

## A LESSON IN SOLIDITY

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### TREUMA

We read:

וזה מעשה המנורה מקשה זהב עד ירכה עד פרחו מקשה היא  
כמראה אשר הראה ה' את משה כן עשה את המנורה.  
And this was the workmanship of the Menorah. It was beaten  
work; according unto the pattern which the L-rd had shown  
Moses, so made he the Menorah. (Numbers 8:4)

Further on we read:

עשה לך שתי חצוצרות כסף מקשה תעשה אותם והיו לך למקרא  
העדה ולמסע את המחנות  
Make unto thyself two trumpets of silver beaten out of one  
piece shalt thou make them and they shall serve thee for the  
calling of the congregation, and for the setting forward of  
the camps. (Numbers 10:2)

If we recall

ועשית שנים כרוכים זהב מקשה תעשה אותם  
And thou shalt make two cherubin of gold, of beaten work  
shalt thou make them, on the ends of the cover. (Exodus 25:18)

והיו הכרוכים פורשי כנפים למעלה סככים בכנפיהם על הכפרת  
ופניהם איש אל אחיו.

And the cherubin shall be spreading forth their wings on high,  
overshadowing the cover with their wings, with their faces  
turned one to the other; toward the cover shall the faces of  
the cherubin be. (Exodus 25:20)

What is the significance of the word *מקשה*? Why are  
these three articles given this common attribute of *מקשה*. Can

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there be any interrelationship between these three items and what would that affinity symbolize?

What is the message that the word **מקשה** is trying to convey to us, for surely by no mere coincidence were these three objects required to be hammered out of one solid piece of gold.

Living in a world whose horizon is overcast with threatening clouds of fear of wars, prejudices, and greed, we may find little time to think about our fellowman or consider his plight, let alone to unravel and solve the world's problems. Yet if we were to look around us we would find the answer to our questions in our own immediate vicinity and in our very last statement describing conditions today.

The Torah's concept of loving your fellow man has in our day and age run up against some insurmountable difficulties. How can one man love his fellowman? the very same individual who is competing against him in his quest for a job, in his daily ambition, and in his very goal of survival. A person's animal instinct of self-preservation negates all of the doctrine of "love thy fellowman as thyself."

And, in spite of this the Torah conveys to us a message advising us as to our way of pursuance of mutual love. The Cherubin which symbolize reciprocal love, their faces turned to each other and spreading their wings on high, beckon to mankind, with this message, "Face your fellowman on an equal plane and lift up your bodies and souls in unison to the lofty heights." These very same Cherubin are described as **מקשה** being hammered out of one solid piece of metal, teaching us to view each other as originating from a common source and demanding that we beat our vicious instincts to con-

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denscend to a divine will. We are taught to subject our obnoxious desires to a divine code. If necessary lift up a hammer with force and beat that hatred, that greed, that enmity and animosity that severs one man from his fellowman. The Cherubin teach us to love each other with fervency and cling to each other with tenacity as one great solid mass hammered into shape, and not pasted together by a temporary bond.

Overcoming the difficulties of loving our fellowman we are obsessed with the fiendish design of group prejudices. We have been organized into various groups and organizations which have their own folkways and mores and do not tolerate those of the outgroup. Here, too, we find the Torah upon our heels calling to us through the medium of the Trumpets to assemble in one vast congregation all the legions of Israel. Love has reached a higher rung. It has surpassed a narrow concept of mutual and brotherly love. It now encompasses a vast group or association of groups, a nation. This is called *אהבת ישראל* love for your fellow Jew, no matter of what occupation, of what political leaning, of what intellect, or of what origin, either "Litwak" or "Galitzianer" or German or Hungarian or American, either "Chassid" or "Misnaged." All deserve your love and binding affection sealed by a lasting bond of common endeavor in carrying out in unison the Torah's commandments. Here too, the common attribute of *מקשה* must manifest itself in our discarding of all prejudices and all bias by hammering ourselves into a united nation. United in love for each other and in the commandments that we perform together.

Accomplishing the transition from the individual state to that of the nation, we are now confronted with the problem of international relations in a society whose fundamental prin-

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ciple and groundwork ought to be mutual love. How can we bring together nations alienated from one another by fears, feuds, and unending competition and rivalry for world markets and territorial expansion? Aren't we fraught with disappointment and disgust even at the mere mention of a plan for world peace? Hasn't bitter experience made us all a bit apathetic and cynical and perhaps suspicious of any new pains and panaceas?

Yet, our Torah, first to offer the solution and ever since clinging to its advice, entreats us to unravel the secret of the "Menorah" and reveal its lesson to mankind. The "Menorah," a mere candlestick although illuminated with small lights, is to serve as a symbol to all nations that they must merge in one common and unanimous love for the Creator. The Menorah, miraculously conceived, poured forth from its small wicks, rays of light, that overflowed from the Temple through the unique windows of that Holy Sanctuary which were small and narrow on the inside and very large and wide on the outside. The Menorah symbolized אהבת ה' love for the Creator — a common denominator for all nations, enough ground upon which to build an everlasting association, not of individual groups but of nations, and banish the fears and nightmares of war and its potential threat to our civilization.

We are told that the great "Tzadik," the Chofetz Chaim of blessed memory in illustrating a point for his students asked them a question. How does a person who is armed to the teeth, upon entering a dark room, rid himself of that darkness? He might use his sword, or his dagger, or his pistol but alas, to no avail. Let him discard his armour and stop wasting his time and instead let him strike a little match and thus in a second he will be able to banish darkness from the room. Yes, a little light, just an iota of light drives out a vast and

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endless oblivion of darkness. For not by armed power, nor by brute force, but only by the spirit of G-d can we disperse the clouds of war that are hovering over our heads like vultures over a dead carcass.

This is the message of the "Menorah." Nations of the world unite in a common purpose. Love and cherish your Creator and the teachings he has transmitted to mankind through his chosen sons. In that sense, "Keep ye judgement and do righteousness for my salvation is close at hand and my righteousness to be revealed." (Isaiah, 56:1)

Being alert we must be cognizant of the fact that the word *מקשה* is used twice in reference to the "Menorah." It is here, more than elsewhere that we must hearken to the message of the "Menorah." In loving the Creator we must remember that all nations had a common root. That is the significance of the first *מקשה*. The material to be used must be solid intoning that we originated from one ancestor and must therefore manifest our solidarity by our love and affection for one creator — the goal of all of our teachings.

And then we must be *מקשה* in the true sense of being hammered into shape, beaten against our low instincts and vain inclinations. Let us instead learn the lesson of our three solid objects. A real *SOLID* lesson. Let us come up from brotherly love, to the acknowledgment of group love, to the realization that all nations can be united in a common ideal of love for the Creator.

I request that we pause in our daily tasks to understand and realize that we must love in spite of ourselves, in spite of our prejudices and ethnocentrism. We must overcome land boundaries and language difficulties to hail the One who is

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ubiquitous and generates our very existence. In the words of the Prophet, "For then I will do away with all distinctions amongs nations transforming all into one clear and comprehensible language group, for the purpose of acclaiming the Creator and serving Him as one man." (Zephania 3:9)