

# Shavuot: Tikun Lel Shavuot - Kedusha u'Malchut

- Nisson Shulman.

The Rav described the struggle between Yehuda and Yoseph for "malchut", in which Yoseph, unchanging throughout his life, represents the "hasid hameuleh" and Yehuda whose character was changed by his own "gevurah" represents the "gibor hamoshel benafsho". The two types of leaders are a necessary and complimentary part of our people's destiny, represented by "Mashiach ben Yoseph" and "Mashiach ben David".

## SHAVUOT: TIKUN LEL SHAVUOT : KEDUSHA UMALCHUT

(Dedicated to the memory of "The Rav", Rav Yoseph Dov Halevi Soloveitchik zt"l)

[For a number of years Rabbi Soloveitchik would teach Jewish Philosophy or Hashkafah during the summer months. This was not a course in philosophy per se. It was a philosophical analysis of concepts or mitzvot of Judaism. Thus one summer was devoted to the philosophy of prayer. Another to the philosophy of the mitzvah of tzedakah. The closest he came to actual philosophy was in the title of one year's summer lectures on "Philosophical Symbolism in the Story of the Patriarchs". Even then, it was halachic, aggadic, musar symbolism, rather than philosophical, even though he was quite capable, were he to have desired, to clothe his thoughts in the mantle of philosophical language. But he did not choose to do so in these particular courses. And what emerged were beautiful and profound insights deep into the hidden meanings of halakhah, of history and of the Torah narrative.]

On occasion, some of the thoughts of those classes would re-emerge in his halakhah or agaddah shiurim. One of these was given in Moriah Synagogue, approximately 1950. I rely only on my notes made during the summer course and during the shiur, and others who were there might remember what I have omitted.]

## KEDUSHA UMALCHUT

"Bas hayta leAvraham, u'Bakol' shema", says the Midrash. The Midrash means that the community of Israel is composed of all attributes, all powers, or "midot", such as "hod, netzach, rahamim, din". No attribute can stand by itself. There must be a blending of all these powers, and the blend yields "tiferet", glory; and when that comes about, it is called, "bakol". That is why the community of Israel is called "kallah".

The heritage of Abraham came through individuals, Isaac and Jacob. Only in the house of Jacob was there a community formed of twelve unique individuals, and each of them represented a different and separate power of the attributes, "Reuben pahaz kamayim", "Yehudah, gur aryeh". The "bakol" of Avraham was divided into twelve parts, or powers, and had to come together again. Thus the narrative teaches how the Hashgachah guided all their steps to bring a great schism to the fore, so that each of the two great protagonists should develop his own particular character and power, until ultimately they would come together again, fully formed as the "Knesset Yisrael". And that is why the sale of Joseph had to happen.

Ultimately, all the powers were crystallized into two main streams of conflict, Judah and Joseph,

Joseph and Benjamin in this regard are interchangeable, and in these two tribes we see especially the development of the conflict, and the resolution of that conflict which would shape the destiny of Israel. And the symbol of all this is that the Chamber of Hewn Stones where sat the Sanhedrin is in the portion of Judah, while the altar and Holy of Holies is in the portion of Benjamin.

Judah on the one hand, and the two brothers Joseph and Benjamin on the other, stand for the two mothers, Leah and Rachel. Each symbolizes a certain characteristic bequeathed to their representative child.

The Almighty decreed that Jacob should take two wives even though Isaac and Abraham each took one. Why? And why did the Hashgachah decree the very strange manner in which these two wives were taken: by trickery? Furthermore, “Vatetze Dina bat Leah”. It does not say “bat Yaakov”. Rashi points out that “al shem yetzieata niret bat Leah, sheaf hi yatzanit hayta, sheneemar (Bereshit Rabbah) vatezte Leah likrato. Vealeha nimshelu mashal, keima, kebita” (Yerushalmi, Sanhedrin, 2:6). Of course the Torah did not mean to suggest that Leah acted improperly when saying to Jacob “I have hired you for the mandrakes of my son”, for that night Yesaschar was conceived. But rather it suggests that Leah had a strong and steadfast character. Sometimes hutzpah; the attribute of “Umilu et haaretz vekivshuha”. Leah’s chief characteristics were steadfastness and initiative. “Vatomer Leah, hameat kachtech et ishi, ulekachtech gam et dudaey beni?” (Bereshit 30:39).

The Midrash points out “Veeynei Leah rakot; yafot hayu”, as Unkelos translated “yain hayuI”. Particularly because they were red and spoiled they were beautiful, for she spoiled them with weeping lest she be given to Esav for whom she heard she had been destined. She fought against that lot and won. So Leah symbolized the attribute of “gevurah”.

Rachel had a different character altogether. She sacrificed herself for her sister, giving over the signs of identification Jacob needed to identify his bride as the right one. She was gentle as a lamb, and so her name connotes. She loved Jacob with all her heart and yet sacrificed herself for her sister. She symbolized “Kach et bincha, et yehidcha, asher ahavta, et Yitzchok, velech lecha el eretz Hamoriya, vehaalehu sham ola al achad heharim asher omar elecha” (Bereshit 22:2). And the greatest sacrifice of all came with her early death. Why? Because her death was a consequence of her effort to empty her father’s house of its idols. Nor could she be buried with Jacob in the grave of the forefathers, but on the road to Efrat, in the region of Bet Lechem, all alone. While Leah was buried with Jacob.

Joseph had the character of Rachel; Judah had the character of Leah.

This does not mean that Joseph was reconciled to his role. He had two dreams. The first was the produce of the brothers - the results of their labour - bowing down to his produce, the sheaves bowing down to sheaves. The connotation is that he will be all-powerful in wealth and blessing of plenty. There is no indication in this dream of bowing down to Joseph himself, but only to his sheaves. But in the second dream the sun and moon and eleven stars of heaven are bowing to Joseph himself! Joseph was not satisfied with wealth; he wanted Jacob to bequeath to him the kingdom – “malchut”! For this it would be necessary for Jacob himself to bow to him, and Jacob would never do so willingly, so Joseph in Egypt thought if Benjamin were detained, the father

would be forced to descend, and – without knowing who he was – bow to him. That would be the symbol of “malchut”, for only to the king would Jacob bow. That is the meaning of “Vayizkor Yoseph et hahalomot asher chalam lahem” (Bereshit 42:9). He remembered both dreams, and that one came true; and now was the time for the second one. That is why he insisted that Benjamin be brought down to him.

It was not to be. The Hashgachah did not permit Joseph to be the king. So immediately after he was sold, events began to prepare Judah for that role.

“Vayehi baet hahi vayered Yehuda meieit echav ... Vayaker Yehuda vayomar, tzadka mimeni” (Bereshit 38:1-30).

And ultimately the great struggle between Judah and Joseph climaxed in their confrontation: “Vayigash elav Yehuda vayomer, bi adoni, yedaber na avdecha davar beazney adoni”. Says the Midrash Rabbah, “Hahu diktiv, ‘hine hamelachim moadu, avdu yachdav’. Hine hamelachim ze Yehuda veYoseph. Avdu yachdav, ze nitmale hema al ze veze nitmale hama al ze” (Bereshit 44:18).

On the result of this struggle depends the future of the Jewish people. Joseph could not contain himself. He lost the battle because he allowed his emotions to overcome him, and confessed who he was before his plan could be carried out. “Behold, I was sent to be the provider, to give you life, to be the ruler in all of Egypt, all this, but not the kingdom of the people of Israel, that is denied me, for the second dream will now never come true” – and it doesn't.

So when Jacob descends to Egypt he refuses even to kiss Joseph, but recites “Kriat Shema” instead, lest by means of a kiss there be somehow an attribution of “malchut”. And in the blessing at the end of his life he gave the “malchut” to Yehuda, “Yehuda ata yoducha acheycha; yadcha beoref oyevecha; gur arye Yehuda, miteref beni alita, kara ravatz kearye, ulekavi mi yekimenu. Lo yasur shevet miYehuda umehokek miben raklav, at ki yavo shilo velo yikhat anim” (49 8-12).

Joseph on the other hand, receives “Birchot shamayim meal, birchot tehom rovetzet tachat”. (49:12); Everything in the world, but not “malchut”.

Yoseph, like Rachel, does not change. He is the same Yoseph in his father's house as in Egypt. Like Rachel who gave the signs to her sister, Joseph yielded the kingdom to Judah. Joseph was like Rachel, symbolic of “hesed”. He therefore merited “kedushah”, and was called Yoseph Hatzadik, characterized as “nezir echav”. That is not the stuff “malchut” is made of, for “malchut” is made of “gevurah”. So Yoseph and Yehudah comprise “Kedushah Umalchus”, and that is the essence of “Knesset Yisrael”, the “Bakol” of Abraham. “Ki lecha naeh Hashem Eloke avotenu, shir ushevacha, hallel vezimra, oz umemshala, netzach ugevura, tehila vetiferet... Vekulam nichlalim bi“Kedusha uMalchut”.

Why did Judah merit “Malchut”? Because like Leah his mother, he has a power that could change the world, and he used that power to change himself.

Rambam in “Shemone Perakim” talks about two kinds of human greatness: one is the “hasid hameuleh”, the other is the “gibor umoshel benafsho”. The first yearns to do good, and pursues it as part of his very nature. The second is not righteous by nature, and in fact can do evil things, but rises above them and harnesses his character and his soul's power and becomes a righteous person. Yoseph was the former, Yehudah the latter.

From Vayeshev till after Vayehi Yoseph's character does not change, except perhaps at the very beginning, until some childish characteristics are lost. Even those was for the sake of seeking good and doing good, however mistaken he was to tell his father about the brothers – “Vayave Yoseph et dibatam ra el avihem”. He was always the “Nazir”, and perhaps that is also part of why the brothers could not stand him. “Veyoseph haya beMitzrayim”. Says Rashi, “Lehodia shevacho shel Yoseph; hu Yoseph haroeh et tzon aviv, hu Yoseph hamoshel bechal eretz Mitzrayim”. His righteousness is seen in that the father sends him to the brothers. He knows they hate him, yet he goes anyway, because of obedience. When a man finds him in the desert and warns him that “They have departed from brotherhood, beware”, he goes to them anyway. That is the type of the personality born to sanctity, and which is steady throughout life without change. Jacob's blessing and Moshe's is identical in substance for Joseph alone. Nothing changes.

But with Judah everything changes. He recreates his character and rises from the depths. Judah is the symbol of “Teshuvah”. 1. “Ma betza ki naharog et achinu vechisinu et damo” (Bereshit 37:26). He knows it is wrong, but compromises with the evil. "At least, only sell him". “Rav Meir omer, kol hamevarech et Yehuda harey ze menaetz (meharef umegadef) sheneemar botzea berech nietz Hashem” (Sanhedrin 6a). 2. His episode with Tamar, “tzadka mimeni”. 3. And in Egypt the Yehudah of “Let us sell him to the Ishmaelites” is gone, and instead we have the Yehudah of “Vayigash elav”.

“Gur Aryeh Yehudah”, because he moulded himself “miteref beni alita”, you raised yourself from the sale of Joseph symbolized by “tarof toraf Yoseph”, to become a different person.

Joseph did not receive “malchus” because he was “nezir echav”. The king cannot be divorced from reality and from his people. He cannot be a “nazir”. A king cannot be a “hasid”. He who has not passed through personal purification in the crucible of changing one's very soul, cannot lead the people. Only such as Yehudah, who could understand failings and failures, and could recognize how it is possible to rise from them and become a new person, could be the king.

In all of our history we find these two archetypal personalities. It is illustrated by the tradition that “Mashiach ben Yoseph” will pave the way for “Mashiach ben David”.

Many leaders in every generation wore the crown of “nezirut” they inherited from Joseph. They were formed from the womb for righteousness. They are the “Kedoshim”, and their destiny was similar to that of Joseph. Other leaders came from Judah, the symbol of “gevurah”. Like him, they conquered their inclinations and shaped their personalities. They had to struggle mightily to achieve their righteousness. And their lives were full of contradictions.

The Rov's maternal grandfather, Rav Elya Pruzener, was of Rachel and Joseph's type. From

childhood he walked the golden road. His life was created from and completely enveloped by “chesed”.

The Rov's paternal grandfather, Rav Chaim Brisker, was full of contradictions. There was no order in his life except in learning where there was strict order. He not only revolutionized halachah and the method of learning, but he revolutionized himself as well.

The Mesorah can be divided into two parts; that which you see by example and that which you learn intellectually. The former is symbolized by the “Joseph” character. The great Hasidim of our history in every generation did not gather many students. They did not teach publicly. Like Joseph the “nazir” of his brothers, separated from them, they too desired aloneness. The Hasid hides himself. His sanctity is separated from everyone. Joseph, on the outside, appeared like the mighty ruler of all Egypt, nevertheless, “Vayavo hachadra vavevk sham” (43:30). To find out his true character, one must spy on him, go step by step after him, as Rabbi Akiva. But one who did approach near a Yoseph, found themselves inexorably drawn to them, “Bein porat Yoseph, bein porat aley ayin, benot tzaada, aley shur” (49:22). Not every woman saw Joseph, but those who did could never forget him.

The second stream of “mesorah” is characterized by Yehudah. Yehudah's characteristics are public, the teaching of Torah in the open, “Berov am hadrat melech”. They seek to communicate themselves to everyone. Yehudah cannot be alone. They wish for Yoseph's second dream, “Vehine hashemesh vehayareach veachad asar kochavim mishtachavim lo”. This is the bowing of a student to the master. And that is why “Sanhedrin behelko shel Yehuda, Kodosh Kodoshim behelko shel Binyamin”.

Which quality is more important for the future of our people? This is not answered.

The Talmud relates: “Rabi Elazar ben Shamua mikatnuto ad sof yamav lo shama adam shehotzi tiftut mipiv velo hitkotetu alav chaverav. Haya ani veyoshev betaanit shemonim shana. Veoto yom shemet, Yom Hakippurim hata. Amru lo talmidav: Ma ata roeh? Amar lahem, roeh ani at rabi Yehuda ben Baba umitato, umitat rabbi Akiva semucha etzlo”.

Rabbi Elazar ben Shamua was the man of “kedusha vahasidus”. Rabbi Yehudah ben Baba was like him, a “hasid hameule”. Rabbi Akiva was a man of “malchut”. He was a “gibor hamoshel benafsho”. The whole story of his life teaches this, his beginning to learn at 40 years, before which he would say, “Show me a Talmid Chacham and I will split his head open”. His departure from home, his overhearing his wife saying if he stayed another twelve years I would be happy and his turning around without a word, his ascent to greatness, his acknowledgement, like Yehudah said, “tzadka mimeni”. He said, “Sheli veshelachem shela”. He was the son of proselytes, and he conquered all, especially himself. And his teaching was for everyone, 24,000 students, and no surprise that he sought a Jewish “meluchah” and led the revolt. Both beds were together: “malchut” with “kedusha”. Both are necessary for our people. The ancient debate continues through the present, and is the heart of Judaism. Who decides which is the more weighty and important? There is no answer. Both are important. Both are crucial for the working out of our people's destiny.

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(Submitted by Nisson Shulman)