


THE FIFTH DIMENSION

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE TORAH? PEACE. Especially: peace within a home. There is a Hebrew term *Shalom Bayit* which expresses this fundamental ideal. It means the ‘Peace of the Home’, and expresses the continual quest to strengthen marital harmony. The unity between a married couple is seen in Judaism not as something incidental to life, but as a major goal. The Rabbis describe bringing peace between a man and his wife as a good deed of such significance that one is rewarded for it both in this world and in the World to Come¹.

The Friday Night candles are viewed as an expression of this peace and also as contributing towards it. The Sages discuss what one should do if one has enough money either for Kiddush wine or for candles, but not for both. They say one should spend the money on the candles and do without the wine, for the candles enhance the atmosphere of marital harmony.

The Rambam (Maimonides) discusses this in terms of a law in this week’s Sedra². This law concerns an unhappy situation of jealousy and discord. The Divine Name is sacred, and in ordinary circumstances should never be erased. However, the Sedra instructs the Priest in the Temple to erase the Divine Name as part of a quest to resolve the dispute and restore peace between husband and wife³. The



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Rambam says this shows us the tremendous importance of marital harmony⁴. Indeed, he says, the purpose of the entire Torah is Peace.

People are very complicated. Chassidic teachings tell us that within each of us there is an Animal Soul and a Divine Soul. The Animal Soul may be forceful and powerful as an ox, or meek and mild as a lamb. The Animal Soul may be wild and undomesticated, or it may be tame and well trained in every respect. However, as an Animal Soul it is likely to be seeking primarily its own comfort.

By contrast the Divine Soul reaches beyond one's own self. It is a spark of the Divine, dwelling within us. It is our core of holiness.

In happy and healthy marriage both these dimensions bond together. The Divine Souls bond: that is obvious. They do so as soon as the Groom puts the ring on the Bride's finger as the central step in the Jewish marriage ceremony.

But in addition the two Animal Souls also bond. With the help of G-d, they feel comfortable with each other. Each one sees the other person's comfort and wellbeing as his or her own comfort and wellbeing. Their union and peace together is not only because of the Soul, but also because of the Animal Soul, and the physical dimension of life.

The Sages tell us that when husband and wife marry, and live in a wholesome and harmonious way together, according to the sacred teachings of the Torah, then the Shechinah, the Divine Presence dwells with them. In the Hebrew word for Man there is a letter Yud, and in the Hebrew word for Woman there is a letter Heh. These two letters make a Divine Name. So we see that from two Divine Souls and two Animal Souls there is also a fifth dimension: the Divine Presence. From Two and Two we get Five.

The purpose of the Torah is peace. Peace within oneself; peace in marriage; and in one's family. Ultimately, the goal is peace between nations and throughout the world. Our steps towards peace in our own homes, between husband and wife, between friends, are steps towards genuine peace in all Creation...

1. Morning prayers, quoting Mishnah Pe'ah 1:1. 2. Numbers 4:21-7:89.
3. Num.5:23. 4. Mishneh Torah Laws of Chanuka 4:14.

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SEDRA NASO

SPECIAL RECIPE

Aaron took a bite out of the cookie. It was still hot and the chocolate chips were melted and gooey. These were the first cookies he had ever made, and they were delicious.

Aaron was already on his third cookie when his older sister, Atara, walked into the kitchen. She saw her brother sitting at the table with a huge plate of cookies in front of him. He had smudges of chocolate on his cheek and above his eyebrow.

“I love Mom’s cookies!” Atara plopped down in the chair next to Aaron and reached for the plate.

Aaron watched his sister as she said a blessing on the cookie and took a bite. He wondered if she would realize that they weren’t Mom’s cookies.

Atara closed her eyes as she chewed. These were delicious.

Suddenly, Atara’s eyes popped open and she saw her brother staring at her. “What are you staring at?” Atara wiped some imaginary chocolate off her cheek.

Aaron burst out laughing and Atara joined in even though she didn’t know why. “They aren’t Mom’s cookies!” Aaron blurted.

Atara looked at the cookie in her hand. “I *thought* they tasted a little different than usual. Who is the baker?”

“You’re looking right at him,” Aaron grinned.

“Good work! They’re delicious.”

“Thank you, Atara. But do they really taste different? I used the same recipe that Mom always uses, the one on the back of the chocolate chip bag.”

“Hmmm. That is funny.” Atara reached for another cookie. “I think these are a little more crunchy or something.”

“You know,” she continued, “two people can do exactly the same thing, and yet add their own special flavour to what they do!”

Aaron didn’t understand. He had followed the recipe exactly. Why would the cookies taste different than Mom’s?

“Think about the Sedra, Aaron. Each of the tribes brings a gift for the Sanctuary, the Mishkan. They each bring *exactly* the same thing. But the Torah lists each of the gifts, twelve times. Why would it do that?”

“It’s like each of them were following the same recipe,” Aaron smiled.

“Right! And yet each gift was special and had its own unique flavour because of who brought it, even though it was exactly the same as all the others.”

“Are you saying that my cookies will never be like Mom’s cookies?”

“That’s right. But that’s a good thing. No one else can make them exactly like you can either!”

Aaron grinned. He really had enjoyed baking those cookies, but his mother had been baking for years. Maybe he should just leave the baking up to her!

“What I’m saying is, these are special because YOU made them, not because they’re any fancy recipe. Get it?”

“I sure do,” Aaron nodded; and he wondered what he would bake next. Something special!

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