problems have solutions; 3) Sharing problems with others makes problems easier to deal with. The child will have been soothed by his parents and will learn that comfort is achieved in an interpersonal venue.

In a less emotionally supportive home, parents are sometimes the source of the pressure the child is experiencing and even if the pressure is from external sources, the child doesn't feel comfortable sharing the problem with his parents. Since he cannot address the problem interpersonally he seeks solitary solutions for self-soothing which often involve acting out in a sexual manner. Besides the release experienced via the pleasurable experience itself, there is the additional benefit that he is not dependent on (unreliable) others for relief.

Later in life, even if the person's life becomes more manageable (perhaps as the result of therapy), there is still a feeling that without constant vigilance things will go bad again, so there is often chronic "low voltage" stress which provokes the old "solitary solution." For example, someone who has been hyper-sensitized by chronic emotional abuse early in life may feel pressure to be extra nice to his wife to ensure that she does the same for him since he cannot tolerate even mild criticism. This person may, in fact, have a good marriage with no discernable stress, but the effort to avoid the slightest bit of disharmony (rather than communicating openly and calmly about differences) can exact a tremendous emotional toll. The habituated response to this chronic strain may very well be solitary self-soothing.⁶

A person who had suffered from years of parental rejection will likely remain overly sensitized to being rebuffed for any reason and to any degree. Even if he's happily married and his wife is usually very affectionate, if she, on rare occasions, is not in the mood for relations, he will likely

feel overwhelmingly rejected and deprived, and this may also provoke the old "solitary solution."

The emotional functions of sexual acting out

Sexual acting out is often motivated by a (subconscious) attempt to:

contain and transform [painful emotions] - such as depression, anxiety, aggression, shame, and fear - by turning them into feelings of excitement and aliveness, rather than allowing them to be overwhelming and depleting [p. 186].. The sexual encounter [usually] takes place during periods in which the integrity of the self is threatened by some disappointment, some frustration. The aim of the sexual encounter is for both a soothing and an obtaining. a compensation for what they had to put up with or what they have been through [p. 195]. 7

In my clinical experience, I have found another factor that often serves to maintain the overwhelming impulse to act out sexually. Someone who has been emotionally deprived, severely criticized and/or abused throughout his childhood will often feel that he is not deserving of pleasure. When he attempts to partake in a pleasurable experience, feelings of guilt will cancel out the pleasure. Only the intense sensations involved in sexual acting out can override the inhibitions to pleasure. This causes the child to become interested in sexuality prematurely and eventually this can lead to a sexual addiction. 8

Pornography

Pornography, on a superficial level, simply serves the purpose of ensuring a more intense, momentarily self-soothing, physical experience. However, there often seems to be another level of emotional need being addressed.

A lack of affectionate intimacy in childhood often results in a frustrated need for intimacy without the tools to achieve it in a healthy way. (Like someone who did not get sufficient attention as a child, who now needs intense attention that can only be achieved by acting immaturely). This is

often the appeal of pornography. In ordinary circumstances a person wouldn't see someone else unclothed unless they had an intimate relationship. Therefore, seeing someone unclothed via pornography creates the illusion of intimacy.⁹

For some people, standard pornography is not intimate enough because everyone knows that the person they are viewing in a supposedly intimate moment is really an actress who is forgoing her privacy for the sake of money or drugs. They therefore, find it difficult to attain the illusion of intimacy with standard pornography.¹⁰ They prefer voyeurism where they believe they are "sharing" a truly private, intimate moment. They, of course, have to block out the fact that the person being observed did not consent to this "intimacy." (In the case of voyeurism via pornography they also have to accept the illusion that the observed are not aware of the fact that they are being filmed). An added emotional "benefit" of voyeurism is the feeling of power in forcing the "intimacy" on the other person. This is especially appealing to someone who was made to feel powerless in his early family environment.

Heinz Kohut elaborated on some of the emotional issues addressed by pornography and voyeurism:

Behind the enormous attraction of pornography which channels these feelings [of voyeuristic preoccupation]. were children who were contact hungry, were not cuddled or held enough. [and the] enjoyment of the interplay between mother and child - seeing and looking - was missing.. The voyeuristic issues come up in individuals who have felt deeply deprived in this more comprehensive interaction with others.. [The visual contact] becomes the carrier of what should have been. skin contact, voice contact, and all other avenues of pleasure [pp. 168-169]. ¹¹

There are often idiosyncratic details added to the sexual fantasy or acting out that enhance the longed for emotional satisfaction for particular individuals. For example, one person was especially desirous of peeping on very frum girls caught in the act of self stimulation. In his mind, such girls are usually less involved in sexual matters and therefore, such an act would be considered especially intimate. Similarly, another person, suffering from same sex attraction (SSA) was especially attracted to "ultra-Orthodox" men, because he believed that they have little sexual interests and so the fact that such a person desires him was especially ego-enhancing.

Interestingly, many people suffering from voyeurism have no desire to see friends in intimate situations because when there is a real relationship there is no need for the illusion of a relationship.

For some people, the act of viewing someone unclothed is sufficient to achieve a satisfaction of the emotional need for intimacy. For others, the eventual sexual release adds a necessary intensity to the emotional experience (like an exclamation mark at the end of a sentence).

After the fact, there is usually a double disappointment: First there is the guilt and shame over the act itself. Then there is the painful disappointment that the hoped for emotional comfort (i.e., the illusion beyond the pleasure - as described above) was not achieved beyond the momentary illusion. It is like when a failed dieter eats cake to alleviate loneliness. The loneliness is alleviated for only a few moments while the shame and feeling of failure linger on. One wonders why the inevitable disappointment doesn't eventually undermine the illusion. I believe there are a few possible explanations.

Firstly, As Rav Dessler explains,¹² Hashem gave the yetzer horah the power to create illusions that resist the lessons of experience. Otherwise, it would be virtually powerless. When faced with an acute or chronic frustration of a basic need (such as the need for intimacy, attention, acceptance, etc.) the power of the illusion intensifies in proportion to the frustration. One finds this with a person dying of thirst in a desert who imagines seeing an oasis up ahead.

Secondly, there is a little bit of truth in every illusion. When one is desperate this little bit becomes enormously appealing. For example, a shipwreck survivor on a raft in the ocean who, after days of unbearable thirst, will finally break down and drink the ocean salt water even though he resisted it for days because he knows it will kill him. None-the-less, since it contains the illusion of water, at some point, it feels like it's worth it to get that temporary relief. Likewise, someone desperate for intimacy may feel, at some point, that the illusion of intimacy is all he can hope to get and that may be better than nothing.

Other factors that enhance the illusion

There is often another factor that makes it especially difficult to control these impulses by some people. Those who grew up in homes that were especially harsh and punitive were often led to feel that the Torah's limitations on sexual expression exist for the sole purpose of depriving them of pleasure. No one has attempted to explain to them that it is for the person's own

benefit, even in this world.¹³ When a person experiences multiple emotional deprivations in his life, this additional perceived deprivation can seem intolerable, thereby enhancing the appeal of the illusion.

If the family puts undue emphasis on external values, such as physical beauty, or impressing others, this can also enhance the appeal of pornography (the ultimate chitzonious). Sadly, this emphasis is not limited to secular culture. It is alive and well in the most unlikely places and by the most unlikely people.

Many years ago I treated a young man who suffered from intense social insecurities, very poor self-esteem and same sex attraction (SSA). He had made progress with his issues and his teacher encouraged him to begin dating. One day he came to a session very despondent. He had gone out on a date with a very quiet girl. I wondered why he agreed to go out with such a girl when he knew from previous experience how much he disliked such dates. He explained that his teacher strongly suggested that he go out with this girl (even knowing that she was extremely quiet and being aware of this young man's strong aversion to such girls) because she was "gorgeous" and the teacher felt this would help him overcome his SSA issue. I found it sad that a respected teacher would subscribe to this superficial perspective of looks being more likely to make a girl attractive to him rather than looking for a girl with whom he'd feel comfortable. Feeling emotionally comfortable with a girl and desiring to feel closer, would be a much more likely path to physical attraction.

Another manifestation of a simplistic and superficial perspective on this issue is the wide-spread belief that getting married will solve these problems. Here too, if we were dealing with a normal yetzer hara, this would likely be true. Since we are dealing with a manifestation of a frustrated emotional need this "solution" is, unfortunately, not effective.¹⁴ Understanding this point will help us be less surprised that a person would seem to prefer to act out in a solitary manner because of the illusion of intimacy rather than by interacting with someone he professes to love where he could enjoy true intimacy. However, if we appreciate that adult intimacy is bi-directional where each partner needs to consider the needs of the other in addition to their own, we can better understand this phenomena. The emotionally deprived person is looking for the intimacy of a parent with a small child where the caring is unidirectional. Often he can only find it within the illusions accompanying solitary self-soothing.

This seeking of a unidirectional relationship is often manifested by a person in a committed relationship acting out with another person who is being paid. The payment obligates the

provider to focus totally on the needs of the customer.¹⁵ Of course, the fact that the provider's motivation is purely financial makes this "solution" as short lived as the illusion.

The association between acting out and "emunah issues"

Chazal speak about the association between sexual acting out and emunah issues (e.g., Sanhedrin 63b). I would like to briefly touch upon a psychological aspect of this association that I have encountered in my clinical work. A frum person who is acting out sexually (or in any other serious manner) will experience intense guilt and profound shame. He will see himself as worthless and deserving of severe punishment, especially if his parents responded to his childhood misbehaviors with intense criticism and/or rejection. This will drive him to intensify his efforts at controlling his behavior. Unfortunately, these efforts will most often turn out to be ineffective since the effort involves suppression due to terror as opposed to change resulting from growth. ¹⁶ The failure to change intensifies the self-loathing and terror of retribution. At some point the person will develop a strong resentment toward Hashem/Yiddishkeit for putting him into this untenable situation and so he becomes alienated from Yiddishkeit. Or as one young man put it: "It's not that you don't believe in G-D, it's just that you don't want anything to do with Him. Just like I don't want anything to do with my [abusive] father even though I believe he exists!"

In conclusion, to be successful in overcoming addictions to sexual acting out, it is important to understand the psychological factors that can transform a "normal" yetzer hara into an addiction.¹⁷ Even more importantly, is the role such an understanding could play in prevention. When children are raised to be emotionally healthy they are spared from dealing with yetzer haras beyond the normal range.

1) Similarly, Rav Dessler asserts that excessive gaavah (haughtiness) is often a reaction to feelings of inferiority (Michtav MeEliyahu, Vol. 5, p. 33).

2) See Rav Chaim Shmulevitz, Sichos Musser, Siman 55.

3) This is similar to Rabbi Dr. A. J. Twerski's comment that "The methods suggested by musser to overcome machshavos zaros [inappropriate thoughts] are not effective with obsessive thoughts. The latter require treatment," (Dear Rabbi, Dear Doctor, Shaar Press, p. 117).

4)In the Shadow of the Net: Understanding Internet Addiction and Problematic Online Sexual Behavior. Nefesh News, November 2005, pp. 1 & 14.

5)More on this point below.

6) Someone who was struggling to completely overcome this habituated response asked why it was so difficult. "After all, I was able to completely give up on smoking," He noted. I suggested that while one can totally swear off smoking, thus putting it completely out of one's mind, one can't absolutely forgo all connections to sexuality. In this regard it is more similar to trying to control overeating. Many people find this more difficult to do than giving up smoking, since one can't completely forgo eating!

7)H. Turken. 2001. The Psychotherapeutic Encounter: Sexual Acting Out as the Focus of Intervention. The American Journal of Psychoanalysis. 61, 185-197.

8)The same dynamics can apply for drug addiction.

9) The common use of the term "making love" even when referring to a person one hardly knows, underscores the essence of the illusion and what it is the person is really after - love. A married man who frequented houses of ill repute, related to me that one time, the lady told him when she met him that she was impressed with his intelligence; he felt satisfied with the compliment, paid the fee and left. The substitution of illusions for desperately needed feelings is not limited to sexual acting out. Parents who use intimidation to extract "respect" or expressions of "love" from their children are also living an illusion. For example, a wealthy couple with estranged adult children in graduate school gave them their monthly stipend only if they came for a weekend visit. The parents would then use the visits as evidence of their children's love and respect.

10)An analogy can perhaps be found in the act of sharing private information with a friend. As a result of this sharing, the recipient of the information feels a sense of intimacy with the one who shared with him. But what if he then discovers that the speaker shared this same information with countless others? He will no longer feel privileged.

11)H. Kohut, 1987, The Kohut Seminars on Self Psychology and Psychotherapy with Adolescents and Young Adults, ed. M. Elson. NY: Norton. See also B. Anechiarico, 1990, Understanding and Treating Sex Offenders from a Self-Psychological Perspective: The Missing Piece. Clinical Social Work Journal, 18, 281-292.

12) Michtav MeElياهو, Vol. 1, p. 99.

13)See the sefer, Mishkan Yisroel (Yerushalayim, 5764) and Marital Intimacy, Rabbi A. P. Friedman (Compass Books, 2005) where this point is elaborated upon.

14) This can be compared to the compulsive eating of a food addict who overeats to combat feelings of loneliness. The fact that he binges on ice cream rather than on carrots, doesn't mean that his compulsive eating is simply an exaggeration of the normal desire to eat.

15)As one person put it regarding the one he paid, "She was very accepting of all my needs, unlike my wife who feels I need too much." The key motivation was his desperate need to be accepted as is.

16)See Michtav MeEliyahu, Vol. 1, p. 235 where he compares this to pressing on a spring where the harder you press the stronger it presses back.

17)See Michtav MeEliyahu, Vol. 1, p. 262, and Matnas Chaim (Rav Matisyahu Salomon), Maamorim, Vol. 1, p. 229, on the importance of understanding the underlying vulnerabilities when fighting the yetzer hara.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 08 Feb 2010 19:43

Two Days We Should Not Worry

Author Unknown

There are two days in every week about which we should not worry, two days which should be kept free from fear and apprehension.

One of these days is Yesterday with all its mistakes and cares,

its faults and blunders, its aches and pains.

Yesterday has passed forever beyond our control.

All the money in the world cannot bring back Yesterday.

We cannot undo a single act we performed;

we cannot erase a single word we said.

Yesterday is gone forever.

The other day we should not worry about is Tomorrow

with all its possible adversities, its burdens,

its large promise and its poor performance;

Tomorrow is also beyond our immediate control.

Tomorrow's sun will rise,

either in splendor or behind a mask of clouds, but it will rise.

Until it does, we have no stake in Tomorrow,

for it is yet to be born.

This leaves only one day, Today.

Any person can fight the battle of just one day.

It is when you and I add the burdens of those two awful eternities Yesterday and Tomorrow that we break down.

It is not the experience of Today that drives a person mad,

it is the remorse or bitterness of something which happened Yesterday and the dread of what Tomorrow may bring.

Let us, therefore, Live but one day at a time.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 09 Feb 2010 13:47

Last Will And Testament

Charles Lounsberry

In the pocket of an old ragged coat belonging to an elderly man in Chicago, there was found, after his death, a will. According to Barbara Boyd, in the Washington Law Reporter, the man had been a lawyer, and the will was written in a firm clear hand on a few scraps of paper. So unusual was it, that it was sent to another attorney; and so impressed was he with its contents, that he read it before the Chicago Bar Association and a resolution was passed ordering it probated. It is now on the records of Cook County Illinois.

I, Charles Lounsberry, being of sound and disposing mind and memory, do hereby make and publish this my Last Will and Testament, in order, as justly as may be, to distribute my interests in the world among succeeding men.

That part of my interests which is known in law and recognized in the sheep-bound volumes as my property, being inconsiderable and of no account, I make no disposition of in this, my Will. My right to live, being but a life estate, is not at my disposal, but, these things excepted, all else in the world I now proceed to devise and bequeath.

ITEM: I give to good fathers and mothers, in trust to their children, all good little words of praise and encouragement, and all quaint pet names and endearments; and I charge said parents to use them justly, but generously, as the deeds of their children shall require.

ITEM: I leave to children inclusively, but only for the term of their childhood, all, and every, the flowers of the field, and the blossoms of the woods, with the right to play among them freely according to the custom of children, warning them at the same time against the thistles and the thorns. And I devise to the children the banks of the brooks and the golden sands beneath the waters thereof, and the odors of the willows that dip therein, and the white clouds that float high over the giant trees.

And I leave the children the long, long days to be merry in a thousand ways, and the night and

the moon and the train of the Milky Way to wonder at, but subject, nevertheless, to the rights hereinafter given to lovers.

ITEM: I devise to boys jointly all the idle fields and commons where ball may be played, all pleasant waters where one may swim, all snow-clad hills where one may coast, and all streams and ponds where one may fish, or where, when grim winter comes, one may skate, to have and to hold the same for the period of their boyhood. And all meadows, with the clover-blossoms and butterflies thereof; the woods with their appurtenances; the squirrels and birds and echoes and strange noises, and all distant places, which may be visited, together with the adventures there to be found. And I give to said boys, each his own place at the fireside at night, with all pictures that may be seen in the burning wood, to enjoy without hindrance and without any incumbrance of care.

ITEM: To lovers, I devise their imaginary world, with whatever they may need, as the stars of the sky, the red roses by the wall, the bloom of the hawthorn, the sweet strains of music, and anything else they may desire to figure to each other the lastingness and beauty of their love.

ITEM: To young men jointly, I devise and bequeath all boisterous inspiring sports of rivalry, and I give to them the disdain of weakness and undaunted confidence in their own strength. Though they are rude, I leave them to the powers to make lasting friendships, and of possessing companions, and to them exclusively I give all merry songs and brave choruses to sing with lusty voices.

ITEM: And to those who are no longer children, or youths, or lovers, I leave memory, and bequeath to them the volumes of the poems of Burns and Shakespeare, and of other poets, if there be any, to the end that they may live the old days over again, freely and fully without tithe or diminution.

ITEM: To the loved ones with snowy crowns, I bequeath the happiness of old age, the love and gratitude of their children until they fall asleep.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 09 Feb 2010 20:15

Meditations of the Rebbe # 170 by Tzvi Freeman

We are all prisoners but we sit on the keys.

Finitude is our cell. The universe is our prison.

Our Jailkeeper is the Act of Being.

The keys to our liberation are clenched tight in
the fists of our egos

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