

Articles - The Jerusalem Correspondent 1st Edition

So I arrived in Israel last week Wednesday. By Friday day I had settled into the yeshiva and managed to meet at least a few of the 40 guys that I would be studying with the coming semester. By Friday night I was ready to visit the Kotel and pour out my emotions to Hashem at a place so intrinsically connected to the Jewish people and the world itself. For anyone who has ever spent a Shabbos evening dovening or at least visiting the Kotel, then I think they will



be able to appreciate how I felt and what I saw. Hundreds of Jews from all over Yerushalayim flock to the kotel on Friday afternoon to be a part of the symphony, joining in the ranks and feeling the energy of unity. I too revel in the experience of being one amongst many, all of the same “tribe,” all “brothers and sisters” in an inner sense of the words.



While standing amongst all the men and trying to gain some sort of focus on the siddur, I can't help noticing the varying colours of kippot, the numerous hair styles, length of payot, beards, colour and types of jackets, needless to say the absolute variety of hats and beanies etc... And on top of the outward expression, the attitude of each person differed tremendously. Some stood there fixed like a pole, oblivious to the noises and minyanim. Some danced around with wild freedom on their faces. Some embraced others and cried for the Jews and the world.

Some stood there in uniform, clenching their gun in one hand and looking in the siddur, held in the other hand. Some were smiling and welcoming whilst others looked to the ground, seemingly in a daze.

Such variety got me thinking. Back in Perth, when an individual begins on his journey to re-connect to Hashem, there seem to be relatively narrow means of expression. Could the lack of uniformity in dress and attitude in Israel be a divisive thing?

We read in this weeks parsha (Mishpatim) about 'not cooking a kid in its mothers milk.' The Rebbe seeks to bring this principle together with other ideas from the Torah about Shaatnez (rule against mixing linen [plant origins] and wool [animal origins]) and rules against sowing different seeds in the same field, or the rule against plowing fields with oxen and donkeys. What does all this mean, and how does it resolve my exposure to so many seemingly divisive expressions of yiddishkeit?

The Rebbe explains that Hashem created this world with boundaries. Every person, place or thing has a certain energy that provides it with life and expression.

Man may be insensitive to these energies, but Hashem is 100% attuned to all things in the universe. Hashem is trying to get us to understand the inherent individuality of each thing, respecting all of life for what it can contribute. Mixing certain objects, species or even categories of species can create a destructive blend of energy that drives the world away from G-d, leaving us wanting.



True peace in the world is not achieved by stripping us all of our modes of expression and appealing to the very lowest commonality, i.e. that we are all flesh and blood. But rather, true peace is achieved by encouraging and nurturing each persons unique energy, perspective and purpose to contribute harmoniously to the whole of the Jewish people, and more globally, the universe.

The world is an orchestra. When only one component part plays its tune, the sound is uninteresting, monotone and flat.

However, when each component part plays its tune together and in harmony with each other part, the result is a powerful explosion of music that genuinely moves hearts and lives. There is an immense rush of emotion, both happiness and solemnity.

So this is why the Torah forbids mixing certain species and categories of life. The boundaries and distinctions in this world are critical for true expression, true peace. We need the different ways within the Torah. We are told that there are 70 faces to the Torah. There are numerous ways of expressing the single truth. Our role is to tap into our essence and discover our portion and our way of revealing that essence. You never know until you explore. You may be the Chassid crying at the Kotel. You may be the religious officer who fights for her country. You may be the long haired hippie whose seeks to include Jewish spirituality into his every move.



You may be someone that the world hasn't even seen or known of. But one thing is for sure. When you find your mode of expression and you harness it for the sake of Hashem, the end result will be peace.

The Rambam writes:

“Peace is great, for the entire Torah was given to bring about peace in the world, as [Proverbs 3:17] states: ‘Its ways are pleasant ways and all its paths are peace.’”

Have a Beautiful Shabbos and may Hashem answer all our prayers.

Love Dave Birk