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THE ETERNAL INTERNAL CONFLICT

When you think of all your inner conflicts and put them out there on paper, you will notice how many there are. *Should I stay later at the party, or should I get up early to pray like a mensch? Should I protect my best friend, or should I be honest when asked information regarding a shidduch? Should I work harder or be calmer? Am I who I was, or am I who I want to be?*

Who are you, anyway? The you that wants to be slim and fit, or the you who wants to eat *sufganiyot*? *Life seems to consist of struggle between short-sighted self and long-sighted self; balancing these two is an art* (Daniel Kahneman). In the course of the day, a person is said to average between 12,000 and 70,000 thoughts (National Science Foundation). That is quite a range. Even at the lower end, is it possible that all 12,000 thoughts are really you? So, how do I know who the real me is?

One music composer complained to his psychologist, *the tune in my head keeps interfering with the song in my heart*. It seems that everyone has the *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* syndrome, and *Man is truly not one, but truly two*. G-d created man with this syndrome. וַיִּצְרֵן יְקֹנֶק אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם. Why are there two "yuds" in the Hebrew word, "and He created"? R' Shimon Ben Pazi teaches אוֹי לִי מִצָּרִי. That man's life is the balance between *Woe is to me from my G-d*, versus *Woe is to me from my Inclinations*. (Berachot 61a) The internal conflict between my G-d and my Inclination is an eternal one.

This is true for all humanity as a whole, but no being on the planet is more *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* than the Jew. Rabbeinu Bachye learns all this from our Parasha. Why does the Torah sometimes refer to Yaakov as Yaakov וַיִּקְרָא יַעֲקֹב וְשֵׁמוֹתָיִם לְמֹתֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל? Didn't the angel already say that Yaakov's name should be changed to Yisrael וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא יַעֲקֹב יֵאמָר עוֹד שְׁמִי בְּי אִם-יִשְׂרָאֵל?

The answer is that Yaakov is the sub-name. While Yisrael is the name of glory. And it is not a contradiction. And every time Yaakov is called Yaakov, and not Yisrael, it was intentional. The name Yaakov is for the body, when busy with bodily, physical, materialistic, Olam Haze, exile, or death. And the name Yisrael is used in connection with G-dliness, Olam Haba, living in E Yisrael... And also we find that Yisrael refers to men, while Yaakov refers to the women, כֹּה תֵאמַר לְבֵית יַעֲקֹב וְתִגִּיד לְבֵנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. For the woman's role is to make the home a place from which the spirituality of the man that lives there can soar.

It is impossible for man to be only spiritual, to be only Yisrael and to disregard Yaakov. One cannot live without the material, the physical - in short, without Olam Haze. As the Talmud teaches, in contrast to the name change of Avraham and Sarah, the name of Yisrael does not nullify the name of Yaakov. (Berachot 13) Rather, a person should consider the G-dly component of himself as the main one, and the physical body as secondary. And when a person allows himself to be enticed by

bodily indulgences, he is Yaakov and not Yisrael...
(See R Bachye)

When Yaakov heard that Yosef was alive and he rejoiced in his heart once again, Ruach Hakodesh returned to Yaakov. And right then, the name Yisrael returned to him. וַיֹּאמֶר יִשְׂרָאֵל רַב עוֹד־יוֹסֵף בְּנִי. הִי. The last time before this that Yaakov was called Yisrael was the last time he saw Yosef, before he was sent to look for his brothers. When Yaakov is told to go down to the Egyptian exile, or told of death or of losing his Ruach Hakodesh [which revealed to him the date of the Mashiach's coming, which he wanted to reveal to his children], he is, again, referred to as Yaakov.

It is so strange how sometimes, within the same episode, or even in the same passuk, Yaakov can be both Yaakov and Yisrael. When G-d revealed Himself to Yaakov to tell him that he should go down to Egypt, the passuk says. וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמַרְאֵת הַלַּיְלָה וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִי: *And Elokim said to Yisrael in the visions of the night, and He said, Yaakov, Yaakov, and he (Yaakov) said, here I am (I am ready).* How do we reconcile the use of two names in the same passuk?

The Baal Haturim always has phenomenal insights. *The letter ׀ of the name Yisrael here in the Torah scroll has 7 “crowns”. This is because we know that a Tzaddik falls 7 seven times in his life and arises (Mishlei 24 16). For Yaakov, at this point, had encountered 7 challenges, and he was saved from all of them. Esav, Lavan, the Angel, Dinah, Yosef, Shimon, and Binyamin (See Tanchum Miketz 10, BR 79a).*

So, a Jew has ups and downs. A Jew has emotions. A Jew has tests in life. And no matter what test you are going through, G-d prefers you more than anything else in His Universe. כִּי־יַעֲקֹב בָּחַר לָךְ. יִשְׂרָאֵל לְסֻגְתּוֹ: For G-d has chosen Yaakov for

Himself (Tehillim 135; see Malbim) You are G-d's favorite, even when you can't stand yourself.

It is impossible to eradicate emotion; it is only possible to ignore it, or to question its truth. Emotions come and emotions go, but the values you respect define who you really are. The person you are is the person you fight to stand up to become. You are the person you pray to G-d that He let you be. Yaakov reached the point of deserving seven crowns for having met seven major challenges in his life and “getting up” after each one. This ability to get up again is the glorious Yisrael, even if he is on his way down to exile.

This problem of not tapping into the Yisrael we are inside is the reason why we don't have the Beit Hamikdash today. As the Messilat Yesharim writes in chapter 19, *“And if a person says, who am I? And what have I, hidden inside me, that I can pray for the end of the exile, for Jerusalem, etc... Can my prayers gather in the exiles? And sprout a redemption? The answer is like we learnt (Sanhedrin 38): For this, a person is created alone, in order that each person can say, “For me, the world was created”, and this brings G-d pleasure, that his sons pray for the Beit Hamikdash. And even if his prayers are not answered immediately, for the time has not yet come, or for some other reason, still, he has done his part, and G-d is happy with this...”* The reason why the Temple is not rebuilt, the reason why Mashiach is not here, is because we do not believe in ourselves; we do not recognize that our prayers can make a difference. We do not realize that the world that each and every one of us finds himself in, is the world that was created for that person. This is the belief of the Yisrael. Only by realizing that even when we are in the Yaakov mode G-d loves us more than anything, will the Yisrael in each one of us shine.

SOMETHING FOR THE KIDS

Someone asked me a few days after Hanukah how my vacation was. I answered that I am still בהפש (I am still on vacation.) He asked me why I am still on vacation a week after Hanukah. I told him בהפש is also the acronym for the four things we all have to deal with in life. All of life's problems usually

fall under one of four categories: בריאות – health, הינוך – parenting, פרנסה – livelihood, שלום בית – peace with your spouse, or the people in your life.

Our job in life is to juggle those four. Rabbi Geizler taught us, as coaches, that if the difficult problems in life are hard to solve, the reason is

usually because the problems are a solution for some other problem. A parenting problem can be solved with time, thought, money, or patience, but the reason why a parent may lack these resources is because these resources are already invested to a great extent in his livelihood. I can't get to the gym and care for my health, because I don't have the time to make time for it, because my time is invested in one of the other three. Etc., etc.

Lately, I invented an awareness game that I play with my kids. It's called "the ingredients game". I take something out of the refrigerator, something that everyone eats, and I ask the kids what the main ingredient is. What is the second most important ingredient. What is the third. Most of the time, we do not pay any attention to the ingredients of the things we eat. And most of the time, we do not realize what percentage of our time, money and effort is invested in any one of the four abovementioned factors. Usually, not even 20 percent of our resources are spent on הניוך, on parenting. Despite the fact that our children are 100 percent of our future. This is something we all know. But something we all forget (or choose to forget) too often.

Probably the person who changed the world the most over the last years was Steve Jobs. What was his motivation? What kept Steve going? "Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything - all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure - these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important." "Being the richest man in the cemetery doesn't matter to me. Going to bed at night saying, 'we've done something wonderful', that's what matters to me." Steve wanted to leave a legacy in this world.

Eliyahu Hanavi asked G-d, "Master of the World! With what will a poor man's name be remembered before You? A rich man is remembered because of his money, his silver and gold, for his precious stones and diamonds and all types of fancy utensils he acquired. But the poor man, how will he be remembered?" In other words, a rich man has the ability to put his name on a Yeshiva Building, on

an Aron Kodesh, he can donate a Shul... and these will bear his name. But the poor man has nothing with his name on it, to keep the memory of his name before G-d!?

G-d answered Eliyahu, "The poor man will be remembered through his children. The son reads the Torah in shul, and people ask, 'Who's that man's father?' The son asks a good question in the study hall, and people ask, 'Who is the one who asked that question? Who is his father?' And people will bless G-d's Name, because of the poor man's son." The rich man is remembered because of the buildings he donated to the Yeshiva. And the poor man is remembered because his son is the one who is teaching Torah in that Yeshiva. (TDE 18)

When Yaakov blessed Menashe and Efraim, he blessed them with the eternal blessing: המלאך הגאל אותי מכל רע יברך את הנערים ויקרא בהם שמי. May the One who redeemed me from all hard times bless the lads, *and call in them My Name*. What does that mean, that Yaakov's name be "called in them"? The Shevet Meyehuda answers that Yaakov was asking that his name live on through these children. Not by having his name on buildings. But by the actions of his offspring.

When Yaakov blessed Yosef, (ויברך את יוסף) he blessed him by blessing his children. (המלאך הגאל אותי מכל רע יברך את הנערים) Because the greatest blessing you can give a person is to bless his children. Because your sons are you after you are gone.

Did you ever stop to ask yourself what is the greatest thing you can give your children? I thought about this for a while. The secret to having a tranquil home, to having Shalom Bayit and to effective, successful parenting is Triple A. Your wife and kids need Attention, Affection, and Appreciation *from you*. But most husbands and fathers confuse the Triple A with another Triple A. They think that what their family needs most from them is Affordability, Availability and Advice. And that is why most husbands and fathers feel that to be a good father or husband is an impossible task. But the second Triple A is asked for only when there is a lack in the first Triple A. The first Triple A is all your family really need from you.

What did Yaakov leave for his children? He gave them the greatest thing a father can give. He blessed each one and let each one know his strength and weakness. He let them know that he knows each one has a unique Neshama, and he believes that each one will go on to become the greatest that he can be. ויברך אותם איש אשר כברכתו וברך אותם *And he blessed them, each one with the befitting blessing, did he bless them.* The Or Hachaim explains this to mean that each one of the children had his unique strengths, and Yaakov made sure that each one knew who he could be, and that Yaakov believed in him. Probably the greatest thing I can give my children is the knowledge and certainty that I believe in them, to let them know how great they are, and how great G-d made them.

Unfortunately, the way the world we live in conducts itself is a far cry from these ideas. The problem with the education system we have in our society is that the school system is outdated. The style of education and parenting kids as "factory made, one size fits all" is outdated. The old system builds factory workers and employees. Today's world and market is looking for more creativity and less workers. People need to feel today, more than ever before, that they have a unique identity.

For example, one of my children happens to be an amazing storyteller. Unfortunately, the school system does not give a child an opportunity to develop such a skill. Quite the contrary. The child can get punished for telling stories in class, while drawing attention. It turns out that one of the greatest skills one can have in life is storytelling. For marketing, bringing your brand to life, for teaching, for parenting, and for holding people's attention. It is the seemingly small traits that our children are blessed with that they need us to glorify and strengthen.

If we bring those unique blessings that G-d gives us to light, we can do tremendous things in the world. Believe it or not, Steve Jobs' greatest life passion and skill was calligraphy, not tech. He knew more about design than he did about technology. And he used that passion to build the iPhone in such a way that, "We made the buttons on the screen look so good you'll want to lick them."

It is up to us to notice the gifts G-d gives our children and to let our kids know how great they can be. To believe in them. Because they are the only future we have.

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