

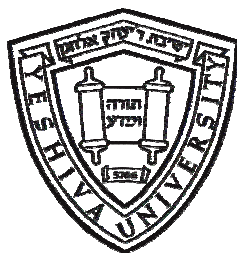
The Millie Arbesfeld

Midreshet Yom Rishon

Sunday Morning Learning Program for Women

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"The Pathway to Passion: From Shir Hashirim to Ruth"



Ms. Shira Weiss
כה' אייר תשס"ז • 5/13/07

- (ב) אני ישנה ולבי ער קול דודי דופק פתחי לי אחתי רעיתי יונתי תמתי שראשי נמלא טל קוצותי רסיסי לילה:
(ג) פשטתי את כתנתי איככה אלכשנה רחצתי את רגלי איככה אטנפם:
(ד) דודי שלח ידו מן החר ומעי המו עליו:
(ה) קמתי אני לפתח לדודי וידי נטפו מור ואצבעתי מור עבר על כפות המנעול:
(ו) פתחתי אני לדודי ודודי חמק עבר נפשי יצאה בדברו בקשתיהו ולא מצאתיהו קראתיו ולא ענני:
(ז) מצאתי השמרים הסבבים בעיר הכוני פצעוני נשאו את רידי מעלי שמרי החמות:
(ח) השבעתי אתכם בנות ירושלם אם תמצאו את דודי מה תגידו לו שחולת אהבה אני:

רמב"ם הלכות תשובה פרק י הלכה ג

וכיצד היא האהבה הראויה הוא שיאהב את ה' אהבה גדולה יתירה עזה מאוד עד שתהא נפשו קשורה באהבת ה' ונמצא שוגה בה תמיד כאלו חולה חולי האהבה שאין דעתו פנויה מאהבת אותה אשה והוא שוגה בה תמיד בין בשבתו בין בקומו בין בשעה שהוא אוכל ושותה, יתר מזה תהיה אהבת ה' בלב אוהביו שוגים בה תמיד כמו שצונו בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך, והוא ששלמה אמר דרך משל כי חולת אהבה אני, וכל שיר השירים משל הוא לענין זה.

רש"י שיר השירים פרק ה פסוק ב

- (ב) אני ישנה - כשהייתי שלוחה ושקטת בבית ראשון נואשתי מעבוד הקב"ה כישנה ונרדמת:
ולבי ער - זה הקב"ה כך נדרש בפסיקתא:
ולבי ער - הקב"ה שהוא צור לבבי וחלקי ער לשמרני ולהטיב לי:
קול דודי דופק - משרה שכינתו על הנביאים ומזהיר על ידיהם השכם ושלוח:
פתחי לי - אל תגרמו לי שאסתלק מעליך:

The Kuzari, Yehudah Halevi

It is the sin which kept the divine promise with regard to the second Temple. Divine Providence was ready to restore everything as it had been at first, if they had all willingly consented to return. But only a part was ready to do so, whilst the majority and the aristocracy remained in Babylon, preferring dependence and slavery, and unwilling to leave their houses and their affairs. An allusion to them might be found in the enigmatic words of Solomon: I sleep, but my heart waketh (Song v.2-4). He designates the exile by sleep, and the continuance of prophecy among them by the wakefulness of the heart. 'It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh' means God's call to return; 'My head is filled with dew' alludes to the Shekhinah which emerged from the shadow of the Temple. The words: 'I have put off my coat,' refer to the people's slothfulness in consenting to return. The sentence: 'My beloved stretcheth forth his hand through the opening' may be interpreted as the urgent call of Ezra, Nehemiah and the Prophets, until a portion of the people grudgingly responded to their invitation. In accordance with their mean mind they did not receive full measure. Divine Providence only gives man as much as he is prepared to receive; if his receptive capacity be small, he obtains little, and much if it be great. Were we prepared to meet the God of our forefathers with a pure mind, we should find the same salvation as our fathers did in Egypt.

"Kol Dodi Dofek", R. Soloveitchik

Eight years ago, in the midst of a night of terror filled with the horrors of Maidanek, Treblinka and Buchenwald, in a night of gas chambers and crematoria, in a night of absolute divine self-concealment (*hester panim muhlat*), in a night ruled by the satan of doubt and apostasy which sought to sweep the maiden from her house into the Christian Church, in a night of continuous searching, of questing for the Beloved- in that very night the Beloved appeared. "God who conceals Himself in His dazzling hiddenness" suddenly manifested Himself and began to knock at the tent of His despondent and disconsolate love, twisting convulsively on her bed, suffering the pains of hell. As a result of the knocks on the door of the maiden, wrapped in mourning, the State of Israel was born!

What was our reaction to the voice of the Beloved that knocketh, to God's bounteous kindnesses and wonders? Did we descend from our couches and immediately open the door? Or did we, like the Shulammitte maiden, continue to rest and tarry rather than descend from our beds?

American Jewry could certainly have accelerated the process of colonization. The obligation to pay close attention to the "voice of my Beloved" that knocketh and to respond to Him immediately with mighty deeds and undertakings devolves precisely upon us who are faithful to traditional Judaism.

When the "desolate wife," who had awaited us with such yearning and for so long, invited us, her sons, to come and redeem her from her desolate condition, and when the Beloved, who had watched over the desolation for almost nineteen hundred years, and

who had decreed that not a tree would flourish there, that no springs would fructify its ground, knocked on the doors of His love, the maiden- we religious Jews- did not rush to descend from her couch and let in the Beloved.

Can we not hear, in our own concern for the peace and security of the land of Israel today (1956), the knocking of the Beloved pleading with His love that she let Him enter? He has already been knocking for more than eight years and still has not received a proper response; nevertheless, he continues to knock. We have been fortunate. The Beloved did not show any special regard to His own cherished darling, but He continues to favor us. On that fateful night, the maiden's Beloved knocked on the door of her tent for only a brief moment and then disappeared, while He treats us with extreme patience. It is eight years now that He has been knocking. Would that we not miss the moment!

On Repentance, Peli, P.

There seems to be a tragic flaw inherent in the nature of man from which no one can escape. The people and things that we love and cherish most are not fully appreciated as long as they are alive and present with us. We realize what they meant to us only after they are gone and their image has become faded and unreal. They seem to twinkle from afar as the stars in the night; we admire them but cannot touch them. How many near and dear ones did we have whom we did not succeed in appreciating fully, as long as they were with us.

The penitent undergoes a similar experience. When a Jew sins, he banishes God from his presence. At first, man may not sense what has happened, he may not realize what has actually occurred. This happens to anyone who has lost someone dear to him.

The same thing applies in the spiritual realm when God has departed from man in the wake of his sins.

While our longings are a fantasy, for one who has died will never return, longing for God is realistic and man is drawn to Him and rushes towards Him with all his strength.

רות רבה (וילנא) פרשה א

למה נענש אלימלך ע"י שהפיל לבן של ישראל עליהם, לבוליטין שהיה שרוי במדינה והיו בני המדינה סבורין עליו ואומרים שאם יבואו שני בצורת והוא יכול לספק את המדינה עשר שנים מזון, כיון שבאת שנת בצורת יצתה לה שפחתו מעילת בסידקי וקופתה בידה, והיו בני המדינה אומרים זהו שהיינו בטוחים עליו שאם תבא בצורת הוא יכול לפרנס אותנו עשר שנים, והרי שפחתו עומדת בסידקי וקופתה בידה, כך אלימלך היה מגדולי המדינה ומפרנסי הדור, וכשבאו שני רעבון אמר עכשיו כל ישראל מסבבין פתחי, זה בקופתו וזה בקופתו, עמד וברח לו מפניהם, ה"ד וילך איש מבית לחם יהודה.

רות פרק א

(ח) וַתֹּאמֶר נְעָמִי לְשֵׁתִי כֹל־תִּיהֶּ לְכֹנֶה שֶׁבְּנֵה אִשָּׁה לְבֵית אִמִּי <יעשה> יַעֲשֶׂה יָקֹם עִמָּכֶם חֶסֶד כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתֶם עִם הַמֵּתִים וְעַמְדִּי:

(ט) יִתֵּן יָקֹם לָכֶם וּמִצָּאֵן מְנוּחָה אִשָּׁה בֵּית אִישׁוֹ וַתִּשְׁק לָהֶן וַתִּשְׁאָנֶה קוֹלָן וַתִּבְכְּינָה:

(י) וַתֹּאמְרֵנָה לָּהּ כִּי אַתְּ נָשׁוּב לְעַמֶּךָ:

(יא) וַתֹּאמֶר נְעָמִי שֶׁבְּנֵה בְנֵי לְמָה תִּלְכְּנָה עִמִּי הַעוֹד לִי בָנִים בְּמַעֲי וְהָיוּ לָכֶם לְאֻנָּשִׁים:

(יב) שֶׁבְּנֵה בְנֵי לְכֹן כִּי זְקֻנָתִי מִהָיִוֹת לְאִישׁ כִּי אֶמְרָתִי לֹא לִי תִקְוָה גַם הָיִיתִי הַלְּיָלָה לְאִישׁ וְגַם יִלְדָתִי בָנִים:

(יג) הֲלֵהֶן תִּשְׁכְּרֵנָה עַד אֲשֶׁר יִגְדְּלוּ הֲלֵהֶן תִּעַנְגְּנָה לְבִלְתִּי הָיִוֹת לְאִישׁ אֶל בְּנֵי מִי כִּי מֵר לִי מֵאֵד מִכֶּם כִּי יִצְאָה בִּי יַד יָקֹם:

(יד) וַתִּשְׁנֶה קוֹלָן וַתִּבְכְּינָה עוֹד וַתִּשְׁק עַרְפָּה לְחֻמוֹתֶיהָ וְרוּת דָּבְקָה בָּהּ:

(טו) וַתֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה שָׁבָה בְּמִתְךָ אֶל עַמָּה וְאֶל אֶל הִיא שׁוֹבִי אַחֲרַי בְּמִתְךָ:

(טז) וַתֹּאמֶר רוּת אֶל תִּפְגְּעִי בִּי לְעֻזְבְּךָ לְשׁוּב מֵאַחֲרַי כִּי אֶל אֲשֶׁר תִּלְכִּי אֲלַךְ וּבְאֲשֶׁר תִּלְיִנִי אֲלִין עִמָּךְ עַמִּי וְאֶל הַיָּד אֶל הַיָּד:

(יז) בְּאֲשֶׁר תִּמְוֹתֵי אֲמוֹת וְשֵׁם אֶקְבֹּר כִּי יַעֲשֶׂה יָקֹם לִי נֹכַח יִסִּיף כִּי הִנֵּנִי יִפְרִיד בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ:

רות פרק ב

(י) וַיֹּאמֶר בְּרוּכָה אַתְּ לִיקֹם בְּתִי הֵיטִבְתְּ חֶסֶדךָ הָאֲחֵרוֹן מִן הָרֵאשׁוֹן לְבִלְתִּי לָכֶת אַחֲרַי הַבְּחוּרִים אִם דָּל וְאִם עָשִׁיר:

(יא) וְעַתָּה בְּתִי אֶל תִּירָאִי כֹל אֲשֶׁר תִּאֶעְשֶׂה לָּךְ כִּי יוֹדַע כֹּל שְׁעַר עַמִּי כִּי אִשְׁתְּ חַיִּל אַתְּ:

(יב) וְעַתָּה כִּי אֲמַנֶּם כִּי <אם> גֹּאֶל אֲנִי כִּי וְגַם יִשׂ גֹּאֶל קְרוֹב מִמֶּנִּי:

(יג) לִינִי הַלְּיָלָה וְהָיָה בְּבִי קָרָא אִם יִגְאָלְךָ טוֹב יִגְאָל וְאִם לֹא יִחַפֵּץ לְגְאָלְךָ וְיִגְאָלְתִּיךָ אֲנִי כִּי חַי יָקֹם שְׁכָבִי עַד הַבֵּי קָרָ:

רות פרק ד

(י) וְגַם אֶת רוּת הַמִּצְרַיִת אִשְׁתְּ מַחֲלוֹן קְנִיתִי לִי לְאִשָּׁה לְהַקִּים שֵׁם הַמֵּת עַל נַחֲלָתוֹ וְלֹא יִכָּרֵת

שֵׁם הַמֵּת מִמֶּעַם אֲחֵיו וּמִשְׁעַר מְקוֹמוֹ עַדִּים אֲתָם הַיּוֹם:

“Catharsis”, R. Soloveitchik

What is heroism in the Halacha? What does the Halacha recommend to us, that we may attain heroic stature? The answer is: one must perform the dialectical movement. The Halachic catharsis expresses itself in paradoxical movement in two opposite directions—in surging forward boldly and in retreating humbly. Man's heroic experience is a polar, antithetic one. Man drives forward only to retreat and to reverse, subsequently, the direction of his movement.

Halacha teaches that at every level of our total existential experience- a) the aesthetic-hedonic, b) the emotional, c) the intellectual, d) the moral-religious – one must engage in the dialectical movement by alternately advancing and retreating.

Bride and bridegroom are young, physically strong and passionately in love with each other. Both have patiently waited for this rendezvous to take place. Just one more step and their love would have been fulfilled, a vision realized. Suddenly the bride and groom make a movement of recoil. He, gallantly, like a chivalrous knight, exhibits paradoxical heroism. He takes his own defeat. There is no glamour attached to his withdrawal. The latter is not a spectacular gesture, since there are no witnesses to admire and to laud him. The heroic act did not take place in the presence of jubilating crowds; no bards will sing of these two modest, humble young people. It happened in the sheltered privacy of their home, in the stillness of the night. The young man, like Jacob of old, makes an about face; he retreats at the moment when fulfillment seems assured.

Guide of the Perplexed III:52, Maimonides

What I have here pointed out to you is the object of all our religious acts. For by [carrying out] all the details of the prescribed practices, and repeating them continually, some few pious men may attain human perfection. They will be filled with respect and reverence towards God; and bearing in mind who is with them, they will perform their duty. God declares in plain words that it is the object of all religious acts to produce in man fear of God and obedience to His word--the state of mind which we have demonstrated in this chapter for those who desire to know the truth, as being our duty to seek... But the truths which the Law teaches us--the knowledge of God's Existence and Unity--create in us love of God, as we have shown repeatedly. You know how frequently the Law exhorts us to love God. "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deut. vi. 5). The two objects, love and fear of God, are acquired by two different means. The love is the result of the truths taught in the Law, including the true knowledge of the Existence of God; whilst fear of God is produced by the practices prescribed in the Law.