

"The EKG of Life"

September 2013



A few weeks ago I was paged to an area hospital to do a well being check on one of our members, who was brought in for chest pains. It was a weekend evening and the emergency room looked more like a train station than a hospital, with all the people walking about. I checked in with the floor nurse, who told me that our member was in booth number 14. I walked in, exchanged some small talk and thank G-d, things look good. It was just a case of system overload and a rough lunch.

As we were sitting and chatting, our member looked up to me and asked "Why do we have ups and downs in life; why can't I just have smooth sailing?" Then he remarked - "those ups and downs are really getting to me". At that point I was looking around the room and saw that he was hooked up to an EKG heart monitor, which showed the needle going up and down. Just then, a paramedic named Stan, who originally brought our member to the hospital, popped his head into the room, and I asked him – "Stan, can you explain to me in simple terms what does it mean when the needle goes up and down?"

He answered "In the simplest of terms, when the needle goes up the heart gets an electrical charge, when it goes down it gives up the electrical charge", "and that is the cycle of the heart". He then continued "and if it flat lines, that means the heart stopped". With that he turned to go and left the room. I looked at our member and thought out loud, - isn't that what life is all about? We all have our ups and downs, our struggles and happy moments, and our task is to try to learn from our struggles, improve on what we can and make the best of the hand that we are dealt. But if we want just "smooth sailing" we flat line!!!! Then our guy looks at me and says "Does that mean I have to give up smoking and start working out??"

But this episode brought to mind the story of "THE BUTTERFLY AND THE COCOON"

Once a little boy was playing outdoors and found a fascinating caterpillar. He carefully picked it up and took it home to show his mother. He asked his mother if he could keep it, and she said he could if he would take good care of it.

The little boy got a large jar from his mother and put plants to eat, and a stick to climb on, in the jar. Every day he watched the caterpillar and brought it new plants to eat.

One day the caterpillar climbed up the stick and started acting strangely. The boy worriedly called his mother who came and understood that the caterpillar was creating a cocoon. The mother explained to the boy how the caterpillar was going to go through a metamorphosis and become a butterfly.

The little boy was thrilled to hear about the changes his caterpillar would go through. He watched every day, waiting for the butterfly to emerge. One day it happened, a small hole appeared in the cocoon and the butterfly started to struggle to come out.

At first the boy was excited, but soon he became concerned. The butterfly was struggling so hard to get out! It looked like it couldn't break free! It looked desperate, fighting for life! It looked like it was making no progress!

The boy was so concerned he decided to help. He ran to get scissors, and then ran back to the struggling butterfly. He snipped the cocoon to make the hole bigger and the butterfly quickly emerged!

As the butterfly came out the boy was surprised. It had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings. He continued to watch the butterfly expecting that, at any moment, the wings would dry out, enlarge and expand to support the swollen body. He knew that in time the body would shrink and the butterfly's wings would expand.

But neither happened!

The butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and shriveled wings. It never was able to fly...

As the boy tried to figure out what had gone wrong his mother took him to talk to a scientist from a local college. He learned that the butterfly was **SUPPOSED** to struggle. In fact, the butterfly's struggle to push its way through the tiny opening of the cocoon pushes the fluid out of its body and into its wings. Without the struggle, the butterfly would never, ever fly. The boy's good intentions hurt the butterfly.

As we go through our ups and downs our "EKG of life", let us remember that struggling is an important part of any growth experience. In fact, it is the struggle that helps us to develop, and gives us our ability to fly. And remembering that in life, the 'downs' are just as important as the 'ups'. It gives us the opportunity to reflect, improve and to grow.

Thanks so much for all that you do, your work is holy and noble. Should you need a shoulder to lean on, or have some good humor to share, don't hesitate to call or drop us a line.

To all the members of my flock of the Jewish faith, best wishes for a Happy, Healthy and Blessed New Year.

On behalf of ALL the Chaplains, May G-d bless you and keep you safe. Amen.

Compliments of your Police Chaplain

Rabbi Moshe Wolf

773-463-4780 or e-mail: moshewolf@hotmail.com