

RIP DOWN ALL HATRED!

written by Ozer Bergman
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In one of his lessons (LM II, 73), Rebbe Nachman points out a secret message concerning *Tehilim* (Psalms) and *teshuvah* (return to God) that is hidden in the first verse of *Sefer Shemot* (Book of Exodus). The letters of the words *TeHiLIM* and *TeShUVaH* are embedded within a reference to the Children of Israel who descended to Egypt (see *Parashah Pearls* on this page). *Tehilim*, as we know, is King David's personal outpouring of the heart, his private prayers that have become everyone's. This implies that we Jews are prayer and *teshuvah*. It also implies that individually—and certainly collectively—we all have within ourselves the ability to return from anything, even from the quicksand of Egypt (see *Shemot Rabbah* 1:10 on Exodus 1:11).

In a different lesson (LM II, 7), Rebbe Nachman teaches that the more Jews there are, the closer the world comes to redemption. Why? Because the Torah's light can be transmitted and held onto by the world only if there are 600,000 or more Jews. However, that alone is insufficient. As you recall, another condition needed for the Torah to be given was unity. The Israelites had to be like an individual at peace with himself, with a clear goal and a firm resolve—and they were.

The Rebbe supplies another reason why redemption comes closer as the number of Jews increases. God made us neighbors so we

should get together and pray together. A minyan's growth adds and extends the reach of each prayer, so that more and more of Creation receives Divine bounty. A major point of all this prayer is that the Torah should not just be written, studied and discussed, but breathed and lived at every moment, be what may, come what may.

One of the nice things about living alone is that no one disputes your decisions. Your viewpoint and opinion are automatically right. But "it is not good that the human is alone" (Genesis2:18). Yet once there is another human being, opinions abound. When there are more and more Jews—and may there always be a continuing increase of Jews!—the challenge to unity is greater (and the benefits of having it, greater still). Deciding what's right and who's right can become matters of intense, heated and contentious debate. There, in the face of fracture and division, we are called upon to make peace and to follow the Divine rules for creating and maintaining peace. This keeps us, and the Torah, one.

Putting these ideas together, we see that the more Jews there are, (a) the more Torah can be brought into the world, and (b) the greater the power of prayer. Both are contingent on our getting along with one another. So we have to be careful to make sure there is *shalom* (peace) among us. Particularly in regard to prayer, our *shalom* has to be so true that we want to pray together and can pray together. This brings us not only to *teshuvah*, but to forgiveness as well.

In order to be and remain peaceful, neighborly neighbors, *halakhah* (Jewish law) requires us to respect each other's privacy, even forcing us to build walls to separate us, if the circumstances require it. Why? Even a person who lives alone needs self-discipline in order to maintain a healthy life and lifestyle. If we get too close for comfort to one another, we are likely to cause harm in either, or both, of the following ways. We may be jealous of what our neighbor has, or, equally bad (at least), we may express impatience for what we view as

his insufferable and inadequate practice of Judaism. Then walls are a very good thing: they help us maintain self-discipline so we won't harm one another.