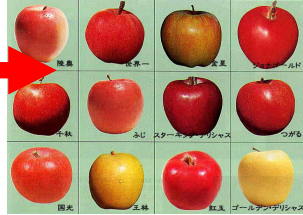


Kabbala and Anatomy IV

The Secret of Conception



Study: Smartest Men May Also Have Highest Sperm Quality

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The smarter the man, the higher the quality of his sperm, new research published in the journal Intelligence shows.

But women having difficulty conceiving shouldn't question their partner's intelligence and men who aren't quite geniuses should not worry about their ability to father children, lead researcher Rosalind Arden of Kings College London told Reuters Health. "This is scientifically interesting, but unimportant in terms of people's likelihood of conception or fertility," she said in an interview. Scientists have wondered whether there might be a human "fitness factor," a correlation between several characteristics of the mind and body that could help determine a person's likelihood of passing on their genes to future generations. Candidate characteristics include intelligence, height, attractiveness, resistance to disease, and mental stability.

Several studies have shown that taller people tend to be smarter, providing some support to this idea.

Arden and her colleagues set out to see if sperm quality and intelligence might be similarly related. "We were particularly interested in sperm quality because sperm quality seems to be such a commonsense measure of what evolutionary people call fitness, which means the likelihood of surviving and having children," she explained.

They looked at a sample of 425 Vietnam era veterans who underwent intelligence testing and sperm quality measurements between the ages of 31 and 44. The researchers calculated intelligence by incorporating the men's results on five different tests. They then compared this "intelligence factor" to the men's sperm concentration, sperm count and sperm motility.

Intelligence rose in tandem with each of the three measures of sperm quality, the researchers found. The relationship remained statistically significant even after accounting for the potential effects of age, cigarette smoking, body mass index, alcohol consumption and sexual abstinence.

The size of the relationship between sperm quality and intelligence was similar to that previously observed between height and intelligence, Arden said, although it may be even larger given that height is more reliably measured than sperm quality.

The idea of a "fitness factor" should not be interpreted to mean that only the genes of the very handsomest, smartest, and tallest will be passed along, according to Arden.

"Throughout history, as far as we know it, most men and women have ended up having some children," she noted. "It's the people who are at least average and a little bit above average who tend to have more children.

"It's not necessarily that women are going to favor men who are going to be rocket scientists, fantastically intelligent, fantastically cool," Arden added. "They might just say, 'I'd rather not have the guy who has a whole suite of unpleasant characteristics, I'd rather have the guy who is at least average.'"

Sefirah	External Aspect within Creation (Macrocosm)	Internal Aspect within Man (Microcosm)
INTELLECT		
<i>Chochmah</i>	Wisdom	Selflessness
<i>Binah</i>	Understanding	Joy
<i>Daat</i>	Knowledge	Unification
EMOTIONS		
<i>Chessed</i>	Kindness	Love
<i>Gevurah</i>	Strength	Fear
<i>Tiferet</i>	Beauty	Mercy
<i>Netzach</i>	Victory	Prevail
<i>Hod</i>	Splendor	Sincerity
<i>Yesod</i>	Foundation	Bonding
<i>Malchut</i>	Kingship	Service

ואחר כך, בבוא ההשפעה לידי מעשה

Afterwards, once the attribute of either Chesed, Gevurah or Tiferet is aroused to dispense benevolence, as the diffusion is realized,

דהיינו, בשעת ההשפעה ממש

that is, at the time of the actual diffusion,

צריך להתייעץ איך להשפיע בדרך שיוכל המקבל לקבל ההשפעה

it is necessary to deliberate how to diffuse in such a way that the recipient will be able to absorb the effusion.³³

כגון שרוצה להשפיע דבר חכמה ללמדה לבנו

For example, when one wishes — and this is a powerful desire — to convey and teach an intellectual subject to his son:

אם יאמרנה לו כולה, כמו שהיא בשכלו, לא יוכל הבן להבין ולקבל

If he will tell it to him in its totality, just as it appears in his own mind, the son will be unable to understand and to absorb it.

This could happen either (a) because the concept as understood by the father is too abstract and subtle for the son, and needs to be lent a more tangible garb, such as a parable; or (b) because the concept is too comprehensive and too diverse, and needs to be broken down into digestible segments, only some of which will be presented to the son.

רק שצריך לסדר לו בסדר וענין אחר

Rather, one needs to arrange [it] for him in a different order and context, such as by providing an example from an alternative context,

דבר דבור על אופניו

“every word fitly spoken,”³⁴ presenting first one side of the issue at hand and then the other,

מעט מעט

little by little, a little of the concept at a time.

The concept thus needs to be contracted with regard to its “length”, by lowering its stature until it is within the grasp of the recipient, and with regard to its “breadth”, by reducing its manifold details to match the capacity of the son or student.

ובחינת עצה זו נקראת נצח והוד

This deliberation, regarding how best to present the concept, is referred to [by the terms] Netzach and Hod.

שהן כליות יועצות

These [attributes] are³⁵ “the kidneys that advise,” in a manner similar to their physical counterpart,

וגם תרין ביעין המבשלים הזרע

and they are also (in spiritual terms) the two testicles that prepare the spermatozoa,³⁶ Like their physical counterpart, the attributes of Netzach and Hod adapt the effusion of the concept.

שהיא הטפה הנמשכת מהמוח

i.e., the drop that issues from the brain.³⁷

דהיינו, דבר חכמה ושכל הנמשך משכל האב, שלא יומשך כמו שהוא, שכל דק מאד במוחו ושכלו

That is, [they adapt] an intellectual subject deriving from the father’s mind in such a way that it will not issue unmodified, i.e., as a very subtle concept in his brain and intellect,

רק ישתנה קצת מדקות שכלו, ויתהווה שכל שאינו דק כל כך

but that it change somewhat from the subtlety of his intelligence and become a somewhat less subtle concept,

כדי שיוכל הבן לקבל במוחו והבנתו

so that the son will be able to absorb [it] in his mind and understanding.

והוא ממש על דרך משל כטפה היוורדת מהמוח

This is truly analogous to the seminal drop which descends from the brain;

שהיא דקה מאד, ונעשית גסה וחומרית ממש בכליות ותרין ביעין

it is extremely tenuous, and, through the kidneys and the two testicles, it becomes truly concrete and corporeal.

This process parallels the progressive concretization of a concept, as it descends to match the capacity of the recipient..

~

וכל מה שהחשק והתענוג גדול, כך ההשפעה והלימוד גדול

And the greater the desire and delight of the father, the greater is the influence and the learning.⁴⁶

שהבן יוכל לקבל יותר, והאב משפיע יותר

because then the son is able to absorb more and the father communicates more, proportionally.

כי על ידי החשק והתענוג, מתרבה ומתגדל שכלו בהרחבת הדעת, להשפיע וללמד לבנו

For through the desire and delight, and with a contented disposition, his own insight is heightened and amplified, so that he can bestow enlightenment upon his son and teach him.

וכמו, על דרך משל, בגשמיות ממש, רבוי הזרע הוא מרוב החשק והתענוג

(47) This parallels, to draw a metaphor from [the attribute of Yesod in] the sphere of the truly physical, the profusion of spermatozoa that results from heightened desire and delight,

ועל ידי זה ממשוך הרבה מהמוח

through which much is elicited from the brain, which is its source.

ולכן המשילו חכמי האמת לזיווג גשמי, כמו שיתבאר

This is why the Kabbalists, seeking to illustrate the imparting of knowledge out of a sense of pleasure, used the analogy of a physical union, for there are a number of similarities between these two expressions of the attribute of Yesod, as will be explained.⁴⁸

והנה מדות אלו, הן בחינות חיצוניות שבנפש

Now, these emotive attributes — those involved in imparting enlightenment, and the like — are the external aspects of the soul.

ובתוכן מלובשות מדות פנימיות

Within them are vested the inner attributes, which bring about the external attributes involved in the actual imparting of knowledge,

שהן בחינות אהבה ויראה כו'

i.e., the faculties of love and awe, and so on.

דהיינו, על דרך משל, באב המשפיע לבנו מהמת אהבתו

This may be compared to the case of a father who bestows enlightenment upon his son because of his love for him,

The internal aspect of the attribute involved is love and its external aspect is kindness.

ומונע השפעתו מפקדו ויראתו שלא יבא לידי מכשול, חס ושלום

and withholds his influence because of his dread and fear lest [his son] come to some downfall, heaven forbid.

The father’s fear and dread are thus the internal aspect of his Gevurah, the attribute that completely or partially withholds the flow of instruction.

The remaining emotive attributes are all offshoots of love and fear (as explained in Part I, ch. 3, above), and accordingly they too possess internal and external aspects.