

HIDDEN MEANINGS

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THE TALMUD CONTAINS AN OLD SAYING CONCERNING THE TORAH WHICH GOES, "TURN IT AND TURN IT, BECAUSE EVERYTHING IS IN IT". FREQUENTLY, THE CASUAL READERS OF THE TORAH WILL SAY THAT IT IS A QUAIN AND INTERESTING BOOK, BUT THEY FAIL TO UNDERSTAND WHY IT HAS CAPTIVATED MANKIND FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS. THOSE WHO STUDY THE TORAH CONSTANTLY, HOWEVER, ARE THE ONES WHO ARE MOST AWED BY ITS CONTENT. NO MATTER HOW OFTEN WE MAY READ IT, WE ALWAYS FIND SOME NEW IN IT. NO MATTER HOW ~~DEEP~~ ^{PROFOUND} WAS ITS MESSAGE AT THE LAST READING, ON THE NEXT READING, WE SEE EVEN MORE DEEPLY INTO ITS MEANING. YES, WE TURN IT, AND WE TURN IT, AND EVERYTHING SEEMS TO BE IN IT. *truly*

THIS SANCTUARY IS BUILT AROUND THE CONCEPT OF TORAH. THE KEY OBJECT IN OUR HOUSE OF WORSHIP IS THE ARK, MADE IN THE FORM OF AN OPEN TORAH SCROLL. SO FAR AS WE KNOW, THIS IS THE FIRST ARK OF ITS KIND. BUT THE ARK ITSELF, CONTAINING THE ACTUAL TORAHS, IS JUST THE FOCAL POINT FOR AN ENTIRE SCHEME OF THOUGHT AND DESIGN WHICH BEGINS WITH THE ARK AND ENDS WITH THE ARK. IN DESIGN THIS ENTIRE ROOM IS LIKE A ~~SCROLL~~ ^{BOOK} OF THE TORAH LAID OUT END TO END. EACH PLASTIC COLUMN BEARS ONE OF THE ELOQUENT MESSAGES OF OUR TRADITION. SIX INSCRIPTIONS ARE IN HEBREW, SIX IN ENGLISH. ~~?TEN/OF/THE/TWELVE/~~ If you COULD READ THE HEBREW AS WELL AS THE ENGLISH, YOU WOULD KNOW THAT WE HAVE PLACED HERE SOME OF THE MOST EXALTED TEACHINGS IN ALL HUMAN HISTORY. TEN OF THESE INSCRIPTIONS ARE FROM THE BIBLE ITSELF. ONE IS FROM THE TALMUD, AND ONE IS FROM OUR PRAYER-BOOK.

SOME OF YOU MAY COMPLAIN THAT YOU CAN NOT CLEARLY SEE ALL OF THE INSCRIPTIONS. YOU OUGHT TO KNOW THAT WE WORKED VERY HARD TO MAKE SURE THAT YOU COULD NOT READ THEM TOO EASILY. COME CLOSE TO THEM, AND YOU CAN READ THEM EASILY. STAND BACK FROM THEM, AND THEY SEEM TO BE ONLY ARTISTIC DESIGNS. THERE IS A LESSON TO BE LEARNED FROM EVEN THIS PHYSICAL REALITY. ONLY THOSE WHO COME CLOSE TO THE TORAH CAN TRULY BENEFIT FROM ITS TEACHINGS. THOSE WHO ARE MERE SPECTATORS FROM A DISTANCE WILL SEE NOT MESSAGES OF THE MOST PROFOUND SIGNIFICANCE, BUT DESIGNS THAT SEEM TO HAVE NO ORDERLY MANING.

They will see merely

I MUST BOAST THAT THE IDEA OF PUTTING INSCRIPTIONS ON THE PLASTIC PANELS IS MY OWN. I GOT THE IDEA WHEN TWO YEARS AGO I STOOD IN THE CENTER OF THE JEFFERSON MEMORIAL IN WASHINGTON AND READ THE INSCRIPTIONS OF THAT GREAT MAN WHICH WERE ETCHED INTO THE CIRCULAR WALLS OF THAT DEEPLY MOVING BUILDING. GOOSE BUMPS CAME UP ON MY SKIN AS I READ THE THOUGHTS WHICH THOMAS JEFFERSON HAS LEFT BEHIND AS A LEGACY TO AMERICANS. WHEN I STAND IN THE CENTER OF THIS ROOM, I GET AN EVEN GREATER THRILL. FOR REPRESENTED HERE IS NOT MERELY THE TEACHINGS OF ONE GENIUS, BUT THE TEACHINGS ~~OF THE GREAT~~ ^{OF THE} THE GREATEST RELIGIOUS SAGES OF ALL TIME.

Those who know the messages on the columns will never be able to enter this room without knowing that these mute walls speak with the voice of eternity.

*reminding us
of the ever-
present
creative
power
of God.*

Let

BET US GAZE QUICKLY ABOUT THIS ~~REVERENT~~ REVERENT ROOM. ON YOUR
 EXTREME RIGHT, THE FIRST PANEL QUOTES THE VERY FIRST PRAYER
 IN THE MORNING LUTURGY, THE SECOND PANEL CONTAINS THE WORDS OF
 KIND DAVID AND THE 23rd PSALM: THE THIRD PANEL *quotes the prophet,*
malachi who said "Hath not one God created us all?"
 THE FOURTH PANEL IS ISAIAHS' FAMOUS PROPHECY OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE
 WHICH NOW ADORNSS THE UN BUILDING IN NEW YORK *no body*
 THE FIFTH PANEL CONTAINS THE TEACHING FROM LEVITICUS, THOU SHALT
 LOVE THE STRANGER AS THYSELF. *The 2 center panels on either*
~~THE SIXTH PANEL QUOTES PSALM~~ *side, the one which are from the Psalms.*
~~THE SEVENTH PANEL QUOTES PSALM~~ *the 6th panel for ex - 2) 12)*
 THE EIGHTH PANEL CONTAINS THE TEACHING OF RABBI HILLEL *who first*
proclaimed the so-called "golden rule".
 THE NINTH PANEL CONTAINS JEREMIAH'S PROPHECY OF THE RELIGION OF THE
 HEART
 TH E TENTH PANEL QUOTES MICAH, *famous definition of religion -*
 DO JUSTLY, LOVE MERCY, AND WAEK HUMBL Y
 THE 11th PANEL QUOTES ISAIAH AGAIN, REMINDING US THAT MONEY CANNOT
 BUY THE SPIRITUAL VALUES WHICH ALONE CAN MAKE A MAN HAPPY.
 THE 12th PANEL QUOTES THE PROPHET AMOS WHO REMINDS US THAT
 THE NEGRO IS AS SACRED IN THE EYES OF GOD AS THE WHITE MAN

THINK OF IT WE ARE NOT ALONE IN THIS ROOM; STANDING AT OUR
 SIDE ARE DAVID, ISAIAH, HILLEL , JEREMIAH, MICAH, AND AMOS -
 THAT GROUP OF MEN ACKNOWLEDGED BY ALL *classical* SCHOLARS ~~OF ANTIQUITY~~ TO
 BE THE MOST GIFTED RELIGIOUS SPIRITS OF THE AGES. NO MATTER
 HOW GREAT MIGHT BE OUR STRIVING, NOR HOW EXTENSIVE OUR SAINTLINESS,
 WE COULD NEVER ACHIEVE THE GOALS THESE MEN HAVE ESTABLISHED FOR
 US, THESE GOALS WHICH ~~CRY OUT UNTO US~~ FROM THESE VERY WALLS,
 THESE ~~PAGES STOLEN FROM THE TORAH.~~ *Beckon to us*

IN TIME, I SHALL SPEAK TO YOU ~~AT~~ AT GREATER LENGTH ABOUT
 EACH OF THESE INSCRIPTIONS. FOR THIS HISTORIC MOMENT WHEN WE
 FIRST WORSHIP HERE, IT IS SUFFICIENT FOR ME TO SAY THAT THERE
 IS SOMETHING FOR EACH OF YOU AND ALL OF YOU HERE. IF YOU FEEL
 LONELY AND UNWANTED, YOU HAVE ONLY TO MAKE THE SECOND PANEL
 YOUR OWN, YOU HAVE ONLY TO JOIN WITH DAVID, IN SAYING, " THE LORD
 IS MY SHEPHERD, I SHALL NOT WANT... YEA THO I WALK THRU
 THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH, I SHALL FEAR NO EVIL ".

IF YOU FEAR THAT GOD'S SPIRIT IS ABSENT FROM THE WORLD
 TODAY, YOU HAVE ONLY TO FEEL WITH THE RELIGIOUS GENIUS WHO
 WROTE THE WORDS ON OUR FIRST PANEL, " EVERY DAY GOD RENEWS THE
 DEEDS OF CREATION".

WHAT IS THE CAUSE NEAREST TO YOUR HEART?- PEACE, JUSTICE,
 BROTHERHOOD, ALL THESE ARE HERE , SEEKING TO BECOME A PART OF
 YOU , AND A PART OF YOUR DAILY LIFE. THIS ROOM IS TEEMING
 WITH VITALITY, IT IS INTENSELY ALIVE, WITHOUT A WORD BEING
 SPOKEN FROM THIS PULPIT, THE VERY ROOM OFFERS KINDNESS AND *sympathy*
~~PITY~~ LOVE AND FORGIWENESS. THIS ROOM IS DEDICATED TO THE
 THEORY THAT THE WRITTEN WORD CAN BECOME A PART OF REALITY;
 IT IS CONCEIVED ON THE PREMISE THAT TORAH IS NOT ONLY A COLLECTION
 OF TEACHINGS BOUND UP IN A SCROLL, BUT TORAH CAN AND MUST BE
 THE STANDARD BY WHICH MEN RELATE TO EACH OTHER

WHEN THEY MEET ON THE BY-WAYS OF LIFE. THIS SANCTUARY IS DEFINITELY NOT JUST ANOTHER PLACE WHERE PEOPLE MEET TO WORSHIP. LIKE VERY FEW SANCTUARIES, THE PHYSICAL OUTLINES OF THIS BUILDING HAVE A REVERENCE OF THEIR OWN. THE PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF THIS ROOM ~~SUGGEST~~ CREATE

TONE. SOME OF YOU WILL SENSE THIS IMMEDIATELY, OTHERS WILL NOT QUOTE FEEL IT.

WHICH BRINGS ME TO MY SECOND POINT TONIGHT. FROM TIME TO TIME A PERSON WILL COME TO ME AND SAY, RABBI, I COME TO SERVICES ON OCCASION, BUT NOTHING HAPPENS. I DON'T FEEL RELIGIOUS WHEN I SIT THERE, AND I DON'T FEEL ANY NEARER TO GOD. IF I COULD BE FRANK WITH THESE PEOPLE I WOULD SAY TO THEM, " IF NOTHING HAPPENS WHEN YOU COME TO THE SYNAGOGUE, PERHAPS THE PROBLEM IS NOT WITH THE SYNAGOGUE, BUT WITH YOU. ". ~~FRANKLY~~ THE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE OCCURS WHEN TWO FORCES MEET TOGETHER, WHEN GOD AND MAN SHARE SOMETHING TOGETHER AND DO WORK TOGETHER. UNLESS YOU BRING SOMETHING TO THE SYNAGOGUE WITH YOU, I CAN PREDICT FOR YOU THAT NOTHING WILL HAPPEN WHEN YOU GET HERE. ONE COMES TO A SYNAGOGUE TO EXCHANGE GIFTS WITH GOD AND WITH MAN: ONE COMES PREPARED TO ENTER INTO A MUTUAL RELATIONSHIP: ONE COMES PREPARED TO WORK. THE BEAUTY AND SPIRITUALITY OF THIS ROOM WILL LOSE THEIR MEANING FOR US UNLESS WE BRING SOMETHING OF OUR OWN BEAUTY AND SPIRITUALITY TO THIS ROOM. THIS ROOM WILL BE A LIVING PLACE, IF WE MAKE OF IT A PLACE WHERE THE ^{higher} BUSINESS OF LIFE IS TRANSACTED. TO THIS ROOM WE MUST COME TO THINK AND STUDY AND MEDITATE FOR THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF WORKING TOGETHER TO FRAME A BETTER COMMUNITY AND ^{to build} A BETTER WORLD. TO THIS ROOM WE MUST COME TO LEARN THAT WE ARE NOT ALONE, THAT THE SPIRIT THAT FLOWS THROUGH ALL OF US COMES FROM THE SAME RESERVOIR, AND WE MUST LEARN TO BE SHARERS OF THAT SPIRIT; WE MUST LEARN TO EXCHANGE GIFTS WITH EACH OTHER ~~FREELY~~. ^{freely}

enter into a

THE TALMUD TELLS US THAT THERE ONCE WERE TWO BROTHERS, ONE MARRIED AND ONE UNMARRIED. ON A CERTAIN STORMY NIGHT, THE MARRIED BROTHER, THOUGHT OF HIS UNMARRIED BROTHER, ALL ALONE, AND SAID TO HIS WIFE, " I WILL TAKE SOME OF YOUR GOOD SOUP TO MY BROTHER. HE MUST BE COLD AND MISERABLE". AND SO THE MARRIED BROTHER SET OUT ON THE DARK AND DIFFICULT ROAD TO HIS BROTHER'S HOUSE. MEANWHILE THE UNMARRIED BROTHER THOUGHT TO HIMSELF, " IT IS A BAD NIGHT. MY BROTHER WILL NEED HELP WITH HIS FAMILY. I WILL GO TO HIM, AND WHILE I GO, I WILL BRING HIM SOME BREAD WHICH I HAVE". IN THE MIDDLE OF THAT STORM SWEPT ROAD, THE TWO BROTHERS MET, EMBRACED, AND WEPT. THE TALMUD TELLS US THAT ON THAT SPOT OF MEETING AND GIVING, THE FIRST TEMPLE OF SOLOMON WAS BUILT..

MY DEAR FRIENDS, THIS SANCTUARY MARKS THE SPOT WHERE BROTHERS AND SISTERS HAVE MET, EMBRACED, AND ~~EXCHANGED~~ EXCHANGED GIFTS WITH EACH OTHER. PEOPLE WITH LITTLE MEANS HAVE GIVEN FREELY ~~OF/WH/~~ TO OUR CAPITAL FUND THAT THIS BUILDING MIGHT BE BUILT. PLEASE DON'T DECEIVE YOURSELF THAT RICH PEOPLE HAVE BUILT THIS ROOM. IT IS NOT SO. WE HAVE 600 FAMILIES IN THIS TEMPLE. EACH AND ALL OF THEM HAVE MADE THIS POSSIBLE. EACH OF THESE FAMILIES HAS THRU ITS PLEDGE PRESENTED THIS GIFT TO THE REMAINING 599 FAMILIES. THIS IS OUR GIFT TO EACH OTHER. ~~ONLY THE FUTURE CAN TELL WHAT WHETHER WE WILL UNDERSTAND DEEPLY ENOUGH THE HIDDEN MEANINGS THAT CRY OUT TO US FROM THE WALLS OF THIS HOUSE OF GOD.~~

magnificent

the message words

4.
ONLY THE FUTURE CAN TELL WHETHER WE WILL UNDERSTAND
DEEPLY ENOUGH THE TRUE VALUE OF THE GIFT WE HAVE GIVEN
TO EACH OTHER.

ONLY THE FUTURE CAN TELL WHETHER WE WILL UNDERSTAND CLEARLY ENOUGH
THE HIDDEN MEANINGS OF THE WORDS THAT CRY OUT TO US FROM THE
WALLS OF THIS HOUSE OF GOD.