The Division of Unity (2024)

(Bamidbar)

Hashem in His kindness in 1967 gave us a great expansion of Israel, in the Golan, Yerushalyim [Har Habayit], Hevron, Schem, and so many of our holy places. Today because many of His children lack unity and are estranged from Him (due in a large part to the loss of Jewish identity), the great open miracles have been exchanged for natural wars with many sacrifices. We have seen how little by little all that was won is being taken away, from Sinai, to Gush Katif and now the north and the south. The relatively small area of Gaza that was won in six days has taken over six months to conquer, with so many tragic losses. Nevertheless, we must give thanks to Hashem, on Yom Yerushalayim, for the great victory he gave us regardless of what we have done with this great gift.

In the Tanach, the miraculous was exchanged for a less miraculous state of natural wars with Yehoshua as well, after the episode of Achan. Our unity is our strength, and disunity our downfall, however even unity has limitations. We cannot unify with the party dedicated to anarchy and undermining unity. There must be a minimal common denominator of Jewish identity.

Regarding the secular leaders in 1967 Rav Kahane writes:

> Israel's leaders, the cowards and the fools of the heart, immediately appealed to the leaders of the Muslim community to assure them that the Temple Mount - the holiest place among Judaism's holy places - would remain in their hands.

In the Daf Yomi we read on Yom Yerushalayim (Bava Metzia 96) there is a discussion regarding legal claims between one party that is certain and another party that is uncertain. The party that is certain is typically given the benefit of the doubt. The Arabs make their false claims with certainty while we are uncertain about our claim because of our lack of connection to our identity. To the world that uncertainty and willingness to give away our heritage for peace and quiet demonstrates a probability that we allegedly stole something that belonged to another. Our uncertainty causes us continually to lose. Rabbi Kahane often said that the nations act reflexively of Israel.

The support or aggression against Israel by other nations is determined by our actions. Our Nation stood as one man with one heart before we received the Torah on Har Sinai. For one moment we were all on the same page, even with our differences. Some say the Har represents the Yetzer and when we are united, the yetzer is defeated. It is the quarreling among us that brings the exile and maintains the exile. There are secular Jews disconnected from their Jewish identity, and there are religious Jews opposed to nationalism.

In my Bet Knesset today the Rabbi when asked why he didn't say a few words about Yom Yerushalayim responded why should I? Where does this animosity come from? It reminds me of two children fighting.

The secular child hates his Father because he perceives Him as showing favoritism to the religious brother. The religious brother hates his Father because he perceives Him as showing favoritism to the secular brother (the secular child who won the war of 67 and all of its spoils).

The Talmud describes the beauty and strength of both children. Regarding the sensitivity of a Torah scholar:

> Rav Kahana said to [the heretic]: The Torah testifies concerning us that we are "set about with lilies," as the Jewish people do not breach even a fence made of lilies. (Sanhedrin 37a)

And regarding the rebellious Jews:

> The verse states concerning the occasion when Isaac blessed Jacob: "And he smelled the smell of his garments, and blessed him, and said: See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field that the Lord has *blessed" (Genesis 27:27). Do not read "his garments [begadav]"; rather, read: His traitors* [bogedav], meaning that even traitors and sinners among the Jewish people have qualities "as the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed." (Ibid)

There are secular Jews who also have their fences of lilies. And there are Charedim that are also like traitors because of their spite. Despite our shortcomings our Father loves us and through His chesed is rebuilding His Kingdom.

There is a story Rav Biderman writes about:

> Reb Shimshon Wertheimer zt'l was a great scholar, and he was also very wealthy and a close confidant to the emperor of Austria. Once, the emperor asked him why Yidden are persecuted more than all other nations of the world. Reb Shimshon replied, "They are being punished because of their hatred of their fellow man and jealousy of one another." The emperor refused to accept that explanation. He told Reb Shimshon, "I give you three days to think this over. If you don't give me a satisfying answer, I will banish every Jew from Vienna."
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> As the story goes, Rav Shimshon did not change his mind. The next day when fox hunting the king got lost in a forest. After swimming across a river, he found the hut of a Jewish merchant. Without any of his royal robes he looked like an ordinary man and asked for help. The Jewish man sat him by the fire and brought him warm clothes. He agreed to take him to the city on his wagon the next day. When they arrived at the palace the Jewish merchant was surprised to discover that this stranger was actually the king.
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> The king granted him any wish he wanted. The merchant was silent and finally thought of an idea. Recently, someone began coming to the towns I go to, and he sells the same items I sell. He is taking away my parnassah. I request that the king issues an executive order forbidding this man to sell his wares in the towns I go to." The king said, "Your request is granted, but you must know that your request is foolish. You lost a golden

> opportunity. You could have asked for so much more, but because of jealousy, all you care about is that your competition shouldn't make money." The emperor summoned Reb Shimshon Wertheimer and said, "Now I know you are correct. The Jewish people are punished because of their jealousy and hatred."

In this week's parsha we read about all the different divisions of the Nation of Israel with each flag and each tribe's position. Some Levite families may be associated with the holiest items in the Mishkan and some with less holy items, yet all are essential. The Levites were chosen, in their merit, to replace the first born because of the sin Bnei Israel did with the Egel. Israelites that were not able to be redeemed by a Levite paid 20 gerah which is equivalent to the price the brothers received when they sinned by selling Yoseph. In Yoseph's merit his children were given the same status as their uncles Reuvain and Shimon. Rather than being jealous of each other we must celebrate each other's unique roles and accept the various divisions within the unity of Am Israel. Within our Nation there is the encouragement to transform and advance and grow, but we must also have reverence and acceptance of the various roles and positions of each tribe that cannot be altered.

Rav Biderman brings down:

> Likutei Maharich writes, "The second day of Sivan is called Yom HaMeyuchas (the day of yichus), and people say that it is because on this day Hashem said to the Jewish nation You shall be to Me a kingdom of princes and a holy nation.' (Shmot 19:6) They became meyuchasim on this day." This pasuk reveals the greatness of Bnei Yisrael, the specialness of every Yid. They are princes, a holy nation, close to Hashem, and therefore, every Yid is worthy to receive the Torah. On Yom HaMeyuchas, Hashem told Bnei Israel " I carried you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Me." (Shmot 19:4)

An eagle changes its feathers every year which is likened to the Jewish people that are always doing teshuva and transforming themselves. A snake also changes its skin. Part of the teshuva process is overcoming the various skins and klippot that cause us to fall and trick us with a new skin. Yesterday's Nazi is today's impoverished Palestinian. Holiness and Harlotry have the same root as well – Kedusha and Kedaisha.

Shavuot Learning

There is a tradition on Shavuot to learn all night to make up for the fact that we slept in on the morning of the giving of the Torah. There is an opinion however (the Arugas Habosem) that Hashem caused Bnei Israel to fall asleep involuntarily, as a lesson that even those who are spiritually sleeping can also attain the Torah. Maybe there is another reason. There is another place in the Torah where Hashem caused a deep sleep. This was when He created Eve from Adams rib. Maybe Hashem took His rib, so to speak and placed His home inside of Israel. Our Haftorah declares that even if we have acted like a harlot, in the end Hashem will be reunited with Israel like a husband and wife.

> "And she shall pursue her lovers and not overtake them, and she shall seek them and not find them; and she shall say, "I will go and return to my first Husband, for it was better

> for me then than now. ….And I will betroth you to Me forever, and I will betroth you to Me with righteousness and with justice and with loving-kindness and with mercy. (Hoshea 2:9-29)

May we be united and respect our differences and the common thread between us. As a man and a woman understand their roles and their respective powers that influence each other and help to motivate and elevate each other. If we are distant from the Torah, may we be like the hobo who discovered that his parents left him a 20-million-dollar bank account. And if we are princes that feel entitled, may we come to appreciate other princes and princesses that may have other strengths and courage that we might lack. May we come to respect the essential contribution of each Jewish soul that is another bridegroom of the Almighty. Chag Somayach

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