

ONE HEART, ONE PURPOSE--AN INSTALLATION

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A: God created man and women with two arms, two legs, two eyes, and two ears, but with one heart.

B: God knew that the two arms could do different things at the same times; the two legs never traveled on the same ground although they moved on one path; and each of the two eyes could take in different images and each ears different sounds.

A: But God in his wisdom created human kind with a single heart so that each person would follow the course of just one heart.

B: So, what is the heart that we should follow its lead, and what is the course of that heart that we should follow?

A: In 1628, William Harvey, the English Physician who is credited with discovering the circulation of the blood, told the Royal College of Surgeons:

B: "The heart...is the beginning of life;...for it is the heart by whose virtue and pulse the blood is moved, perfected, made apt to nourish, and is preserved from corruption and coagulation; it...nourishes, cherishes, quickens the whole body, and is indeed the foundation of life, the source of all action."¹

A: But we Jews knew the importance of the heart more than 1000 years before Dr. Harvey spoke his words.

B: From earliest times our Sages have told us that the heart was the center of being.

A: Midrash Temurah states that the blood circulates throughout the body with the heart pushing the liquid.²

B: In Proverbs we are told: Guard your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life!³

A: It seems that the heart is the favorite subject and symbol of Jewish religious as well as secular writings.

B: The heart determines all action.⁴

A: The heart perceives, the heart hears, it speaks, it grieves, it envies, it breaks, it strives, desires, confesses, comforts, repents, hardens,...The heart is melted, it is torn...It deceives...it hates and rejoices.⁵

B: A man's heart changes his countenance for good or evil.⁶

A: The heart is the tabernacle of the human intellect.⁷

B: At the center of our religion is the Sh'ma and a statement about the heart: "You shalt love thy Lord your God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy might."⁸

A: Here we are instructed that we must love the One God with all our being.

B: Why is the love of God that comes from the heart placed first before the love from the intellect and the strength of a person?

A: The rabbis explain that with all thy heart means "with all thy desires, including the evil inclination"; we are to make one's earthly passions and ambitions instruments in the service of God.⁹

B: Further our tradition tell us: "If the heart is whole with God, everything is whole; and if the heart lacks Him, all is lacking."¹⁰

A: As it is with the individual, so it is for an organization for it too is a living thing with a heart that reflects what it is.

B: The heart of any organization is its leadership which determines the way the organization will function, fail or prosper, fall backward or strive forward.

A: Will the out-going officers and Board of Directors of Women's League for Conservative Judaism please stand.

B: In Pikei Avot, it is asked: "What is the good way to which a person may cleave?" Rabbi El'azar answered: "A good heart!"¹¹

A: And these leaders have been a good heart to Women's League. For God "has set the world in their heart,"¹² and they have lead us well during their term.

B: (insert specifics of what done during past year)

A: "Man looks to the outward show, but the Lord looks into the heart," it is stated I Samuel¹³.

B: We can easily see that they have done well, and we are sure the Lord has looked into their hearts and has seen good hearts. For it is said in the Talmud: If the thoughts of your heart be pure, It is likely that so will be the works of your hand.¹⁴

A: May you all live long lives, with good hearts that continue both to lead and to be mentors for those who follow.

OUT-GOING BOARD OF DIRECTORS & OFFICERS SAY TOGETHER: Praised are You, Lord our God, King of the universe who has shared of His wisdom with those who revere Him.¹⁵

B: With our sincere Todah Rabah, you the Officers and Board of Directors of Women's League for Conservative Judaism for 1986-1988 term are discharged.

A: The Prophet Ezekiel wrote that God has said: "A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you...."¹⁶

B: So it is today as Women's League receives its new heart and spirit as we install its new Board of Directors and Officers.

A: Will the new Board of Directors of Women's League for Conservative Judaism, please stand:

B: You are the new heart and spirit of Women's League. It is your task to build upon what has come before you and to strengthen it through your work.

A: Your roles will be many as chairmen, workers, leaders, and representatives of the whole membership. You know you must work wholeheartedly to accomplish whatever your tasks.

THE NEW BOARD SAYS TOGETHER: Our God and God of our ancestors, we acknowledge Your Torah as our guide. You gave unto those who came before us a Law of righteousness. Your commandments were a lamp to their feet. May we, too hearken unto You and serve You with a pure and perfect heart.¹⁷

B: You, the Board of Directors of Women's League for Conservative Judaism are hereby installed for the term 1988-1990.

A: We are told that: "the duties of the heart consist in securing the equal cooperation of body and soul in the service of God,..so they testify alike, support and confirm, not contradict and differ from, each other. This harmony is called in Scripture whole-heartedness."¹⁸

B: In Women's League as in most organizations the achievement of this harmony, this whole-heartedness, is achieved by the officers.

A: The officers to be installed, please come forward as your name is called.

B: Ruth Shatz, Recording Secretary.

A: "Words that come from the heart enter the heart," we are told in the Talmud.¹⁹

B: It is your job as the secretary of Women's League to find the right words--not from a thesaurus, not necessarily from your mind, but from your heart.

A: Your words, even in business dealings, will communicate to others more clearly and more quickly than mere language can since they will be words going from heart to heart.

B: Moshe Ben 'Ezra wrote that "Words that do not come from the heart will not enter the ear."²⁰

RECORDING SECRETARY SAYS:

Dear Lord, Our God,

Your words are established forever.

Awesome and revered are they, eternally right;
well-ordered are they, always acceptable.

They are sweet and pleasant and precious, good and beautiful and beloved.²¹

May our words be inspired by the words of You, O God, O king.

May the words of my mouth
and the meditations of my heart
find favor before you,

my Rock and my Redeemer.²²

A: Gertrude Ackerman, Financial Secretary, and Penny Leifer, Treasurer.

B: It is for you to manage the finances of Women's League.

A: Yours is not an easy task nor one often glorified in glowing or flowery rhetoric; but yours are

essential roles.

B: We are told in the Talmud: "All the organs depend on the heart, and the heart depends on the pulse."²³ So it is with the entity we call Women's League. For without your work the rest of the group could not function.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAYS:

Behold, God is my saving. I shall trust in Him and have no fear; for the Lord God is my strength and song, and He has been my saving.²⁴

TREASURER SAYS:

Honor the Lord....Those who honor him will not suffer want. All those who seek the Lord will never lack anything that is good. Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His kindness endures forever. You open your hand, O God, and in favor supply living beings with all they need.²⁵

B: "The heart fathoms what the eye sees not and the ear hears not," we are told.²⁶

A: The heart of the Vice-President must see and hear a great deal since her role is so varied.

B: The Vice-President must educate the membership about the problems of the world around us and then lead us to action.

A: It is her role to help our women as well as all she comes in contact with continue on learning about themselves, their world, and their heritage.

VICE-PRESIDENTS:

Help us, Compassionate, to help others.
Protect us, Creator, from callousness.
Inspire us, Merciful, with kindness.
Protect us, Lord, from indifference.
Help us to open our eyes to Your truth;
help us to open our hearts to Your Torah.
Help us to open our lives to you.²⁷
Teach us to number our days
That we may get us a heart of wisdom.²⁸

A: "I shall light a candle of understanding in your heart, which shall not be put out"²⁹ expresses the special role that is the president's. For it is she who must not only understand at a moment's notice the needs of the group, but she must also be able to react from the heart to the needs of the individuals in that group.

B: She must be strong, but she must be completely neutral imposing a harmony between thought, feeling, and deed all those around her.

A: The successes of our organization will be her successes as the failures too will be hers. For she is the ultimate leader, the center of our Sisterhood.

PRESIDENT:

Eternal God of all who have come before me, I am well aware of my special responsibilities as a leader. It is an awesome role I have assumed. Make me ever able to meet the challenges I will face with strength and knowledge.
Oh, Lord, my God, make me like the prophet Jeremiah whose service to You and his people was

not foresight of coming events but insight into the meaning of the present.

Oh, Lord, make me like Jeremiah so I may help hasten the day when all people will dedicate heart and purpose to Your service. Hasten the day when Your people will have one heart, one purpose.

A: You, the Officers of Women's League for Conservative Judaism for 1988-1990 are now installed.

B: The leadership of Women's League for Conservative Judaism has asked today for "One heart, one purpose."

A: It was the Prophet Jeremiah who first spoke these words 2600 years ago as he witnessed the destruction of the first Jewish state. He did not sit idly by as the destruction occurred--first he fought to prevent it and when defeat came he planned how the Jews should live in exile until the reconstruction of the Jewish state.

B: His plan for survival: "live in changed," without losing one's heritage.³⁰

A: Jeremiah spoke directly to the circumstances of his own time,³¹ but he has much to say to us in our time.³²

B: Jeremiah told his people that God must be served by the practice of justice and righteousness in personal, national and communal life,³³ that this practice of justice and righteousness must come directly from the heart. This was his people's purpose for being.

A: Thus the phrase "One heart, one purpose" expresses an "unanimity and singleness of purpose" and is at the very core of the Prophet Jeremiah's teachings.³⁴

B: This unanimity and singleness of purpose may have seemed a daring philosophy to Jeremiah's demoralized people in the sixth century B.C.E. and still is a daring philosophy in today's often apathetic and everchanging world.

A: But Jeremiah has always been considered the companion to the daring.³⁵

B: Women's League must be daring in today's changing world.

A: Jeremiah's ancient words--"One heart, one purpose"--must be at the core of Women's League's existence today and in the future.

B: As they did in Jeremiah's time, his words must direct us to dare, to change, and to grow today .

A: It must be our one purpose as Women's League leaders to see change, as Jeremiah did, not as an end but as an evolution and a growing. We must dare to guide that change, that evolution and that growing so that our traditions are not lost, that our ideals are not forgotten and that our principles are not compromised.

B: On January 21, 1918, Matilde Schechter, the founder of Women's League for Conservative Judaism, our parent national organization, expressed it best when she wrote that the purpose of Women's League and each individual sistershood was:

A: "...To serve the cause of Judaism by strengthening the bond of unity among Jewish women; and by learning to appreciate everything fine in Jewish life and literature, to instill the beauty of our ancient observances in the hearts of children...to cherish the various ceremonies of Sabbath

and the Holidays...to teach their significance intelligently."³⁶

B: All of us in Women's League for Conservative Judaism, the Board of Directors, the Officers, and the membership alike, should be single-hearted in our pursuit of our one purpose. Thus we all pray together:

ALL TOGETHER:

Eternal God, in whose service we are enlisted and in whose name we have gathered, lift our thoughts that we may renew our minds; and lead us beside the still waters so that we may restore our heart and purpose.

We thank You, O Lord, for our hallowed memories and for our abiding hopes.

Help us to show that we are Your children by giving ourselves faithfully to Your tasks.

Help us to convert our convictions into conduct and commitment.

Help us to narrow the gap between our principles and our practices, between our aspirations and our actions.

Keep us from blaming others for our own faults; help us to heal the wounds we have thoughtlessly inflicted.

Help us to face our defeats with courage and to carry our successes with humility.

Keep us from the pride that blinds the mind and from the anger that locks the heart.

Make us loyal to our convictions in the face of falsehood; but help us to speak the truth in love.³⁷

May the work of our hands and minds be acceptable to You; may this joyous occasion enrich our lives, drawing us closer to You in truth and in love, with one heart, one purpose.³⁸

And Let Us Say: Amen

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ George Seldes, The Great Thoughts, p. 175.
- ² David M. Hausdorff, A Book of Jewish Curiosities, p. 133.
- ³ Proverbs 4, 23.
- ⁴ Sefer Hasidim, 13C #643, p. 173, cited by Joseph L. Baron, ed., A Treasury of Jewish Quotations, p. 172.
- ⁵ Ecclesiastes R. cited by Alcalay and Nurock, eds., Words of the Wise, p. 211.
- ⁶ Apocrypha Ben Sira 13, 25, cited by Alcalay and Nurock, p. 210.
- ⁷ Maimonides, Shaare HaMusar, Responsa, ii, 39c, cited by Joseph L. Baron, ed., A Treasury of Jewish Quotations, p. 172.
- ⁸ Deuteronomy 6.
- ⁹ Dr. J. H. Hertz, ed., The Pentateuch and Haftorahs, p. 770.
- ¹⁰ Bahaya cited by Alcalay and Nurock, p. 211.
- ¹¹ Pikei Avot 2, 11, cited by Rabbi Jules Harlow, ed., Siddur Sim Shalom, p. 615.
- ¹² Ecclesiastes 3, 11.
- ¹³ I Samuel 16, 7.
- ¹⁴ Morris Silverman, et al., eds., Sabbath and Festival Prayer Book, p. 348.
- ¹⁵ Harlow, p., 711.
- ¹⁶ Ezekiel 36, 26.
- ¹⁷ Rabbi Sidney Greenberg and Rabbi Jonathan D. Levine, eds., Likrat Shabbat, back p. 63.
- ¹⁸ Bahya, Hobot HaLebabot, 1040, Introduction, cited by Baron, p. 168.
- ¹⁹ Talmud Jerushalmi, Berakhot, quoted by M. Ibn Ezra, Shirat Yisrael, (12C) 1924, p. 156, cited by Alcalay and Nurock, p. 210.
- ²⁰ Moshe ben 'Ezra cited by Alcalay and Nurock, p. 212.
- ²¹ Harlow, p.103.
- ²² Greenberg and Levine, p. 119.
- ²³ Johanan b. Nappaha, Talmud Jerushalmi: Terumot, 8.4, cited by Baron, p. 314.
- ²⁴ Rabbi Ch. M. Brecher, ed., Grace, Hymns and Blessings, p. 125-26.
- ²⁵ Ibid., p. 47.
- ²⁶ N. 'Amram cited by Alcalay and Nurock, p. 212.
- ²⁷ Harlow, p. 803.
- ²⁸ Greenberg and Levine, eds., back p. 67.
- ²⁹ Apocrypha: II Esdras, 14, 25 cited by Baron, p. 524.
- ³⁰ Jeremiah 29 cited by Bernard J. Bamberger, "Introdocution," The Book of Jeremiah, p. xi.
- ³¹ Bamburger, p. i.
- ³² Ibid. p. vi.
- ³³ Ibid. p. viii.
- ³⁴ Rabbi Dr. H. Freedman, Jeremiah, p. 229.
- ³⁵ Sheldon H. Blank, Jeremiah: Man and Prophet, p. 231 cited by Bamberger, p. vi.
- ³⁶ From the writings of Mathilde Schecter, Jan. 21, 1918 on the occasions of the founding quoted in Guildlines for Contemporary Jewish Women, New York: Women's League for Conservative Judaism.
- ³⁷ Greenberg and Levine, p.19.
- ³⁸ Ibid., p. 20.

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