

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 laagvokeles - 03 May 2011 20:26

by the number of times this thread has been aproached i gess it helps the addicts a lot, thank you

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by Dov - 03 May 2011 21:25

Very sweet, thanks again Yechidah.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 04 May 2011 15:35

Mark Twain's comments on the Jews are more well known

here is one from Leo Tolstoy

What is a Jew? This question is not as strange as it may seem at first glance. Let's examine this free creature that was insulated and oppressed, trampled on and pursued, burned and drowned by all the rulers and the nations, but is nevertheless living and thriving in spite of the whole world.

What is a Jew that did not succumb to any worldly temptations offered by his oppressors and persecutors so that he would renounce his religion and abandon the faith of his fathers?

A Jew is a sacred being who procured an eternal fire from the heavens and with it illuminated the earth and those who live on it. He is the spring and the source from which the rest of the nations drew their religions and beliefs.

A Jew is a pioneer of culture. From time immemorial, ignorance was impossible in the Holy

Land, even more so than nowadays in civilized Europe. Moreover, at the time when the life and death of a human being was worth nothing, Rabbi Akiva spoke against the death penalty which is now considered to be an acceptable punishment in the most civilized countries.

A Jew is a pioneer of freedom. Back in primitive times, when the nation was divided into two classes, masters and slaves, Moses' teaching forbid holding a person as a slave for more than six years.

A Jew is a symbol of civil and religious tolerance, "So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt." These words were uttered during distant, barbarian times when it was commonly acceptable among the nations to enslave each other.

In terms of tolerance, the Jewish religion is far from recruiting adherents. Quite the opposite, the Talmud prescribes that if a non-Jew wants to convert to the Jewish faith, then it has to be explained to him how difficult it is to be a Jew and that the righteous of other religions also inherit the heavenly kingdom. A Jew is a symbol of eternity.

The nation which neither slaughter nor torture could exterminate, which neither fire nor sword of civilizations were able to erase from the face of earth, the nation which first proclaimed the word of the Lord, the nation which preserved the prophecy for so long and passed it on to the rest of humanity, such a nation cannot vanish.

A Jew is eternal; he is an embodiment of eternity.

Leo Tolstoy, 1891

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 06 May 2011 12:25

“Arvus”

The concept that every Yid

Is intertwined with

His fellow Yid

When a limb is weak

The rest of the body

Puts in great effort

To compensate

To cover for

The tasks of the weaker limb

I remember when

I had a broken ankle

My good foot and arms

Put in a lot of extra toil

Until the broken foot

Got back to itself

And was healed and able

To take back its function

So too, Kllal Yisroel

When a Yid is weak

The rest of us

Take on to take care of him

Help take off some of the load

Until he is able

To stand on his own former strength

And if he remains weak

We continue to compensate

For we are one unit

But the greatest chessed

Is to allow the weaker Yid

With kindness and care

To develop

His own unique strengths

For as long as it takes

We allow him

To rest

To maintain his own pace

Until he regains

And discovers his own special path

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 06 May 2011 13:47

From Reb Shlomo

I want you to know something so deep. Why don't we really invite guests, the right way? When I am at somebody else's house, I cannot invite guests. I want to say a gevalt Torah. In order to fulfil the mitzvah of hachnasat orchim (welcoming guests), you have to feel at home where you are. And, when I feel at home, then I can invite guests. Why is Friday night so special for us? Why Shabbos? Because, everybody knows, on Shabbos I am not in exile. Shabbos, every Jew is in Eretz Yisrael (Israel). Shabbos the house belongs to me. So, when I am at home, I can invite guests.

What really is exile between people? Exile is when I want to give you something with all my heart, but you only want fifty percent. I will still give it to you, because I love you. But, why didn't you take the whole thing? Why didn't you take it the way it is?

I want you to know a Torah which I have been privileged to hear in the name of the Holy Mai Hashloach. The gemara says that when Rabbi Haninah ben Dosa was at the end, when he was hungry and thirsty, there was no food in the house, he cried. Suddenly the Ribbeno Shel Olam sent him one golden foot. A foot of a table. That night he dreamt that he was in Gan Eden (paradise) and he had a chair, and a table, but the table had only three feet. He realized that the Ribbono Shel Olam was taking off a little bit from him in Gan Eden to give it to him in this world. He said, "Ribbono Shel Olam, please don't do this to me. Take it back." And the gemara says that a hand came from heaven and took it back. The holy Mai Hashiloach, the holy Ishbitzer, asked this question. The gemara says that G-d only gives; He doesn't take back. So how could He take it back? So he says that the moment something comes into this world, it is already so defiled that G-d can't take it back. It's like when you buy a suit, after you wear it, you cannot give it back. But, Haninah ben Dosa was so holy that, even after he received it, it was still holy.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by heuni memass - 06 May 2011 16:36

Deep my friend. Very nice!

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by Serene smile - 06 May 2011 17:29

You write good

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 10 May 2011 13:18

A story about Rab Moishe Feinstein ztl

By Isaac Steven Herschkopf

I could not have been more than 4 or 5 when I asked her. It seemed to me, at the time, to be an innocent, straightforward question: "Mommy, when do I get my number?"

I was, of course, upset when she burst into tears and ran out of the kitchen, but I was also confused. This was Washington Heights in the 1950s. It was an enclave of survivors. Every adult I knew had a number. Even my teenage sister had one in blue ink tattooed on her forearm.

They were as ubiquitous on the benches of Riverside Drive as they were on the footpaths of Fort Tryon Park. If you saw an adult with some sort of hat on his head, he invariably also had a number on his arm. In the summer, when the community traveled en masse to Catskill bungalow colonies, or to Rockaway beaches, the numbers came too.

I presumed it was a ceremonious part of becoming bar mitzvah, or perhaps graduation from Breuer's or Soloveichik, our local yeshivas. No one appeared to be embarrassed by their number. ARG! I never saw anyone try to cover it up when they went swimming. It seemed to be a matter of fact part of life.

When, as children, we would ask our parents why there was a “Mother’s Day” and a “Father’s Day,” but no “Children’s Day,” the automatic response was “Every day is ‘Children’s Day!’” In Washington Heights, in the ’50s, every day was Yom HaShoah.

Ironically enough, at the same time, no day was Yom HaShoah. The commemoration, as it exists today, was not around then. Breuer’s and Soloveichik consisted almost exclusively of children of survivors, yet neither school had any assembly, or recognition of any type, of the Shoah.

The very word Shoah didn’t exist. The word Holocaust did, but it was never invoked. When on rare occasion our parents would make reference to the events that led them to leave Europe to come to America, they would label it “the War.”

They spoke nostalgically of life “before the War”; they never spoke of what happened during “the War.” They spoke reverently of their parents and siblings who were “lost in the War”; they never spoke of their spouses or children who perished. After all, they had new spouses and new children who didn’t need to be reminded that they were replacements.

I was already bar mitzvah when I first realized that my parents had been previously married and had prior children. Years later I was shocked to discover that my sister with whom I was raised was not my father’s daughter.

When I finally came to understand that not every adult was a survivor, and people would ask me what survivors were really like, I never knew what to answer. There was Mr. Silverberg, our seatmate in shul, as jovial as Santa Claus, who always had a good word for everyone. On the other hand, there was Mr. Grauer, our neighbor whose face was indelibly etched in a frown and was always threatening to hit his wife or his children. In retrospect, as a psychiatrist, I could understand both, but who truly defined what it meant to be a survivor? Did anyone, or anything?

I learned the answer from Rabbi Moshe Feinstein.

This gadol hador, the greatest sage of his generation, was so renowned he was referred to simply as “Rav Moshe.” The closest I came to this legend was at Yeshiva University High School, where my rebbe was his son-in-law, Rabbi Moshe Tendler. Rabbi Tendler, and every

other rabbi, would speak of Rav Moshe in awe-stricken tones usually reserved for biblical forefathers.

One summer I was spending a week with my aunt and uncle in upstate Ellenville. Uncle David and Aunt Saba, survivors themselves, as the doctor and nurse in charge of the concentration camp infirmary, had managed to save the lives of innumerable inmates, including my mother and sister. After “the War” they had set up a medical practice in this small Catskill village, where, I discovered, to my amazement, they had one celebrity patient - Rav Moshe.

My aunt mentioned casually that Rav Moshe had an appointment the next day. Would I like to meet him? Would I? It was like asking me, would I like to meet God.

I couldn't sleep that night. I agonized over what I should wear. Should I approach him? What should I say? Should I mention that his son-in-law was my rebbe? Should I speak to him in English, or my rudimentary Yiddish?

I was seated in the waiting room, in the best clothing I had with me, an hour before his appointment. It seemed like an eternity, but eventually he arrived, accompanied by an assistant at each side. He didn't notice me.

I was frozen. I had intended to rise deferentially when he entered, but I didn't. I had prepared a few sentences that I had repeatedly memorized, but I sensed that my heart was beating too quickly for me to speak calmly.

My aunt had heard the chime when he entered and came out of the office to greet him: “Rabbi Feinstein, did you meet my nephew Ikey? Can you believe a shaygitz [unobservant] like me has a yeshiva bochur [student] in the family?”

Rav Moshe finally looked at me. I was mortified. My aunt was addressing him irreverently. She was joking with him. She had called me Ikey, not Yitzchok, or even Isaac.

Then it got even worse. She walked over to him. Surely she knew not to shake his hand. She didn't. She kissed him affectionately on the cheek as she did many of her favorite patients. She then told him my uncle would see him in a minute and returned to the office.

Rav Moshe and his attendants turned and looked at me, I thought accusingly. I wanted to die. In a panic, I walked over to him and started to apologize profusely: "Rabbi Feinstein, I apologize. My aunt, she isn't frum [religious]. She doesn't understand..."

He immediately placed his fingers on my lips to stop me from talking. He then softly spoke two sentences in Yiddish that I will remember to my dying day: "She has numbers on her arms. She is holier than me."

Rav Moshe had understood what I had not. Our holiest generation was defined by the numbers on their arms.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 11 May 2011 17:48

"Every human being's essential nature is perfect and faultless, but after years of immersion in the world we easily forget our roots and take on a counterfeit nature"

(Lao-tzu)

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 12 May 2011 13:40

In my opinion, the most moving anecdote, including a powerful message for this time of year when we are attempting to correct our Middot (character traits), in Rav Chaim Soloveichik's Shiur from Shavuot was the story which he told of being at a Simchah in America with his father, Rav Aharon Soloveichik, Zecher Tzaddik LiVrachah.

Rav Chaim told how they were eating delicatessen at the Simchah, when he happened to ask who supervised the Kashrut of the delicatessen. When the host mentioned the name of the person who supervised the Kashrut of the delicatessen, Rav Aharon Soloveichik put down his fork and said that he could not eat this delicatessen, though he assured everyone that it was kosher and technically permissible to eat.

It turned out that Rav Aharon could not bring himself to eat the delicatessen because he knew of a terrible blemish in the Middot (character traits) of the person who supervised its Kashrut, a serious flaw in his fulfillment of Mitzvot Ben Adam LaChavero (Torah commandments relating to the proper treatment of one's fellow man). In a manner very similar to the Talmudic description of a Chasid Shoteh (despicably foolish "righteous person"), this Kashrut supervisor had instructed his congregation that if they are near an immodestly dressed woman who slips on the ice, they should not help her get up!

Rav Aharon Soloveichik was such a great Tzaddik that his moral standards affected him to such a degree that he could not even bring himself to eat meat supervised by a person who could issue such a ruling!

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by Serene smile - 12 May 2011 16:52

GREAT STORY! (2 bochurim saw a woman drowning... U know that one?)

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by yechidah - 12 May 2011 17:06

serene smile,I love that name

I dont recall the story you are mentioning

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by Dov - 12 May 2011 17:20

I was at the levaya of the great tzaddik, Rav Shmuel Yaakov Weinberg (whose younger brother, Rav Noach zt"l, said taught him everything he knew).

Rav Weinberg's sone told the story of why his father left the great chassidic family he was born into, about a woman on fire, R"l. Same deal.

V'hameivin yovin.

Nu. Sof kol sof, we need to be grateful to Hashem that we still have no axes to grind, and are content just doing the best we can with what we have rather than just point fingers at others.

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Re: yechida's reflections

Posted by Serene smile - 12 May 2011 17:31

Amen.. The story: 2 buchrm.. Woman drowning.. 1 saves her.. They keep walking... 2 miles later one says "I can't believe u touched her!"... "I carried her for a few moments" the other replies "but you've carried her for the last two miles".. :-) (is this pointing fingers?.. I by no means had any intention to... ??)

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