Torah and Mental Health
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Presented at URJ Biennial Convention 2019/5780

Deuteronomy 28:28

God will smite you with madness, with blindness, and with confusion of the heart.

Deuteronomy 4:15

And you shall carefully guard your own lives.

Explanation: This is the Torah’s mitzva/commandment not to do anything harmful to ourselves.

1. Book of Ruth Chapter 1

19 So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole city was astir concerning them, and the women said: ‘Is this Naomi?’

20 And she said unto them: ‘Do not call me Naomi, call me Marah; for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.

21 I went out full, and the LORD brought me back home empty; why do you call me Naomi, seeing the LORD answered against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?’

22 So Naomi returned, along with Ruth the Moabite her daughter-in-law, who came from the fields of Moab; and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

2. Book of Samuel I Chapter 1

9 So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh and after they had drunk; and Eli the priest sat upon his seat by the door-post of the Sanctuary of the LORD;

10 and she was in bitterness of soul and prayed unto the LORD, and deeply wept.

11 And she vowed a vow, and said: ‘O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of
your servant, and remember me, and not forget your servant but give unto your servant a male child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head.'

12 And it came to pass, as she prayed long before the LORD, that Eli watched her mouth.

13 Now Hannah, she spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice could not be heard; therefore, Eli thought she was drunk.

14 And Eli said unto her: 'How long will you be drunk? Put away your wine.'

15 And Hannah answered and said: 'No, my lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I poured out my soul before the LORD.

16 Count not your servant for a wicked woman: for out of the abundance of my complaint and my vexation have I spoken.'

17 Then Eli answered and said: 'Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant your petition that you have asked of Him.'

18 And she said: 'Let your servant find favor in your sight.' So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her face was no longer sad.

3. Book of Samuel 1 Chapter 16

19 And it was when the [evil] spirit from God was on Saul, David took the harp, and played it with his hand; so, Saul found relief; and it was good for him, and the evil spirit left him.

16:23
4. Babylonian Talmud Chagiga 3b-4a

Our Rabbis taught: Who is a Shoteh? One who goes out alone at night, one who sleeps in cemeteries, and one who tears his garments. It was asked: Rav Huna said (this applies) only if he does these all together. R. Yochanan responded – even if only one of them. How would this be? If he does these in a foolish manner – then even one (would be an indicator). And if he does not do these in a foolish manner - then even all (would not be indicators). It has to mean that he did these in a foolish manner. What about the one who sleeps in cemeteries? Say he did it so the spirit of Tum’ah would lay upon him. What about the one who goes out alone at night? Perhaps gandrippas was after him. And the one who tears his garments? Say that he is a Baal Machshavot. Since he did them all, he is like (the animal) who gores an ox, a donkey, and a camel; it becomes a Mu’ad (dangerous) to all. R. Papa said: Did R. Huna hear what was taught in a baraita - Who is a Shoteh? One who loses all that is given to him. He (R. Huna) retracted. It was asked: When he retracted, did he also retract from (the case of) one who tears his garments which is similar (to one losing all that is given to him)? Or did he retract from all of them? Teyku (this will be answered by Elijah the Prophet).

5. A Healthy Mind and Spirit: Prevention via Managing Stress

Snippets from Pirkei Avot 1:17

ишועו בנו אמטה. כל ימי ז holster יבכמיים.
לא מראתי לון טוב מיבשינבעה.
יכל מפרכת יברא ומכא חמא.

R. Simon ben Gamliel used to say: All my days I grew up among the Sages and I never found anything better for the body than quiet…. And whoever talks excessively brings on sin.

2:2

יוח תּלְמָד חֵינָה עַל חֵרֶךְ אַרְאא.
יכל חינה שאיא אלמאך, סינק בבלת דוגרת יוה.

The Study of Torah goes well with Derekh Eretz (Literally “the Way of the Land”, referring to either secular education, or good manners and habits). And all Torah that does is not accompanied with a productive occupation, will cease in the end and cause sin….

2:8

קרבת בישר, מקבת רמה.
קרבת בכסים, מקבת דגאת.
קרבת הנקה, מקבת מיים.
קרבת מבשה, מקבת טבילה.
קרבת עץ, מקבת נבילה.
קרבת עצה, מקבת שולח.
The more flesh, the more worms; the more possessions the more worry.... the more Torah, the more life, the more study (literally Yeshiva) the more wisdom. The more advice, the more understanding; the more tzedaka, the more peace.

2:18

כְּרֵי שְׁמֵעִים אֶבֶן: כְּרֵי שְׁמֵעִים אֶבֶן שֶׁעָמָם וְשַׁעֲמָן.
כְּרֵי שְׁמֵעִים שֶׁעָמָם וְשַׁעֲמָן.
כְּרֵי שְׁמֵעִים אֶבֶן שֶׁעָמָם וְשַׁעֲמָן.

R. Shimon says, be careful about reading the Shema and about prayer; and when you pray do not make your prayer routine but ask for compassion and grace before God.... And do not judge yourself to be an evil person.

6. **Quotes From Rebbe Nachman Of Breslov on Joy**
   (based on Likutei Moharan - LM)

*It is a great mitzvah to always be in happiness.* *(LM2:34)*

*It is even good to do silly things in order to cheer oneself up.* *(ibid)*

*It is good to set aside a specific time every day to have a broken heart and to speak out all one's problems before God, but the rest of the day be only happy.* *(ibid)*

*The essential joy comes from mitzvot.*

*(LM 30:5)*