



From the desk of
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Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

Religious Court of Elad * Batei Hora'ah * Religious Services * Marriage Licensing * Kashrut * Mikvaot * Eiruvim

TORAT

Parashat Vayakhel

HAMELECH

Facing Each Other

This week's *parashah* describes the *keruvim* which adorned the *Aron*. The *pasuk* says that they faced each other. But in *Divrei Hayomim* (II:3:13) the *pasuk* says that the *keruvim* faced the walls of the *Kodesh HaKodoshim*. Gm. *Bava Batra* (99a) reconciles: When *Klal Yisrael* do the will of Hashem, the *keruvim* face each other. When *Klal Yisrael* did not do the will of Hashem the golden *keruvim* miraculously turned away from each other. Thus, the position of the *keruvim* functioned as a constant resemblance of the current level of mutual appreciation and attention.

There is an additional message contained within the *keruvim's* alternating positions. The *keruvim* looking at each other represents *Klal Yisrael* themselves, as they focus upon helping each other out.

Born to Give

And this is today's topic: *achdut* and true *ahavah*. Not the way many use the word "love," saying: "I love this" or "I love that." That is not true love. They are really just loving themselves. They are identifying that which gives them pleasure and they call that love.

True love is devotion. Hashem says to *Klal Yisrael*, "I love you." (*Malachi* 1:2) He loves us for our sake, not for His. Hashem is Good, so He wants to give (*Sefer Da'at Tevunot* 18). Hashem also wants us to develop ourselves into being people who give (*Sefer HaChinuch* 66). The world is built upon kindness (*Tehillim* 89:3). Hashem created the world so that He could bestow goodness (*Rav Chayim Vital* in *Sefer Etz Chayim*).

A baby is born with his fists clenched, tightly closed, as if to say, "Everything is mine." A man passes away with his hand open and empty, expressing his lack of ownership over anything. (*Medrash Kohelet Rabba* 5:14)

We Are One

The Torah says: love your neighbor like yourself. Hillel takes it a step further. He teaches: what you do not want to be done to you, do not do unto others (*Shabbat* 31a). Sometimes it is easy to give and give and give. But true love involves not just giving, but caring. And caring means: really feeling for the other person. And if something bothers him, I will not inflict that pain. For we are one. The two *keruvim* were formed out of the same gold piece. "Mikshah achat" – we are all one. Your pain is mine.

Says the *Baal Shem Tov*: Hashem is your shadow. A shadow does whatever the person does. Wave to your shadow and he'll wave back. Hashem acts towards a person in a way that reflects how the person interacts with his peers. The *pasuk* says, "Love your neighbor like yourself; I am Hashem."

We can repunctuate that and read: Love your neighbor. Like yourself, I am Hashem. Meaning to say: Just like you treat your comrade, so shall I, Hashem, treat you.

Canaan's Will

The evil *Canaan* (in *Pesachim* 113b) instructed his children: Love each other, love theft, love promiscuity, hate your masters, do not speak truth. Now, the final four directions characterize *Canaan* perfectly. But why does he begin with a noble idea of brotherly love? Even the evil



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Canaan wanted his offspring to remain a unified nation. So step one is brotherly love. After that, Canaan did not mind if they would stoop to the lowest levels of crime and indecency. He actually encouraged it.

And if brotherly love was so important to Canaan, who personifies the lowest level of mankind, how much more so must we incorporate it into the very core of Klal Yisrael, who have a real chance at *achdut* and were made to be one.

Three things indicate that we are Jews: compassion, bashfulness, and kindness. Canaanites may profess brotherly love for each other, but they do not even approach real *midot tovo*. The Jewish Nation is unique in its unity and concern for one another. When one Jew is in distress, all Jews around the globe take up his plight.

Like Yourself?

There was a wealthy man in Bialostok who was also miserly. Every once in a while he would allow needy people to dine at his table, but he fed them only salty bread. Obviously, they left quite hungry and thirsty.

The Rav of Bialostok, Rabbi Moshe Zev (author of *Sefer Marot Hatzovot*) felt that it was his job to teach the man a lesson. But the miser had his response ready. "The Torah says to love your fellow like yourself," he began. "I also only eat bread and water," he said smugly.

Reb Moshe Zev said, "Gemara Berachot 20b teaches that Hashem favors the Jewish People because he told them to *bentsch* after eating to their satisfaction. Yet, they are *machmir* upon themselves and *bentsch* after consuming one *kizayot* or *kebeitzah*."

Explained the Rabbi: Upon yourself, you may be *machmir*. But for the other fellow, you must feed him until he is satisfied."

Ten to Five

Reb Zusha of Anipoli had ten rubles and he wanted to find a safe place to put them, somewhere that thieves would not take them. So he opened up a *Chumash* to the *Aseret Hadibrot* and put them next to "Lo Tignov". The next day, he looked for them but they were not there. He thumbed through the *Chumash* and found five rubles next to the *pasuk*, "*Veahavta lerei'acha kamocho*".

He exclaimed, "That *ganav* is more righteous than I. I had ten rubles and wanted them all for myself. He got ahold of ten rubles and shared five with me!"

Accept and Please

Ahavas Rei'im is a lifelong project. We must constantly work on ourselves. We meet up with people who have different customs, different ways of doing things, different mentalities and we must work together. We do not have to change ourselves overnight, nor do we have to give in every time. But we must be accepting of other people's motives and attitudes. Not everyone has to be exactly like me. Just like I have my idiosyncrasies, so does he. I should learn to accept them and try to discover what pleases and displeases the people with whom I come in contact. I should try do that which pleases and avoid that which doesn't.

If we concentrate on trying to please others, we will find that we ourselves will have more pleasant lives.

**Shabbat Shalom Umevorach,
Mordechai Malka**