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by Rabbi Yaakov Finestone

FEEL THEIR LOVE!

PARSHAS VAYAKHEL- PEKUDEI

I remember reading the following story. It is not a true story, but it does impart a lesson: *A husband and wife lived in poverty. Finally, the wife told the husband to get a bracha from a particular rebbe. The husband told the rebbe about his sad state-of-affairs. The rebbe felt bad and gave the husband a bracha. He said that the first thing that the husband did when he arrived home would be especially blessed. The husband excitedly started dreaming about all the business possibilities that could bring him riches. As soon as he arrived home, he and his wife got into an argument. That was the husband's first act when arriving home and that act became "blessed". He and his wife argued for the rest of their lives.*

The pasuk in this week's parsha (Shmos 35:3) says, "You shall not light a fire throughout your habitations on Shabbos". Most commentators explain this literally, that you may not light a fire on Shabbos. The **Shaloh HaKaddosh** in his sefer, Shnay Luchos HaBris (as quoted by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin in Love Your Neighbor), says that the word "fire" in the pasuk also alludes to the destructive fire of anger and disputes. Especially on Shabbos, one should be exceedingly careful not to grow angry or become involved in disputes.

Some commentaries say that erev Shabbos, Friday afternoon, is a time when people may get angry more easily, in their rush to prepare for Shabbos. The **Talmud** (Shabbos 30B-31A) tells a story. *Two men made a bet that whoever could make the sage, Hillel, angry would get four hundred zuz. One of the men went to Hillel's house on erev Shabbos and asked him a nonsensical question. Hillel answered calmly and returned to his erev Shabbos preparations. For a second time, the fellow knocked on Hillel's door, again disturbing Hillel, with another nonsensical question. This went on once more. Hillel maintained his composure and did not get angry!*

*You shall not light a fire
throughout your
habitations on Shabbos"
(Shmos 35:3).*

Perhaps the following dvar Torah by **HaRav Alter Henach Leibowitz zt"l**, will help us, in some way, to avoid getting angry at others, especially at our loved ones.

The **Midrash Tanchuma** (Shmos 12 and 13) says that when all the work of the Mishkan was complete, the only thing remaining to be done was for the Mishkan to be erected. Then Hashem's Holy Presence would dwell within it. However, no one was able to erect it. Neither the wise men nor Ohaliav or Betzalel, who were in charge of its construction, could do so. Therefore, the Jewish people felt much anguish. The people voiced their frustration to Moshe. They showed Moshe each part of the Mishkan. Moshe agreed that it was all done properly, according to the proper specifications. Therefore, they asked Moshe, "Then why can't the Mishkan be raised?" Moshe felt their pain. He felt terrible anguish that they could not erect the Mishkan. Why did Hashem cause this failure? Moshe Rabbeinu had felt personal pain that he had not been asked by Hashem to participate in the actual building of this holy structure. In actuality, Hashem had saved the raising of the Mishkan for Moshe to do.

The **Rosh HaYeshiva zt"l** asked, how could it be that Moshe, with all his wisdom, did not realize that raising the Mishkan would be his share in it? Moshe had felt pain that he had not been actively involved. One would think that Moshe would have felt joy knowing that obviously Hashem was saving this for him. Yet, the **Midrash** seems to indicate that Moshe only felt anguish but no joy, by the fact that the Mishkan could not be raised. Why was that? The **Rosh HaYeshiva zt"l** explained that Moshe was overwhelmed by the pain and anguish that the Jewish People felt due to their

inability to raise the Mishkan. That pain, for others, so overwhelmed him, that his own personal pain, his desire to participate, was totally dwarfed. How could he feel joy when the Jewish people felt anguish?

Perhaps the reason that Moshe felt the pain of his people to the exclusion of his own personal pain was because of his tremendous love for his people. He loved the Jewish people so much that his personal pain was negligible compared to their pain.

We should make a conscious effort to increase our love for our fellow Jews.

When our hearts are filled with love of them, our own ego and self-love will be reduced.

That will help us to refrain from getting angry at others, even when they seem to deserve it.

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Rabbi Yaakov Finestone is the director of JEP Queens. For almost 50 years JEP Queens has been in the forefront of kiruv. JEP has changed the lives of thousands of Jewish children enrolled in public schools and kiruv schools. Many are shomrei Torah and mitzvos today because of JEP.

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