

Getting Serious

By HaRav Ariel Bar Tzadok

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I have just had a brilliant revelation. The world is “going to hell in a hand basket” and I finally figured out what the problem is. You see, the world is so entirely messed up for one specific reason, the one reason that most people emphatically avoid and ignore. If we are willing to look at what the real problem is, I believe I can offer some real solutions. Maybe if we actually make the effort to work to fix the problem we can somehow change our world. I am an eternal optimist, so let us “give it a shot.”



I do not need to “beat around the bush” here. The one reason why the world is so messed up and what people are ignoring and avoiding is, did you guess it, yes, the problem is none other than YOU! That is right, YOU, not us, not the world, not society, the problems that you are facing in your life come from and can be changed by non other than Y-O-U!

Let us begin with the issue of discipline and self-control. Do you have sufficient discipline and self-control? How many times have you known something to be right, yet, you fail to do it because of some stupid excuse you made up? It is either too hard, you considered it beneath you, or you thought of some other stupid or foolish reason all to avoid doing what should have been done. Needless to say, all of these excuses belong in a toilet and not in your head. Let the analogy continue, if you place these kinds of ideas and attitudes in your head then indeed your head is a toilet and you are full of, well, you know...

Our emancipated modern society today has taught one lie that is greater than all the rest. The great lie is that the value and importance of pleasing oneself and accomplishing one's personal happiness is paramount and how one feels about something is what is most important. Let the truth be known, in the eyes of Heaven, your happiness means nothing and your feelings mean even less than that. Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness might be guaranteed you under the United States Declaration of Independence, but Heaven and the natural laws of reality that they ordain care nothing for U.S. declarations.



In other words, the realities of life, as ordained by Heaven, are not geared towards one finding fulfillment, happiness and feeling good. Indeed, all who place these selfish personal pursuits as paramount in their lives are doomed to live lives of horrible pain and suffering. Life does not countenance fools and anyone who believes life will provide them exactly what they want, when they want it is a fool.

I truly feel very sorry for those people who live ruled by their emotions. Emotions are well and good, they are a natural and necessary aspect of our human experience. However, let the truth be known, emotions are fragile and transitory things; they are always changing and in a state of flux. One who therefore lives under their influence has no stable foundation upon which to build one's life.

Individuals who allow their emotions to cloud their judgment and to direct their choices throughout life are the most unhappy and unsuccessful bunch of human beings. They are most prone to psychological disorders and all types of substance abuses. Everything revolves around one's feelings; they live their lives in the pursuit of feeling good. Being that feelings, by nature are ever changing, the emotional individual without any control over one's feelings is wracked from side to side throughout life. The circumstances in one's life are ever changing and never stable. If one cannot emotionally handle the daily changes that life brings then one's life is usually a complete mess because of it.

The emotionally oriented individual needs to learn a very important lesson about balancing head and heart. The emotionally based individual must be taught, by whatever means necessary to overcome the imbalance caused by ever changing feelings and learn to become stable, fruitful and productive. Only in this is true happiness to be found.

Emotionally based personalities unfortunately are not the only ones with problems adjusting to the real world. The single greatest problem in the world is selfish individuals. These are the people who believe everyone and everything in life should serve them and revolve around them. When the world is full of selfish petty people, then the world become corrupt and evil. Modern western secular society unfortunately is built upon the premise of pleasing everybody. Everybody can get what they want, regardless of however perverse or despicable their perversions may be.

In the eyes of the self-centered selfish individual, nothing is considered wrong anymore, even much of which is still considered illegal. For example, the reason why so many people are involved in the usage of illegal narcotics is that the pursuits of their own pleasures have convinced them that such usage is not wrong or immoral, it is just illegal. They disagree with the law and are willing to



flaunt it and just hope they never are caught. As long as they are getting what they want, they do not consider their behavior wrong and thus should not be subject to punishment. They hide their behavior so as not to be penalized, nonetheless they do not believe there is anything wrong in what they are doing.

When society is made up of individuals who care more for their personal pleasures and interests than for the laws of the land and the security of the nation, this is a society headed for a big fall.

Selfishness, self-centeredness, the pursuit of pleasure, relaxation and comfort, these are the ingredients that destabilize society and create chaos. Life is not about being comfortable. Life is not about pursuing and receiving pleasures. These types of pursuits speak for themselves. Individuals focus upon fulfilling not their personal needs, but rather their personal desires. Such selfish individuals only take interest in others as it suits or pleases themselves.

The old adage says, "there are too many (chiefs) leaders, but not enough (indians) followers." When everybody wants to be the boss, then this means everyone wants to give the orders and wants everyone else to follow orders. What happens when everyone is giving the orders and no one is listening to follow them? What we have is anarchy, division and disaster, which aptly describes our society today.

The natural form of the human body dictates to us the natural order of human psychology. Just as the head is placed above the heart, so too must our intellect rule over our emotions. It is not wrong to have feelings or be emotional. It is very wrong to allow one's emotions to cloud one's judgment and to dictate one's actions.

Performing proper behavior requires clarity of mind and determination of focus. Behavior must be guided by what we know is right and proper and not by how we feel about an issue or what our emotional state is at the moment. Such type of emotional dominance is what we call immaturity.

One can feel any way one wants, but those feelings must not be the determining factor directing what one does and how one behaves. One must do what one is obligated to do, regardless of how one feels about it. As it is said in military lingo, "yours is not to question why, yours is but to do and shut up." There is a lot many of us can learn from military style discipline.

I have always encouraged military style discipline programs; indeed, I have always encouraged young people to join the Military. The Military requires its members to be mature. In order to be mature they learn how to follow orders



immediately and properly. It is this type of cooperation that enables the Military to work together as a cohesive unit instead of a bunch of squabbling individuals each seeking to better the next.

The Military teaches its members that they are part of a greater whole and that the good of the unit far exceeds the good of the individual. Each individual learns to see the bigger picture and to live for something bigger than oneself. One learns to live under adverse circumstances and to accept them without complaint. **One learns to do what one has to do, to deal with what one has to deal with and to make the best of what one has.** All this is done without complaining, whining or crying.

One carries one's own burden and actually seeks to assist and support others carrying theirs. The motto is "all for one and one for all." It is no wonder that the western secular world views the military today with such disdain and revulsion. The Military teaches and stands for everything the selfish, self-centered disgusting lazy undisciplined modern individual hates. In the Military, there is discipline, responsibility, selflessness, sacrifice and most important, consequences for improper behavior. If you do not do the right thing, there is hell to pay. The exact opposite is true in modern society.

In the world today, everyone seeks to avoid all consequences of any type behavior. Everyone just wants to do whatever they want and that there should be no consequences and no one calling any type of behavior bad or wrong. However foolish and unrealistic this is, it is still the dominant attitude taught and believed by a majority of people today. Therefore, instead of "united we stand," today we have "divided we stand," and thus "divided we shall fall."

You ask, what can we do about this sad state of affairs. Well, unless the individual is willing to change, to adopt discipline and proper behavior, then there is no hope. Unless we stop making excuses for ourselves and others and blaming everything under the sun for our personal problems, there is no hope. As the American President Harry Truman said, "the buck stops here." In other words, responsibility begins with the individual.

Related to this point of selfishness, pursuit of pleasure and lack of discipline is the growing epidemic of obesity. Obesity is gluttony, pure and simple. It is over eating in excess and is considered a cardinal sin. Obesity is disgusting. It is grossly unhealthy and the most obvious and overt sign of a lack of self-control and discipline. Stop blaming being overweight on societal pressures, hormones, stress and every other kind of stupid reason. One becomes obese for one and only one reason; one eats too much, period.



Want to lose weight? Stop over-feeding yourself. Stop giving in to stupid cravings deluding yourselves into believing you are hungry. You are not hungry; you just have cravings, wants and desires, the manifestations of self-centeredness. Your body is not lacking from food. Instead what you lack is discipline.

Learn to say no. If you have a problem with this, consider joining the Military, (yes, I am serious). I assure you the Military will teach you how to say no when no is necessary and to say yes when yes is necessary. If you cannot learn this by yourself, then place yourself under a teacher who can make sure you are taught the lesson. Martial Arts training is very good in this respect. Anything short of this is laziness and weakness and by religious standards sin and evil. By G-d, Heaven will judge one ever so harshly for disgracing the Image of G-d in which we are created.

No more excuses. It is time for action. The world is messed up because Y-O-U are. Change yourself and you will change the world, at least your little corner of it.

It we start by changing individuals we can make a difference, and a big one at that, in the lives of many. Now, stop complaining, stop making excuses, just go out and do it. Do not tell me why you cannot. On the contrary, go out, do the right thing and then tell me how you can!

Life is not all about you; it is about service.

One will find true meaning and fulfillment in life, all the while that one is giving to others.

It is in the giving, not the receiving that true fulfillment and happiness is to be found.

Try this and you will see for yourself the truth and wisdom of it.

G-d is already with you, right now, all that is needed is for you to be with Him.