

"FURTHERMORE"

In the Haftorah from the prophet Isaiah which we read this morning, and which describes the coming of the Messiah, there is one verse that especially attracted the attention of the Sages.

וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יוֹסֵף ה' שְׁנוֹת יָדָיו עַל עַמּוֹת הָאָרֶץ.
"And it shall be on that day that the Lord shall again, a second time, recover with His hand the remnants of His people."

The Rabbis were intrigued by the word יוֹסֵף which means: he will repeat, add, do again. Thus we read:

אֵלֹהִים הוֹסֵף מִכֹּחַ הַבְּרִיָּה הַשְּׁלֵמָה לְמִסְפַּר הַמַּעֲשִׂים הַטְּבוֹתִים
(פְּסוּקֵי שְׁמוֹנֶה עָשָׂר)

What God adds is greater than what He gives in the first place; His addition is more than His principal.

Thus, the Rabbis add, the עֲדִיקָה or major blessing that God gave to Adam and Eve was Cain; Abel was a kind of divine afterthought, the מוֹסֵף. Yet, Cain was only born with one twin sister, while Abel was born with two twin sisters. Here we see that God's מוֹסֵף is greater than His עֲדִיקָה. Another example given by the Rabbis is that Joseph was the עֲדִיקָה, the main son of Jacob and Rachel, whereas Benjamin was a מוֹסֵף. Yet, Joseph had two sons whereas Benjamin had ten. Again we find the lesson that the afterthought of God is more significant than His first thought.

That is why, the Rabbis add, כִּי־יִשְׂרָאֵל הוֹסֵף לְמִסְפַּר הַקְּדוּשָׁה
וְהָיָה עַל הָעֲדִיקָה הַתְּחִלָּיתִית אֵלֹהִים מוֹסֵף
when the Prophets saw that God's מוֹסֵף is greater than His עֲדִיקָה, they began to bless Israel with the blessings of מוֹסֵף, of addition or "furthermore." Thus, Moses blessed Israel with the words "וְיוֹסֵף ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם כַּכּ אֵלֶיכֶם עֲשׂוּבָה", "May the Lord add to you as you are a thousand times." David said, as we read in the Hallel today, "וְיוֹסֵף ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֵלֶיכֶם וְאֶל בְּנֵיכֶם", "May the Lord add to you, to you and to your children." And Isaiah, in today's Haftorah, recites the verse with which we began:

וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יוֹסֵף ה' שְׁנוֹת יָדָיו...
"And it shall be on that day that the Lord shall again add, for a second time, with His hand..."

The insight of the Rabbis is that sometimes the מוֹסֵף expresses the true intent, for which the עֲדִיקָה is merely preliminary. The major part of a tree is the trunk, but it is the fruit and the branches which make the tree significant. There can be no building without a foundation; yet we live and spend our lives in the superstructure. מוֹסֵף can be more meaningful than עֲדִיקָה.

This is not only a generally pragmatic insight, but a specifically psychological truth as well. About five years ago, in an issue of The Psychoanalytic Review, one psychologist wrote on hints that patients drop in their conversations in which they reveal their true intent. Sometimes it will happen that a patient delivers himself of a long speech, trying to make a certain point, and then at the very end he will add a disclaimer or modifier beginning with such words as "Nevertheless," "However," "Furthermore," or "In addition." What comes after that -- is usually more revealing than the whole speech that preceeded it. It is the postscript that is more important than the letter.

הוא מנסה להגיד משהו אחר.

It is something we can affirm from our own experience. What we appreciate most, quite often, is not the vacation that is coming to us by law, but the extra day. What sustains us is usually the additional little gift given to us by someone we love, or one more and unsolicited word of commendation; the bonus of an extra smile, an extra bit of warmth, an added favor.

I have found in my own experience that the time I put aside for study may be used fruitfully; but the extra fifteen minutes or half hour that I "steal" from the rest of my schedule is usually the most creative or, at the least, the most delightful.

The Halakhah too reveals a similar point. Marriage (kiddushin) can be effected by the man transferring an object of value to the woman who, in consideration of the gift, accepts the marriage proposal. What happens, however, if this man had lent this woman money, and later proposes marriage to her and, instead of giving her a substantial immediate gift, tells her הרי את מקדשת לי, I hereby marry you by waving or foregoing the loan which you owe me? The Talmud decides: אין זה מקדש, it is not a valid marriage. A loan was made to be spent, and therefore it cannot be considered as if it were before us; it is too insubstantial to assume that the woman will consider it the kind of gift by dint of which she is married to this man.

But the Talmud (Kid. 48b) tells us the following law:

הוא נשוי לה אף על פי שנתן לה דבר אחד

if this man proposed marriage to this woman by waving the loan, but in addition added a small gift of his own, then the law is that the marriage contract is valid. The reason for this is that although the loan cannot serve legally as the instrument of marriage, the woman is presumed to have had in mind not the loan but the דבר, the extra little bit that he added as an afterthought, and it is this דבר, this afterthought, that serves as an adequate legal basis for marriage.

All of life is a *השאלה*, a loan. Nothing really belongs to us, we must return everything to the great divine Lender. But sometimes it seems too insubstantial to arouse in us the proper kind of gratitude. We are neither cognizant nor appreciative of all that God gives us. We accept ^{it as} part of the normal process of living -- and life is *החיים הריקים*, empty and profane. But sometimes God adds *הנאה*, an extra gift. His *הנאה* -- extra wealth or extra happiness, an extra portion of *חיים*, an extra stroke of good luck -- that is what makes life so much more adorable, so much more pleasant, so much more cherished! The "Furthermore," the *הנאה הנלווית*, becomes more important than the *השאלה*, then the major part of living, or the *החיים*.

That lesson must not be lost upon us as religious Jews. What we call "Modern Orthodox Judaism" has often sinned in this respect. We frequently define ourselves relative to those on the right and those to the left of us. In contrast to those on our left, we maintain our undiminished loyalty to the Halakhah. In opposition to those to the right of us, we do not believe it is proper to spend our days searching for greater *הנהגות*, for more severe interpretations, combined with an antagonistic attitude to the State of Israel. We do not define greater piety as requiring more restraint than the Torah does originally. Now, be that as it is, what happens is that frequently our observance of Jewish law becomes strict and restrained, in the sense of making us feel that it is almost impious to allow ourselves any greater latitude of piety. We forget that Judaism is more than Halakhah, that it requires of us a greater show of warmth and passion and piety. We have gotten ourselves a dreadfully wrong impression: as if any show of religious enthusiasm beyond the strictly minimal requirements of the *הלכה* is forbidden. Therefore, the Torah has sometimes seemed a burden instead of a blessing, and Judaism has been wrongly interpreted by us as consisting wholly of Halakhah and never of the supererogatory, the additional show of affection and loyalty that is not strictly required and deemed necessary by the law.

It is important for us to remember the same principle especially with regard to married life. Everyday routine and obligations and duties -- they are the *החובות*, but they are not enough. If married life is to be happy and successful, there must be *הנאה*, each partner must add *הנאה*.

In an halakhic journal in Israel a few years ago, one writer put it quite shockingly: Woe to the couple that lives its life strictly according to the *הלכה*! The Code of Jewish Law (in *שולחן ערוך*) records the claims and counterclaims, the mutual duties and obligation of each partner in a marriage. That is the *החובות*. It defines obligations and rights. But it does not yet

make life liveable. What makes married life something special, what sweetens it, is the *חֶסֶד*, the *הַיָּסֵד*, the extra gift or word or appreciative comment, the extra endearing term, the risk of extending oneself to his spouse beyond the requirements of law and morality and convention, even if one may prove thereby vulnerable to ingratitude and exploitation. The *הַיָּסֵד*, the extra bit, the "furthermore," the *חֶסֶד* -- that is what makes life into *חַיִּים קְדוֹשִׁים*: something sacred.

At Yizkor we think of our loved ones. Amongst the many thoughts, often conflicting and ambivalent, some of the most precious memories revolve about the extra bit that a parent did for a child, above and beyond the call of duty: the *חֶסֶד*, the *הַיָּסֵד*, the special acts and deeds and words and gestures that therefore make Yizkor so very individual for each person.

The difference between *חֶסֶד* and *חֶסֶד* is equivalent to the difference between *צִדִּיק* (justice) and *חֶסֶד* (love). Or, to use a Talmudic term, between *צִדִּיק* (law) and *לְעֵיל מִדִּין* (beyond the requirements of law).

Thus, the Rabbi taught:

הָאָרְצָה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם אֲלֵהָ מִלְּפָנֵינוּ בְּעֵת הַשְׁמָדָה

Jerusalem was destroyed (at the end of the Second Commonwealth) because Jews based their lives on the words of the Torah. They acted in accordance with *צִדִּיק* but not *לְעֵיל מִדִּין*, with law but not with the supererogatory warmth that Jews ought to show. Jerusalem was destroyed not because they were *בְּאֵרֵי חֵטְא*, because they were heretics in principle, but because they were, as it were,

בְּאֵרֵי חֵטְא, they denied God and themselves that extra bit, that "furthermore," that additional touch of love and warmth and grace.

It is in this sense that the Rabbis understand the words of Isaiah in today's Haftorah, *וְיִשְׁעֵי יְהוָה יִפְתָּח*. Redemption and liberation of Israel, the rebuilding of Jerusalem, will come by going in the opposite direction of what caused this destruction: by emphasizing the "furthermore," the *חֶסֶד* and addition, the *הַיָּסֵד*.

We observe today the eighth, extra, concluding day of Passover. There are many reasons given why we observe eight days in the Diaspora instead of seven prescribed by the Bible. One of them (which goes back to the great Kabbalist, R. Moses Cordovero) informs us that in Israel the atmosphere is holy because of the Holy Land, but in the Diaspora there is not enough sanctity to sustain us throughout the year. Therefore, we need a *חֶסֶד קָדוֹשׁ*, another little bit of sanctity on the holiday, in order to carry us safely throughout the year.

On this day of *חֶסֶד*, of additional holiness, may we be privileged soon to witness the Messianic redemption, that is described in our Haftorah as *וְיִשְׁעֵי יְהוָה יִפְתָּח*, addition.

And furthermore, may we learn to invite and anticipate this redemption by ourselves practicing the ethic of *חֶסֶד* in our own lives.