

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 - 29 Apr 2010 12:46

I read a book called “The Walk” by Richard Paul Evans

It is the Book 1 of a series he plans to write, about a man who lost his wife and his business and his home all at once. A bottle of pills in his hand and nothing to live for, he plans to end his misery. Instead he takes a walk. from Seattle to Key West, Florida. The people he meets along the way and the lessons they share with him saves his life .The first book is just the beginning of the walk. From Seattle to Spokane

It’s a very good book.

And in the epilogue the quotes a great Brazilian folk tale called “The Little Cow”

Directly hits home.

Because addictions and escaping into negative patterns of escape is like this little cow that we are afraid of letting go

I was going to write some insights after quoting this powerful tale but I decided not to.

Instead, read it very very carefully, and think about it. Because the handbook describes accurately the initial “withdrawal” symptoms when one first holds back from those addictive behaviors.

It can be excruciatingly painful for you at that time. For some it hurts terribly. not just a physical like urge, but a feeling of loneliness and despair that you wish you could escape from.

During that time frame, the pain is horrible.

But you know that this is the path to recovery, healing, and true joy.

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You should remember this folk tale during that very difficult time.

Because that painful time will pass by and be behind you.

And happiness and true pleasure will take its place.

And you would have given up that "Little Cow"

Please read carefully. (most of the time I can copy and past stuff but this I had to type word for word. it's worthwhile because of its powerful message)

A Master of Wisdom was walking through the country with his apprentice when they came to a small, disheveled hovel on a meager piece of farmland. "See this poor family", said the Master." Go see if they share with us their food"

"But we have plenty," said the apprentice.

"Do as I say"

The obedient apprentice went to the home. The good farmer and his wife ,surrounded by their seven children came to the door. Their clothes were dirty and in tatters.

"Fair greeting," said the apprentice. "My Master and I are sojourners and want for food. I've come to see if you have any to share."

The farmer said, "We have little, but what we have we will share." He walked away, then returned with a small piece of cheese and a crust of bread. "I am sorry, but we don't have much."

The apprentice did not want to take their food but did as he was instructed

"Thank you. Your sacrifice is great"

"Life is difficult", the farmer said, "but we get by. And in spite of our poverty, we do have one great blessing"

"What blessing is that?" asked the apprentice.

"We have a little cow. She provides us milk and cheese, which we eat or sell in the marketplace. It is not much but she provides enough for us to live on."

The apprentice went back to the Master with the meager rations and reported what he had learned about the farmer's plight. The Master of Wisdom said, "I am pleased to hear of their generosity, but I am greatly sorrowed by their circumstance. Before we leave this place I have one more task for you"

"Speak, Master"

"return to the hovel and bring back their cow"

The apprentice did not know why, but he knew his Master to be merciful and wise, so he did as he was told.

When he returned with the cow, He said to his Master, "I have done as you commanded. Now what is it that you would do with the cow?"

"See yonder cliffs? Take the cow to the highest crest and push it over."

The apprentice was stunned. "But Master....."

"Do as I say"

The apprentice sorrowfully obeyed.

When he had completed the task, the Master and his apprentice were on their way.

Over the next years, the apprentice grew in mercy and wisdom. But every time he thought back on the visit to the poor farmer's family, he felt a pang of guilt. One day he decided to go back to the farmer and apologize for what he had done. But when he arrived at the farm, the small hovel was gone. Instead there was a large, fenced villa.

"Oh no," he cried. "The poor family who was here was driven out by my evil deed". Determined to learn what had become of the family, he went to the villa and pounded on its great door. The door was answered by a servant. "I would like to speak to the Master of the house", he said.

"As you wish" said the servant. A moment later the apprentice was greeted by a smiling, well-dressed man.

“How may I serve you?” the wealthy man asked

“Pardon me, sir ,but could you tell me what has become of the family who once lived on this land but is no more?”

“I do not know what you speak of,” the man replied.

“My family has lived on this land for three generations”

The apprentice looked at him quizzically.” Many years ago I walked through this valley, where I met a farmer and his seven children .But they were very poor and lived in a small hovel”

“Oh”, the man smiled, ”that was my family. But my children have all grown now and have their own estates’

The apprentice was astonished .”But you are no longer poor. What happened?”

“God works in mysterious ways,” the man said, smiling.

“We had this little cow who provided us with the slimmest of necessities, enough to survive but little more. We suffered but expected no more from life. Then, one day, our cow wandered off and fell over a cliff. We knew that we would be ruined without her,so we did everything we could to survive. Only then did we discover that we had greater power and abilities than we possibly imagined and never would have found as long as we relied on that cow.

“What a great blessing from Heaven to have lost our little cow.”

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 30 Apr 2010 13:06

Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach teaching on Pesach Sheni, Sunday evening, 14 Iyar,

5754/April 24, 1994, in Newton, Massachusetts

I just learned last week an unbelievable story by Reb Shalom Shachna, the father of the Holy Rizhiner. And it would be too long to tell you all those names, like-but it's just a privilege to know that they existed in this world. He had hundreds of followers, but there were two: one of them had the most obnoxious wife ever--she was, like, really on his case--it was just--mamesh he couldn't live! And each time he comes to the Rebbe, he says, "Mamash, I have to divorce my wife. I can't bear it anymore." He says, "Not yet, not yet, not yet."

The other one was a rich man. He had a lot of real estate, but he also owed a lot of money. But if he would sell the real estate, [with] whatever he has, he could pay off the bills. And they were mamash also on his tail. [Greeting a newcomer] Hey [inaudible name]! Good Yontif. So he says, "I want to sell all I have, to pay off." And he also tells him, "Not yet, not yet, wait, wait, wait, wait." Finally one day, the person who owes so much money couldn't bear it any more, he says, "You know, I love my Rebbe, but I can't do it." He sold everything, paid off, and without saying anything bad--same night, he got (g'ferlach) ill, he's just about taking off. He says to his best friend, the one who has this terrible wife, "Run to the Rebbe fast, and tell him I'm dying."

So Reb Shalom Shachna says--you know, basically, you know, especially in Rizhin, you don't say what you know. You know, it's clear to you and me, all the people who brag so much, tell you every thing they know, they really know very little. 'Cause if you really know, you keep it inside. He says, "Basically, it's not my way of telling things, but I have to tell you."

You know, according to some other religions, you come back 2,000 times. According to us, you come back three times, maybe four times. Whenever it doesn't work, that's it. He says, "Both of you have been here already four times. You haven't fixed it yet. So the Heavenly Court had compassion with you. So they decided to send you back one more time. But it has to be in such a way that you're not really alive in this world. So your wife, mamash, makes you so miserable, that you're only half a life. And the other person, he owes so much money, he can't breathe. It

was good for you. I wanted to keep you alive till you fix what you have to fix. Now, what can I do with him now?"

I'm telling you this story because everybody knows, today and tomorrow afternoon it's Pesach Sheni...actually, it's a holiday of the second chance. And, um, I mean, just the words, "second chance," is already like--unbelievable words, right? That means it's never too late. You can always fix it. You can always fix it.

And before we go into details, I want to share with you something important. Today is also the Yahrzeit of Reb Meir, the Heilige Reb Meir. Everybody knows, Reb Meir--like, there were two giants in the Talmud, which are unsurpassed, Reb Meir and Rabbi Akiba. And basically the whole Torah sh'baal peh--you know, there's Torah sh'b'ksav--the written Torah. And the written Torah is so many words, so many letters, and that's it. Torah sh'baal peh is first of all the oral tradition, what God told Moshe--not to write down, but to give over, and also, that everybody can add!

You know, take--let's say the last parashah, right? Acharei Mos-Kedoshim. We're reading the parashah already since Mt. Sinai, 3,700 years. Every year hundreds of new books are coming out, commentaries on the Bible. And good ones, gevalt ones, right? And not everything is printed, you know, gevalt what's not printed, right? And the masters of adding to the Torah [are] Rebbe Meir and Rabbi Akiba.

Something else happened Pesach Sheni, which is awesome. Everybody knows, after we crossed the Red Sea, Amalek came and attacked us. You know what day Amalek came? Pesach Sheni. Unbelievable. Because the most anti- Pesach Sheni is Amalek. Amalek, everybody knows, is the nation who are the greatest enemies of Israel, but also, spiritually, Amalek is the arch-enemy of God, the anti-God.

Let's put it this way: you know, I shouldn't eat a hamburger on Yom Kippur. But imagine, I was very hungry, nobody was looking, going into a Doggy Diner, make sure nobody is there, especially the rabbi isn't there--hopefully. On Yom Kippur--and I knock in a little hamburger. So I'm not, let's say I'm not a very--very pious Jew, but I cannot say I'm against God, right?

Amalek is anti-God. What's Amalek saying? Amalek comes and tells you, "It's too late. You can't fix it any more. It's too late, forget it. It's not for you." And, you see, Amalek is the one who says to you--imagine I decide I want to do something absolutely beautiful. Amalek says, "I know you

for so long. For you, it's like a little holiness attack. You'll do it for three days, and then you go right back where you came from. Forget it. It's too late to change." Everything is too late. You know why there's no peace in the world: 'Cause Amalek is sittin' there, right? And [he says,] "Listen, they're killing each other for so long, and suddenly they'll change? Forget it, right? I always tell my friends, there's so many divorces in the world, and I could swear to it that Brother Amalek was standing under the chuppah and telling some--"I'd love to see how long this marriage lasts," you know? And the vibrations are--[out-breath expletive, like throat clearing]. I mean, you can see him when anybody starts doing something good. Right away, Amalek says, "Ahh. It won't last." Amalek.

So Amalek came to attack us on Pesach Sheni. And what's the most anti-Amalek? Anti-Amalek is, it's never too late because even if I fail, I have another chance. I always have another change. I can always fix it. And you know, this is really mind-blowing. Why is Reb Meir's Yahrzeit on Pesach Sheni? You know who Reb Meir was? You know, I hope you don't really take world history too serious[ly]-because they change it always [to make it] the way they like it. You know, I don't want to say anything bad, but us Jewish people, our history doesn't change. Let me tell you, that year was Mt. Sinai--it was Mt. Sinai. We don't have professors every year and try to change it a little bit.

You know, my Zeide told my father--my father had a doctorate in Philosophy and in History--and my grandfather, he studied also History--he had a Ph.D. in History, but first in Germany and then in France. He says, "In France, why do they teach you a different history, right? What's good for France. And in Germany they teach you what's good for [Germany]. So what is the real truth? You'll never know, right?"

According to World History, Nero, after he burned Rome, he got crazy, and he killed himself. According to our history, which is more reliable, he saw Rome burning, and he realized--can't live like this. He went to Yerushalayim, converted--became a Jew--and his grandson is Reb Meir. Unbelievable, right? You know what that means? That even the lowest human being, like Nero, also has a second chance. The world has a second chance. Whatever the world destroys--remember what Reb Nachman says, if you believe that you can destroy, why don't you also believe you can rebuild? And it's even deeper than that. God does not let you destroy more than you can rebuild. Suddenly the destruction stops because if you would go further, you couldn't fix it anymore.

Okay, now let's go down to--again--to the basics. Pesach Sheni is--you know, we have to bring a Paschal lamb on the 14th day of Nisan, and the people who carried the coffin of Yosef--if you remember, Yosef HaTzaddik told the Jews, "Take me with you when you come out of Egypt. I want to be buried in the Holy Land." So they were carrying the coffin of Yosef. But when you carry a dead person, then you cannot go to the Holy Temple. So they couldn't bring the Paschal

lamb. So they came to Moshe, and they were very sad. "Lama neegara?" Why weren't we privileged also to bring the Pesach? [Numbers 9:7] So Moshe Rabbeinu says, "Wait"--eemdu actually means, mamash, "Pray hard"--"and I will ask God what to do." So God says, "I'll give them a second chance--four weeks later, on the 14th day of Iyar."

You know, tonight is exactly four weeks after Pesach. And, again, we have more time later. I just want to tell you fast. The second chance--you're not given a second chance just like this. You have to ask for it. If you don't ask, you don't get it. I don't have to ask God every Pesach, "Please let me make a Seder." I mean, I'm asking God, "Let me make a good Seder." But it's Pesach anyway. Pesach Sheni? I have to ask.

You know, I meet my wife, I marry her, and it's all beautiful. I hurt her feelings? Ah, I have to ask. Give me another chance. Certain things you have to ask. And certain things are given to you. So Pesach Sheni is the holiday of the second chance, but it's so deep--you know what Torah sh'baal peh is? It's my doing. Doesn't come down from Heaven unless I ask. So this is Reb Meir, right? Torah sh'baal peh--mamash asking for it. And according to all the rabbis in the Talmud, the people who asked for it were those people who carried the coffin of Nadav and Avihu. If you remember, on Rosh Chodesh Nisan, when we initiated the Mishkan--the Holy Temple--Nadav and Avihu walked into the Holy of Holiest, and they didn't come out. You know, the High Priest walks into the Holy of Holiest once a year on Yom Kippur. Basically, you cannot just walk into the Holy of Holiest. And Nadav and Avihu were not told to go in. They walked in, and they left their soul there.

And again, I wish we would have all night. But let me tell you something--anybody here who studies the Bible--sadly enough the English translation makes it like they did something terrible, and they were punished. God forbid, God forbid. But why did they go into the Holy of Holiest? And basically, because of them we have Yom Kippur. And also--I'll start from the other side. You know, Moshe Rabbeinu came down from Heaven because we made the Golden Calf. And he asked for forgiveness, and on Yom Kippur God gave him the two tablets again. Why do I have to go into the Holy of Holiest? And if you remember, the High Priest walked into the Holy of Holiest--didn't ask for forgiveness--he just walked in there, didn't say a word, and he came out.

I'm sure Nehemiah [Polen] was learning it in a million ways--and Brother Hershele--but let me tell you. There's two ways of asking for forgiveness. Imagine I'm yelling at my wife, and I mamesh hurt her feelings; then I say, "Listen, you know, I just learned that it is forbidden to hurt somebody's feelings, and also I read in another book it's very, very bad--so I want you to forgive me. How does it sound to you? And I want you to know, I have a Ph.D. in Judaism, and also, really, mamesh, like, you know, it's really, it's against the Torah to yell at your wife." So my wife just melts away. Unless she is a shmendrick like me, right?

Let me ask you something--how would it sound to you? Let me ask you--why doesn't the Torah ever say you have to love your children? Would be beautiful. Imagine I walk up to my daughters and say, "Listen to me, I love you because it says in the Torah, 'You have to love your children.'" 'Cause the Bible says you have to love your children. How does it sound to you?

If I do something because I have to [someone sneezes]--God bless you--it's outside stuff. And you know what it is? And this is not to say I'm not doing it because--It's clear to me God wants me to love my children, right? But it's not on the level "you have to." It's deeper than "you have to," not less deep. It's so much deeper.

You know, I was talking to someone who had a little radio show in New York. Sometimes they talk about--sadly enough, there's still people who hit their children--it's disgusting. So someone called me up on the radio and says, "Where does it say in the Torah that you're not permitted to hit your children?" I said to him, "Let me ask you something--" [someone sneezes] God bless you--"You mean to say you can lift your hand and hit a little baby? Then you're not a human being, right? You're definitely not God's image, right?" You know it's deeper. "Do you mean you could?" How would it sound to you? I will tell you if the Torah wouldn't forbid us to kill, I would walk around with a knife killing everyone. But then I read the Bible--the Ten Commandments [chuckles]--and I decided not to kill. Okay, you know, for some people maybe it's an emergency. You mean you COULD kill? I want you to know something awesome, awesome, awesome.

The Ishbitzer says, when G-d spoke to us on Mt. Sinai--God says, "Don't kill"--what was engraved on our hearts is not the words, "Don't kill." What was engraved inside of us: how precious life is. [Whispering] Life is so precious. It's not I SHOULDN'T kill--that's forbidden--I CAN'T kill, right?

You know, when God said to us, "Don't steal," it's not all--I saw, I saw mamash there written on the sky, "Don't steal." [A person evidently brings him something to drink.] What are you bringing me there, darling? You are cute! L'chaim. [People respond in kind] L'chaim. [Drinks] Thank you. What do I need my guitar for?

You hear, friends? Imagine if my little child says to me, "Can you give me some apple juice?" Am I giving her the apple juice because I have to? It's the deepest "I want to," right? Deepest, deepest, deepest. You know the difference between serving God and serving idols? It's very simple. Serving the living God is "I want to." Serving a dead idol--by a lot of people, gevalt, God has become a dead idol. "I have to." Anybody's doing things because he has to--it's pagan

worship. [Whispering] I have to! Everything is forced. [Normal voice] Sure, when I serve God, I really have to--gevalt, it's the deepest, deepest, like I wanna, I wanna give my children apple juice. Sure, I have to. But I want to.

The Talmud says, "How did our father Abraham serve God before He gave us the Torah on Mt. Sinai? How did he know? And the Gemora says, "It's inside." Inside. The deepest inside. The deepest, deepest inside. So I want you to know, until we made the Golden Calf, the Torah was so deep in our hearts. When we made the Golden Calf, something, God forbid, happened to us. [Whispers] I have to. [Normal voice] You see, when you serve the idol, even serving God becomes idol worship. I want you to know something. You know what idol worship is? It means God is dead. Doesn't move. I'll tell you something I just shared with somebody. The first--you know, when they made Sha'arei Tzedek, so to speak, a Jewish hospital in Yerushalayim, they took a German-Jewish doctor, very religious, and he was like an idol-worshipper. When he was praying, he wouldn't move, even it's an emergency. 'Cause he'd say, "No, when I'm davening, I'm davening."

What do you mean? Someone is dying! You'd better get your act together and come out--you're the doctor, right? What's his problem? Serving a dead God. Can't move, right? He doesn't know when yes and when no, right? You know what's so special about the Torah? There is nothing, nothing, more alive than the Torah. Even when the Torah says no, maybe tomorrow it's yes. You know what it means to be a living person? To be in touch, to know exactly what does God want of me right now. Remember the children of the Heilige Strelisker came to the Heilige Rizhiner and [he] asked [them], "What was the most important thing by your father? And they said, "For him, the most important is to know what God wants of him right now." What do you have to do right now, right?

You know, all those people--they have plans, and they know now already what they'll do ten years from now on Shabbos morning 9:20. They'll be in the synagogue and they'll be on page 35. It's idol worship. How do I know, right? I hope I'll be there, but what do I know, right? I'll tell you something very deep--not only in doing good. The Heilige Rizhiner says to the chasidim, "Please, I would like to show you what is a real human being. Call me somebody in from the street." They call in somebody, and he says, "Listen, brother. Imagine you're walking behind me, and a thousand rubles are falling out of my pocket. What are you gonna do?" He says, "The truth? I'll keep it." "Thank you so much." He says, "What a thief! Call in somebody else." The next person comes in, and he asks him, "What would you do?" He says, "Rebbe, I'd give it right back to you." "Oy," he says, "What an idiot!" [Crowd cracks up--even Shlomo laughs] He says, "Call in somebody else." [They] call in the third person. He says, "Rebbe, I don't know. It depends what mood I am in." "Ah, that's the real one!" Right?

You know what it means, "the living God?" Not only that God is alive--I'm also alive! I don't know

what I'll think tomorrow. I'll just hope. I hope I won't steal. But what do I know, right? You know, if someone says to you, "Are you keeping next Shabbos?" All I can say, "I hope." I hope. What do I know, right?

So in a nutshell, Nadav and Avihu were so afraid. So here we build a mishkan, and again the mishkan, God told us "Build a mishkan"--again we did it because we have to (as much as we did it because we want to). They wanted to do one thing--nobody told me--nobody told me--"shelo y'tsivu HaShem" [paraphrase of Lev. 10:1] I want to do it because I love God so much. I want to be so close to Him. I want to run into the Holy of Holiest. Oh, this is so deep.

You know, if my whole Yiddishkeit--my whole connection to God is because "I have to," it's a bad--it's a bad connection. But then I want you to know something deeper. When do I ever have the privilege to do something with my whole heart--with my whole heart. You know what holy is? I'm doing it. Sure, I'm doing it good. Even if one corner of my heart is not so much with it, it's still holy. You know what the Holy of Holiest is? "V'chol adam lo y'hiyeh b'ol mo-ed" [Lev. 16:17] There's nothing left in my heart which doesn't want to do it. There is not one billionth'l, zillionth'l ounce in my heart left which doesn't want to serve God. But this is not so simple.

You know, what's "establishment"? What's bugging us about the so-called religious establishment? They know now that in fifty years from now, Kol Nidre Night, it starts 6:50. They know exactly ten minutes after eight the rabbi will make the Kol Nidre appeal. And about--approximately ten minutes after nine they'll announce how much everybody gave. And approximately nine minutes before ten--will be the closing prayer. It's all beautiful. No. [Whispering] It can't be. It can't be.

You know, imagine I get married, and I get myself a paperback book on marriage, and then I see exactly in the morning--ah ha, page 35, I know what to do. Then, after breakfast, I see my way in the reading, I need to turn the page, page 37, let's see what I have to do. It's all cute and sweet.

I have to tell you something. There are two stories which are actually the same. Reb Hanoch of Alexander--one of the biggest rebbes--there are two famous stories of him. But I'll tell you this one. He told the story: There was this idiot. And every morning when he--you know, when he undressed, he did not remember where he put his socks, where he put his shirt, where he put his pants. So he decided, mamash, one night he'll write down everything. So he wrote down, "My pants are under the bed. My socks are next to the bed. And I am in my bed." Next morning he wakes up. "Ah, my pants--under the bed. My socks are here." And then he sees, "And I am in my bed." He looks in the bed, and he's not there. He begins to cry. So he says, "Master of the

world, where am I?" Gevalt, is that deep, right? Gevalt, is that deep. But where are you? Where are you? Right.

You know, friends, it is possible to do everything, but you never found yourself--completely disconnected from yourself. What do you really want? What do you really want? You know what Aharon HaKohen, when he walked into the Holy of Holiest? You know what he brought back to us? Just the inside of us. Remember, we were learning it a lot of times--maybe not every person is holy. But every person is the Holy of Holiest. We have something so holy inside, so awesomely holy inside, right? But we're so disconnected from it.

So the High Priest, when he walked into the Holy of Holiest--and here, I want to share with you something I was learning yesterday, and that actually, it's the same thing. You know, my beautiful friends, let's again take a husband and wife. I hurt my wife's feelings. And then I ask her for forgiveness. So she says, "Okay, I forgive you." But you know what it is? Yeah, she forgives me, but sadly enough, those scars. Scars. Aye gevalt. You know how many people hurt our feelings and we forgive them? [Someone sneezes] God bless you. Yeah, we forgave them. [Whispering] But the scar. It's heartbreaking, right?

I want you to know--I was learning it yesterday--the scar you cannot fix from outside; on the skin there's a scar. You can only fix it from [whispering] inside, behind the skin. [Normal voice] You know, from the holy to the Holy of Holiest was a perochos, right? Okay, so God forgave us for making the Golden Calf. But humanly speaking, there was a big scar, humanly speaking, even on God's heart. How do you--how do you get rid of the scar? Ah--the Holy of Holiest. Deepest. From behind the curtain. You know, when I hurt somebody's feelings, and I ask them for forgiveness, we're still far from each other, still long distance. How many people make up, then forgive each other?--But oy gevalt, there's still long distance. Do you know, you can stand next to a person and be billions of miles away. Listen, God is everywhere, and how far are we from God, right? All those long distance calls. Holy of Holiest is--so close. It's just so deep, it's so deep. Suddenly, there are no more scars. Because it's this deepest revelation. Gevalt, am I one with you. I mean, if I did something wrong it was only my outside; it was never my inside. Deepest, deepest inside, right?

I want you to know something--everybody's asking. Basically, if I cannot do something good--it was not in my hand--it is considered in Heaven like I did it. Ma aleh alav hakasuv k'ilu asah-oh [Brachot 6a]. So everybody's asking, why are they krechtsing about Pesach Sheni? They couldn't do it, right? Because they were tamei ha-mes. If you touch a coffin you cannot go into

the Holy of Holies. It was not their fault, right? But the answer is very simple. If all you're interested in [is] doing it because the Torah says you have to do it, so I did it, right? I REALLY wanna do it. Imagine Neshama says to me, "Can you give me apple juice?" And then I would say, "You know, I'll just--I'm so sorry--I'm just--I have a long distance call to Israel." So I really, I can't give her the apple juice, right? But then I say, "Neshama, you know something--" She says, "Yeah, I forgive you. I understand. You couldn't." "I'm so broken that I didn't give you the apple juice." I didn't do it, right? Nobody blames you. But I still didn't do it.

And here I want you to know something very deep. This is mamash very important to know, friends. Anybody who knows a little about Shabbos--you know, in Belz, the way they made Kiddush--ah, gevalt. Gevalt Kiddush, right? Bobover Rebbe--makes a different Kiddush; Satmar Rebbe--another Kiddush. So you would say, "Everybody makes Kiddush, everybody says the same blessing." Yeah, but the way they're saying it--everybody has their own individual way of saying it, right? Maybe on the outside it's all the same.

You know, take Yom Kippur, right? You know, sadly enough, there are some synagogues, the same service at 2000 synagogues, it's all the same because there's nothing inside in it, because the moment you put your inside--it cannot be that--two people don't do it the same way, right? It comes from inside. So they say, "Okay, so we won't be blamed for not doing it; we did it. But what we did, it's like all of Israel did it, right? But it was not my doing, my Korban Pesach, right? Ah, you know, the way I bring Korban Pesach? The way I sing and dance when I bring the Paschal lamb, gevalt!" Ssss.

You know what Amalek does? You know what the greatest evil in the world is? When someone says to you, "Your own addition doesn't count. Whatever you do special is unimportant. Just do it!" I want you to know something. I watch sometimes--you know, in my neighborhood, a lot of homeless people--and Baruch HaShem, one of my greatest privileges is really, I'm very close to--I would say, to 98% of them. Okay, our chevra, mamash, you know, they know how to give a dollar to a poor man, right? You don't just take out the dollar, look to the other side, here, you know. Sometimes I watch my chevra, you know? Everybody's doing it in a sweeter way, right? In a special way, right? [Whispers] This is so special.

And here, I want to add something awesome. It was the people who carried the coffin of Yosef, who came to Moshe, and they said, "We need a second chance." How did they know? I was learning it yesterday, and it really blew my mind--myself. Everybody knows the story of Rachel and Leah, right? Rachel is engaged to Yaakov, and Yaakov and Rochel have a secret sign because they knew that Lavan--Laban--will put Lee-ah under it--under--under the wedding canopy. So in the last moment Rachel saw--"Oh, my sister will be put to shame." She gave her over the secret sign.

So Yaakov didn't know it's Lee-ah; he thought it's Rachel, right? You know what that means? Rachel gave up her husband. Rachel gave up this world and the coming world because it was clear to her, "If I don't marry Yaakov, I have to marry Esau." Because everybody was saying, "Yaakov and Esau-- and Lavan has two daughters--one is for Yaakov, one is for Esau," right? Do you know what it means to be the wife of Esau? Don't have to tell you. Not this world, not the coming world. Give everything up, for what? Lemme ask you something: imagine this young lady stands under the Chuppah, and then suddenly the groom says, "I don't want you," and she'll be put to shame. She'll get over it! A few years later she'll meet somebody else, she'll get married, right? But you know what? [Whispering] The scar. The scar. You know what Rachel did? She gave up her life for the scar of Leah. Ah, that is awesome. "I don't want any scars on my sister's heart." So here they come to--Yosef, the son of Rochel--they come to Moshe, and say, "You know something? Unless we do Pesach Sheni, there'll always be a scar on my heart--why I didn't have this Pesach. Why didn't I have the privilege to do this?"

[Normal voice] So someone says to me, "You know, it's okay. You'll still go to Paradise." I'm not asking you about Paradise or Hell--[whispers] I want so much to do it! [Normal voice] You know, friends, when you want to do something for your best friend, for God, and you don't do it--there's this deep scar on your heart. And if it was the coffin of Nadav and Avihu, obviously it's even easier. You know what's Nadav and Avihu? Kodesh Kedoshim. And Kodesh Kedoshim is only when I mamash do it, with all my heart, with all my soul.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 30 Apr 2010 14:06

Reb Shlomo

The Secret of Lag Beomar

New York, 5751

My beautiful friends, I just returned from Yerushalayim, from the Holy City, from the Holy Wall, from everything holy and beautiful in our lives. And we are in the middle of counting, counting our days, counting life, counting beautiful things. I will share with you a little bit about Lag B'Omer, about Shavuoth, and about Kiddush Levanah, the Blessing of the Moon. My dear friends, the deepest depths of Yiddishkeit is, that I am longing for so much and I am so broken that I don't have it yet. Yet I do have it. The Isbitzer says, If I need a hundred dollars it is because I don't have it. But for G-D, if crying for the Torah, if crying for Yiddishkeit, it is because I really do have it. You know friends, G-D gave us the Torah on Mount Sinai and the saddest thing in the world is that we had the arrogance to think that we had it. So we lost it. When Moshe Rabbenu broke the tablets, he gave us the Torah again and the Talmud says that both tablets, the whole ones and the broken ones, are lying in the Holy Ark. We need both.

So basically the laws of the Torah which we receive on Shavuoth are not enough to protect us from the Golden Calf. So G-D in His infinite mercy gives us broken tablets - the deepest secret of the Torah, the Torah of Rabbi Akiva and Reb Shimon Bar Yochai. He gives them to us before Shavuoth, on Lag B'Omer. And then on Shavuoth what we receive is even deeper than the secrets of the Torah, the utmost heavenliness and godliness of the Torah.

The Gemara says that G-D always gives the medication before the disease. So every Shavuoth there is always a possibility of making another golden calf. Maybe last year we did it, maybe we are still doing it. So Lag B'Omer is the day that G-D gave us the secrets of the Torah. You know what the secret is? The secret is something that fills your heart so much, it fills you with longing, it fills you with depth. A secret is like a little bit of light beyond vessels. Basically, when G-D created the world, G-D was hiding in the world. G-D is the biggest secret in the world. He is so obvious and yet so hidden. So G-D gives us the secrets of the Torah before Shavuoth. And every Lag B'Omer Reb Shimon Bar Yochai and Rabbi Akiva are giving over to us the deepest depths of the Torah. Reb Zadok Hachohen says, How do you know how much somebody loves you? When somebody loves you, they want to tell you all their secrets.

You know what is living on Lag B'Omer? He gives us the deepest depths, how much the Torah loves us, how much we love the Torah. Lag B'Omer we are telling the Torah all our secrets and the Torah is telling us all the Torah secrets. Reb Akiva was longing all his life to give his life for G-D. He had such deep longing for G-D. He was ready to die for G-D, to show that the way that I love G-D is beyond vessels, deeper than everything in the world.

A few days after Shavuoth we are mekadesh levanah (sanctifying the moon). Everybody knows that the moon receives the inside light of the sun. Everybody knows that during the day we take care of the outside. We work, we do business. The night is the inside. The Gemara says the night is for learning, especially secrets; the night is full of secrets. Do you know what secrets are? Secrets are: after you hear the secrets you still don't know them, there is so much more to them. The levanah, the moon, is so deep. The moon is always longing for more. When the moon is full, it is not satisfied. It knows there must be more in the world than just this light that fills it and it begins all over again. So we Yidden get together between the beginning of the month and the full moon to thank G-D for this new light. Every month the moon is new again; the sun is always the same. Inside people are always new. In other words, inside people are always so broken, but they are also always new.

My beautiful friends, I am inviting you all for Kiddush Levanah. The first Kiddush Levanah after Shavuoth, whatever we didn't do on Shavuoth, whatever we missed out, we can still do, because it is the month of Shavuoth, the moon of Shavuoth. It is the light of Shavuoth. You know, Shavuoth night we are up all night. We are reading the beginning and the end of the every parsha and tractate. We are connecting ourselves to the beginning and the end because we know the beginning is in G-D's hands and the end is in G-D's hands.

We pray and hope that we'll be able to do something in the middle. The Talmud says: If all the oceans will be ink and all the leaves will be quills to write with, we still could not tell each other the holiness of that night. And then that morning at dawn we receive the Torah with all our hearts. G-D is telling us, I am really your G-D and I am with you always, always. And you are my people. Let's be together that night, let's be together Lag B'Omer and let's be together at Kiddush Levanah. We should be together, my friends, every Shabbat and every Yom Tov. And I bless you that you should always have someone to tell your secrets.

Love,

Shlomo

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Re: yechida's reflections
Posted by yechidah - 30 Apr 2010 16:00

Good Shabbos,my friends

"Always put off until tomorrow what you shouldn't do at all."

(Morris Mandel)

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Re: yechida's reflections
Posted by yechidah - 06 May 2010 19:34

I saw this in a book called "Avraham's Journey" by J.B. Soloveitchik (page 85)

gives a perspective on what a true relationship is.

whether with a friend or wife or even Hashem.

there is nothing casual or arbitrary about any of these connections

"He understood very well that friendship cannot grow out of surface communication and pragmatic associations, lovely as they may be

"Friendship can be realized only by inner communication, in existential sharing, in creative relationships, in sympathy

"Man cannot be redeemed from his loneliness through quick childish comradeship or casual or incidental acquaintanceships, but only through mutual understanding, a meeting of the minds and hearts, and a feeling of togetherness that ties every thread of the personality into such a relationship"

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 06 May 2010 19:53

Poem # 57

A man in pain,
digs a ditch
in his backyard,
to lay down in it
and die

He hesitates,
leaves the site,
carries on
lives life

accumulates special jewels,

saves them

in that hole

a grave no longer

a testimony,

a treasure,

to a life,

lived fully.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 07 May 2010 12:49

Have a wonderful Shabbos,

This poem I wrote yesterday

It's important for people who are not married to understand this as well.

I wrote 2 poems on this topic

This is one of them

Poem # 59

A woman's desire

To embrace her husband,

Must be proceeded,

By accepting the reality,

That she must embrace herself first,

Completely, Unconditionally,

It is only then,

She can receive fully,

The comforting embrace,

Of her husband

A husband's desire

To embrace his wife,

Must be proceeded,

By accepting the reality,

Of embracing her essence,

Mind ,heart, personality, flaws,

Accepting fully, unconditionally,

Her uniqueness,

Her individuality,

It is only then,

He can give fully,

That embrace

To his wife,

Who now knows,
Deep in her heart,
That she was hugged and embraced,
Even prior to his approaching her,
So that the physical union,
Is an expression and manifestation,
Of what was there all along

For he has learned,
How to hold her,
Completely,
He takes her into himself,
And she feels herself,
Being accepted and loved,
Without reservation,
Without judgement,
Pure love.

To embrace a wife
That is already embraced,
Is the greatest gift,
A husband can give,
To his wife,
Whom God loves.

To touch her,

Before she is touched.

A woman who embraces herself first

Is ready to accept

The love of her husband

And to feel herself held by him

Way before

He is physically holding her

Pure love.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by Dov - 10 May 2010 04:32

It is only then,

He can give fully,

That embrace

To his wife,

Who now knows,

Deep in her heart,

That she was hugged and embraced,

Even prior to his approaching her,

So that the physical union,

Is an expression and manifestation,

Of what was there all along

For he has learned,

How to hold her

Thanks for this, Yechidah. We are seeing that it's all about what was there all along that makes the present so beautiful. To me, embracing *ourself*s is simple acceptance of the truth about self - good and bad. Embracing each other is simple acceptance of each other - good and bad. That's why schmutz has nothing to do with real sex - it has no shaychus to embracing, let alone to d'veikus! And in the same way I understand why it was so hard for my wife and I to love each other in the early years. I didn't accept myself, didn't accept her, and had no idea what treasures we each had to offer. Nu. B"H we are growing together now be"H one day at a time. And we owe it all to sobriety.

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Re: yechida's reflections
Posted by yechidah - 10 May 2010 13:18

thank you dov

this that I wrote here was a learning process for me as well.because sex has been twisted and messed up, especially in our society, many of us have trouble understanding and applying it in a healthy way,the way it was meant to be.and I think it is because of this, we are missing something beautiful in life,because avoidance and running away from intimacy in marriage can cause as much damage as fooling around.We never were taught how to use this gift properly,and we are denying ourselves and our wives the beauty of a real unparalleled and special connection that Hashem wants us to have.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 10 May 2010 17:24

article from aish

Protect your marriage by avoiding friendships with members of the opposite sex.

by M. Gary Neuman

Adultery is one of the gravest blows to a marriage, as well as a painful rejection for one partner. But you don't have to be intimate with anyone else to be unfaithful. Emotional infidelity is just as -- and at times even more -- destructive to your marriage. Couples I counsel are absolutely outraged when I tell them that they could well be committing emotional adultery when they flirt with coworkers, send around funny emails to colleagues, or hang out with members of the opposite sex at gatherings. But they are, and so probably are you.

Stopping this kind of relationship is the single most important thing you can do for your marriage. It's not about where it may lead. It's about where it has already gone, far from your focus on your marriage.

When you find yourself getting irritated with what I have to say, consider: Why does it bother you? Why are you resisting the idea? Why not see if I'm right by making some changes? What is it that you're trying to protect by maintaining the kind of relationships you're presently involved in? If these relationships aren't as "damaging" as I say, because you say you don't find them that important and they aren't going to lead anywhere, then prove it to yourself by letting go of them. If they don't mean that much to you, why the irritation when I ask you to cut back on these friendships? Remember what it is you've always wanted from your marriage, and start considering the large, determined commitment that is absolutely necessary to creating a happy marriage.

Placing primary emotional needs in the hands of someone outside the marriage breaks the bond of marriage just as adultery does. Most of us won't fall in love in cyber space, yet we find it okay to share a different kind of space with friends of the opposite sex. We discuss our problems, air out our issues, and settle disagreements with our business colleagues. We chat

with our friends and neighbors. What's the harm in a man having a casual friendship with a woman when either is married? Surely, every friendship doesn't lead to an affair. Yet we forget the emotional harm of relating to someone outside the marriage when that same energy can be used to relate to our own spouse. Marriage is about relating to a member of the opposite sex with an intimacy felt with no other.

When a spouse places his or her primary emotional needs in the hands of someone outside the marriage, it breaks the bond of marriage just as adultery does.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU'RE BEING UNFAITHFUL?

Consider your own personal relationships:

- When you hear a funny joke or good piece of gossip, do you first tell other colleagues? By the time you get home, have you chewed it all over so much at the office that you don't feel like telling that joke again to your spouse?
- Do you discuss all of your work problems (or issues involving volunteer work or other important things you are involved in) so thoroughly with colleagues that you're all talked out by the time you return home? Do you feel like it would take too long to review and explain the entire issue from scratch to your spouse?
- Do you go out alone to lunch or after work for drinks with members of the opposite sex?
- Do you enjoy harmless (by your definition) flirtation with someone of the opposite sex at a cocktail party?
- Do you believe that getting emotionally excited by flirting with someone of the opposite sex is helpful to your marriage? Do you think it helps educate you as to what you need more of from your spouse? Do you tell yourself that the juice you get from flirting brings more vitality to your marriage?
- Do you spend as long buying the "right gift" for a colleague of the opposite sex as you do for your own spouse?
- Do you share intimate issues about yourself or marriage with a member of the opposite sex?

If you're doing any of these things, you're being emotionally unfaithful to your spouse. You have only so much energy. If you're spending it with coworkers or outside the home and then getting home and feeling too tired to spend any more on your spouse, that's emotional infidelity. You're

effectively relocating vital marital energy into the hands of others. Forget about where it might end up. Even if you never touch this other person, you have still used that person to relate to, and in doing so, you relate away from your spouse.

You may be shaking your head and disagreeing. But I've spent years helping couples pool their energies toward each other, and it has changed their marriage immediately. Stop all of these outside relationships and bring all your emotional and sexual energy home to your spouse, and you, too, will change your marriage immediately.

EXCLUSIVITY MAKES SENSE

The first step in developing a happy marriage is to close our peripheral vision to others so that we can be fully focused on our mate.

We seem to honor this commitment intuitively when tragedy strikes. Recently, there was an unforgettable wedding in my community. After the engagement, the groom was diagnosed with life-threatening, malignant melanoma. The wedding was postponed, and the twenty-year-old bride moved in with her future in-laws to help care for her love through his surgeries and subsequent chemotherapy treatments. There were few dry eyes as these two young lovers, wise beyond their years, made a public commitment to each other.

If one spouse becomes physically handicapped, our culture expects the healthy spouse to expend years of energy to stand by the disabled partner, to demonstrate a commitment to love. Why should we wait for that extreme righteous commitment to display itself only after tragedy?

The only way to keep a marriage strong is to put it first and foremost always. I recognize that some may find my idea of marital isolation archaic and unrealistic. Yet we are comfortable applying the same logic to many other areas in life. If we were to start a business, for example, we'd understand the need to focus serious attention on it. If we were to start two businesses simultaneously, others would count the minutes until we filed for bankruptcy. If we started a family, we'd feel obligated to focus our attention on our child. We wouldn't dream of spending large amounts of time alone with another child. We'd know it would be wrong to limit time with our own kid in favor of another kid who seemed "neater" than our own. As a parent, you'd understand your obligation to find the parts of your child you love and to learn to focus more on those wonderful points. You'd want to find activities that brought out the best in your child and yourself.

Marriage needs the same commitment to developing a loving and satisfying relationship. We can't divide ourselves in many directions without losing the intensity in our marriage. Our energy is already split between our jobs, our kids, and our marriage. The only way to keep a marriage strong is to put it first and foremost always. Just because we live in an ever-changing "enlightened" world doesn't mean we should eliminate healthy marital concepts because they sound archaic.

FOCUS ON YOUR MARRIAGE

When you make the choice to truly commit to each other, you face a huge obstacle: the world around you doesn't understand commitment. They don't know that you really plan to live the rest of your life with your spouse. No, you don't want to do it in pain and misery. But it can be wonderful only if you learn to be there through thick and thin. When you know that you can be at your very lowest and your spouse will put loving arms around you and pledge undying love, you're married forever. If we can just banish the urge to find this kind of love outside our spousal relationship, we'll be forced to put incredible effort into the greatest thing we have going: our marriage. If you feel you are missing that "connection" with your spouse, choose to find the way to create a new bond with your spouse instead of looking to an opposite sex friend to fulfill you.

Countless people have told me that getting involved with members of the opposite sex isn't a problem for them because it would never lead to adultery. Having an affair is far from the only problem. You will simply be chipping away at your marriage every time you get that ping of excitement from an emotionally stimulating moment with someone of the opposite sex. It's dangerous to your marriage, and not just because it may lead to sex. It drains your marriage of the immense energy it needs to grow: the energy to flirt with each other, to be emotionally stimulated by a different point of view, to share the excitement with someone who wants to know who you are. When you place your emotional energies elsewhere, without even realizing it, you don't offer your spouse the opportunity to provide you with that same ping of excitement you are looking for elsewhere.

Refocus on the one you married and how you can get whatever it is you're getting from these other relationships from your own marriage. Find outside relationships with members of the same sex and keep the "chemistry" between you and your spouse.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 12 May 2010 14:16

AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT ARTICLE FROM MEANINGFULLIFE.COM

I am first quoting the most important paragraph of the article

this is absolute truth.

and gives great hope any addict or anyone that has deeply ingrained negative tendencies.

The implications of personality change due to our Divine (rather than human) nature are far-reaching and revolutionary. It creates an infinitely higher standard of what we can expect of ourselves and of others. It motivates us to reach places we may never have considered imaginable. Above all, it gives us the power to change our very nature – even if it is deeply ingrained into our genes and personalities, due to heredity or training.

Emor: Can We Change Our Personalities?

And you shall count for yourselves... from the day on which you bring the Omer offering, seven complete weeks shall there be; until the morrow of the seventh week you shall count fifty days, and you shall proclaim that very day a holy festival – this week's Torah portion (Leviticus 23:15)

We are now in the forty-nine day period between Passover and Shavuot, which is marked by an intense journey toward emotional refinement. Each of the 49 days corresponds with one aspect of our seven multiplied by seven (49) emotional attributes, as outlined in detail with daily exercises in my book, *The Spiritual Guide to Counting the Omer*. Day one focuses on refining the “love within love,” day two – discipline within love, and so on.

Whenever addressing the issue of self-refinement and personal growth, we must ask the big question: Can we indeed change our personalities?

Animals, for instance, do not work on themselves and their relationships. They are who they are, controlled by their inherent instincts, and that’s that. Animals don’t go to therapy, don’t take Prozac and simply play out their lives according to their built-in mechanisms.

True, we can train an animal to jump through hoops and perform other tricks, but we cannot fundamentally change their natural patterns, as Dr. Moreau tragically discovered.

The famous parable of the proverbial cat drives the point home. Two philosophers were arguing the point whether animals can be trained and changed to behave like humans. The first thinker pointed to a cat that was trained to be a waiter in a fancy restaurant. Dressed in coat n’ tails the feline served patrons walking on two with his nose and whiskers elegantly facing upward. The second philosopher took out a bag and opened it up releasing several mice scurrying in different directions. The cat in tuxedo and all suddenly dropped on all fours to pursue the mice, leaving the wine and dinner strewn across the cherry wood floors, and the philosopher to scratch his head...

Humans too have their inherent natures and dispositions. Just as we can’t change the color of our eyes or our height (except superficially), how can we change our emotional “stripes”?

Especially considering the contemporary prevailing Darwinian-Freudian theory of man – as an evolved beast driven by the self-ish preserving Id – it would appear that there is little hope for any fundamental change beyond the behavioral.

Just witness the ugliness to which man can stoop when our survival instincts are challenged. Ravenous people have been known to kill other men with cannibalistic fury to satisfy their desperate hunger. No one should ever be tested, but history is fraught with brutal examples of mans' fall to bestial behavior capable of unimaginable atrocities when his survival (real or perceived) is at stake.

This may upset the entire billion-dollar self-help industry and therapeutic community (and conversely help the lucrative cosmetics business), but hey, if we are unchangeable creatures, let's just call a spade a spade, and stop wasting time, energy and money trying to work on perfecting our inner selves (it may be time to buy cosmetics stock).

If, for example, someone is born with an angry gene, or acquired angry fits at young age – either due to overexposure to an angry parent, or to deeply embedded resentment built up over the years – can we actually expect that this person will cease reacting with bouts of fury? Or if another is stingy by nature (first or second nature) can she ever become generous?

Is compassion wired into our systems, with some of us given a larger measure, while others are wired in different ways with different features?

When observing familial patterns it appears that certain traits “run in the family.” Whether this is due to “nature” or “nurture” – heredity or acquired attitudes – doesn't change the obvious difficulty or impossibility to change the grains of our natures, just as we can't change the grains in wood.

So what value or hope do we have in attempting to change our natural tendencies – a seemingly doomed cause?

How many people have you actually met that have changed their personalities?

The argument can be made that we really can't change our essential selves, but we can change our behavior. What is expected of civilized beings is not that they transform their insides, but that they live by a common law that dictates mutual respect: Superimposed “green lights” and “red lights” that allow us to co-exist. Hopefully, the fa?ade of behavioral discipline

will hold the inner beast at bay, with only a few anomalies in the shape of monstrous criminals put behind bars. Fear of punishment, in this system, is the determining deterrent that stops humans from gravitating back to their natural selfishness.

But left to their own, people will naturally return to their primal roots: Beasts struggling to survive at all costs.

Not a pretty picture, but do we have an alternative?

Now for the good news.

Every assumption is based on our initial premise. Every theory is defined by its axioms.

The reason we assume that we cannot change our personalities is because our initial impression is that everything in this universe doesn't really change in any fundamental way. Minerals remain minerals, vegetables are always vegetables and leopards do not "change their spots."

Existence as we experience it on a sensory level is a static place. Yes, things move about but they do not fundamentally change their natural personalities and do not transcend their inherent boundaries. The sun rises each day and sets at night. Then the moon rises and sets. The moon goes through its lunar cycle consistently each month. Every part of "nature" is a like a predictable clock following a pre-set unwavering program. So just as a stone, a tree and an animal all remain the way they have always been, why should we assume that a human being is different?

Based on this premise, that existence is static and even dying, the impossibility of changing ones personality seems as inevitable as the fact that a lamb will never behave like a wolf.

Indeed, existence as we know is worse than static; it is dying. Everything we experience, even physical matter, is in the process of erosion. Life in particular is mortal. Everyone and everything ages and dies.

However all this is based on the premise of existence “as we know it.”

There is another premise – one that upsets the entire theory of an unchanging existence. This premise is posited by the Torah. Like a true blueprint the Torah doesn’t describe symptoms but causes. It doesn’t define existence by the way we humans perceive it with the naked eye, but by its true inner character. When we look at a structure we see the outer layer; it’s body. When we look at its blueprint we see its internal engineering; it’s soul.

The Torah, which defines things as they truly are, opens up by describing man – not as a five or six foot skeleton, not as a creature of intelligence and feelings, not as a being that is born and dies. Who then is man? The first thing we are told is that the human being is not human but “divine,” created in the “Divine Image.” At the core each of us is a “Divine persona.”

This declaration changes the entire picture. Were we mere human personalities then our personality could change no more than land can become water or earth can transform into heaven.

Without getting into the intricate meanings of “Divine Image,” the basic difference between human and Divine is the difference between death and life. Divine is dynamic. Human is static. Divine is alive. Human is dead.

You see, the fact that the physical universe ages and erodes tells us that it is in fundamental demise from the outset. In Torah law there is a question about what can be categorized “mayim chayim,” live waters. If a live spring were to dry up in seven years, the law dictates that even while the spring is “alive” during the seven years it cannot be called “live,” because its demise is an inevitability. If something will ultimately die, is it truly alive in the first place?

Eternity, in other words, is not discovered at the end of “the road,” but at the beginning. Eternity is qualitatively, not quantitatively, different than the ephemeral, just as infinity is qualitatively equa-distant from the number one as it is from a trillion.

We may not know much about the Divine, but one thing it is not is human (that is, human as we define the term). The divine is a source of constant energy flowing from the Essence of it all. It is dynamic and alive, and always open to change.

By stating that the human being is made in the “Divine Image” we are compelled to rethink the very nature of our beings. Instead of trying to fit our spiritual “concepts” into human terms, we are asked to fit our “human” parameters into “Divine” context. As some thinkers have noted: “We are not human beings on a spiritual journey; we are spiritual beings on a human journey.”

Indeed, the Divine behooves us to rethink the very nature of existence itself. Not just the human, but the entire universe, beneath the surface, is pulsating with vibrant and dynamic Divine energy. By seeing ourselves as Divine we can begin looking at the universe in a new way and then recognize our ability to change existence as a whole.

I have always been intrigued by the statement of some French atheists that if “G-d didn’t exist we would have to create Him.” Beyond the sacrilegious tone of this statement, it carries a deep truth: If we allow ourselves to see life as nothing more than mortal, than we are doomed to the death of all things mortal. In effect, rendering all our life choices, all our sacrifices, all our commitments, into dying causes – dying along with us.

Our only wellspring of hope – one that infuses all our commitments with eternal meaning – is our connection with the Divine.

As one Holocaust survivor once said: “After the holocaust we have no choice but to believe in G-d, because we no longer can believe in man...”

The implications of personality change due to our Divine (rather than human) nature are far-reaching and revolutionary. It creates an infinitely higher standard of what we can expect of ourselves and of others. It motivates us to reach places we may never have considered imaginable. Above all, it gives us the power to change our very nature – even if it is deeply ingrained into our genes and personalities, due to heredity or training.

So, can you change your personality?

No, if it's a human personality.

Yes, if it's a Divine one.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 13 May 2010 12:55

Dedicated to Reb Guard who presents to us the opportunity of reaching the goals discussed in this poem.

I saw the concept here in the Chasam Sofer (Toras Moshe) in Sefer Beraishis (forgot exact location) that by closing our physical outer eye from seeing things we shouldn't, Hashem opens up for us our spiritual inner eye to see His infinite delights, and that the joy of this vision is true and pure and real -may all of us be merit to experience this.Amen

Poem # 65

Closing your outer eye

From unhealthy visions,

Creates the opening

Of your inner eye

The soul's eye

To see

Unparalleled and breathtaking

Sights of endless delight

Closing your outer eye

To the women of the world

Opens up your inner eye

To see the true beauty

Of the one woman

Given to you

By God

Closing your outer eye

From viewing infection\

Creates a healing

Of your inner eye

That pierces through

Into the soul

Transforming

What was\ a defect

Into a source

Of joy and love

And kindness

Closing your outer eye

From the faults of your spouse

Will open up the inner Eye of God

To see only the good

That is within you

For when you play “dumb”

Looking away from

The character flaws of your wife

Then God plays “dumb” too

Ignores your defects

That are within you

Patiently giving you time

To work on it

On your own

In calmness

In peace

In patient love

Closing your outer eye

From viewing unhealthy sex

Will open your inner eye

To view and express

True and real intimacy

Opening your inner eye

To the absolute truth

Of God's will

Will open your outer eye

To see the world

And yourself

In it's true reality

The wisdom within each object

Each person

Outward expression

Of inner essence

Which is truly

God Himself

It is the goal we

Strive for

And one day

God willing

Our outer eye

Will align perfectly

With our inner eye

Which will bring us

Peace and happiness

True unity with our

Wives, children, friends

With ourselves

For we will finally see

What our essence is

Beyond the outer rust

A beauty

Breathtaking to behold

God sees this already

He is asking of us,

No, pleading with us

To see it too

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by Dov - 14 May 2010 01:20

Yechida, take a peek at what I just posted in #14 on "Yecheil's Journey." You may like the comment at the end. Love you, brother!

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 14 May 2010 13:00

Dov

I love your comment at the end and I quote it here:

"PS. I truly believe that the lust problem we have is part and parcel of our natural but misguided yearning for d'veikus with Ultimate Power and Ultimate Goodness. I know that I want porn - not because it is dirty and "I like to be dirty" but because my heart tells me that something about it is truly beautiful and warm, and loving. I know that a good part of my heart is yearning, but is twisted. For me, Recovery is a process of learning what true beauty is. Chazal say it is Hashem. There is no coincidence that they refer to that Ultimate beauty as P'nei haSh'chinah - a feminine aspect symbolized by Chava, and later by Rochel and Leyah. I hope I am not being too weird for you here, but there are many times that I notice a pretty woman on the subway in NY and turn away asking Hashem to "help me not be distracted by that shadow of true beauty and instead come to always appreciate the real beauty that is Your Malchus and Sh'chinah haKedosha." Nu. It works."

thank you, and I have to say I share those convictions, because even at the age of 14, when I started to see how twisted and sick our society's use and abuse of these matters are, I always believed that there was something very special deep down when this aspect of God's Creation is used the right way, it's just that most of us lose our way in the process either by misusing this drive, or, as crazy as this sounds, by running away from these things altogether, which is also a road that leads to very negative behaviors, and to put it bluntly, some people are over occupied with sex, and always want to have sex with their wives, but then you have some that don't sleep with their wives enough, which they believe is a holy thing, when in reality all it is is a very damaging avoidance, and a fear of connecting in a real way, the way it was meant to be.

we all are aware of how the over emphasis on sex in our culture created many cases of very unhealthy overindulgence

but what many don't see is the terrible damage caused by overavoidance, going to far in the opposite direction, thinking that this is the only way to protect ourselves from tumah, and it is our sick culture that is mostly to blame. Sex is used so terribly so we are inclined to run away from it altogether.

But that has destroyed many marriages, because a tzenua does not hate sex. (if she does hate sex, she is not a tzenua, but a coward with some arrogance blended in, or was abused as a kid, or not physically healthy, or was taught some garbage by a brain-dead kallah teacher) She wants sex from her husband and she needs it too, but she wants it to express her soul through her body, and she needs her husband to recognize the specialness and uniqueness of her soul

through this intense physical act.

If anyone thinks that Leah wanted to sleep with Yaakov just to establish the Shevotim are mistaken. Look how she named the first three children, my husband will love me, my husband will attach himself to me ect ect...

Have a wonderful Shaabos, Dov and the rest of this wonderful chaburah

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