

# Dancing Together

At the end the tractate of Taanis we find,  
A Mishna that is one of a kind.  
Rabban Shimon Ben Gamliel said that on the Jewish calendar,  
No days were as joyous as the 15th of Av and Yom Kippur.

In those days the daughters of Jerusalem would go out dancing,  
In the vineyards in borrowed white clothing.  
To the young men they would be calling,  
"Please lift your eyes and take note of what you are choosing.

Do not set your eyes upon beauty,  
Set your eyes upon the lineage of family."  
To prove that this is true,  
With verses from Mishlei, the Mishna does continue.

"Grace is falsehood and vain is beauty,  
A woman who fears Hashem, praised she shall be.  
Give her from the fruit of her hands," it states,  
And let her works praise her in the gates."

These verses only prove that the women did declare,  
That about physical beauty the men shouldn't care,  
The verses don't prove that they said, "set your eyes upon family,"  
On the contrary, because of her fear of Hashem, praised she should be.

How can we say that this was said by everybody,  
If they didn't all come from a distinguished family?  
The Beraisa which elaborates on the Mishna, adds to the difficulty,  
By dividing the women into categories three.

The beautiful ones would say, "Set your eyes upon beauty,"  
The distinguished ones would say, "Set your eyes upon family."  
Those that were homely and didn't have anything special to mention,  
Would say "Choose your wife for the sake of heaven."

From the Beraisa we see,  
That "Set your eyes upon family," was said only,  
By those that actually came from a distinguished family,  
So why does the Mishna generalize and say that it was said by everybody?

Commentators explain,  
That the Mishna does contain,  
A hint to these groups three,  
That the Beraisa elaborates on clearly.

"Lift your eyes and see,"  
Was said by the women with beauty,  
"Do not set your eyes upon beauty, set your eyes upon family,"  
Was said by the women who had a distinguished lineage as their quality.

The women who were homely,  
Who had good deeds only,  
Said that a wife should be chosen,  
Based on the fear of Hashem possessed by the woman.

This answers the first question,  
That we did mention.  
As a separate statement, the verses in the Mishna are quoted,  
To prove what the women said, they were not intended.

This explanation is not smooth according to the Mishna's understanding,  
"The daughters of Jerusalem," implies that everyone was saying!  
Why aren't the three categories listed clearly in the Mishna?  
All the other details could have been elaborated on in the Beraisa.

The entire passage was said by all the daughters of Jerusalem,  
The Beraisa adds that besides for the general declaration,  
The women were divided into categories three,  
Each class added their unique qualities individually.

The statement of the beautiful ones in the Beraisa we need to explain,  
The Torah teaches that "grace is falsehood and beauty is vain."  
Why is the advice to "choose your wife for the sake of heaven," given,  
Specifically with regards to marrying a "homely" women?

Commentators explain that the "homely" women were virtuous too,  
The advice was that the men should focus on the good deeds that they do.  
However how is being homely an advantage,  
Over those who were taught to be G-d fearing because of their lineage?

The answer is that obviously,  
The daughters going out was something holy.  
They did not intend to point out attributes of a physical quality,  
They intended to highlight attributes that the Torah teaches are worthy.

When parents have sanctity and purity during the time of intimacy,  
Beautiful traits and soul garments their children receive spiritually,  
And therefore the children are also beautiful physically,  
Giving the girls in the first category the spiritual advantage of beauty.

We can make a division,  
Between the virtues of the daughters of Jerusalem.

1. A particular attribute that was unique to each daughter,
2. A common attribute that is transmitted to all generations forever.

The Mishna's approach is now illuminated,  
In the category of a woman who fears Hashem every woman is included.  
Fear of Hashem is an attribute that is transmitted,  
To her children and students because it is deeply rooted.

In the second verse quoted in the Mishna this is hinted,  
It refers to the children that she gave birth to and educated.  
"She shall be praised," not only because of her deeds,  
But because of "the fruit of her hands" who she nurtures and feeds.

Why are we certain that fear of Hashem is possessed by every woman?  
"Young man! Please lift your eyes and see," is necessary to mention,  
We should not evaluate a person based on how they appear to the eye,  
To look with an elevated perspective at their root and source we must try.

From "Set your eyes upon family," we learn,  
Her Jewish character traits are inherited, not something she did earn.  
Sara, Rivka, Rochel and Leah are our mothers,  
We are all their daughters.

Even a woman who doesn't have any spiritual virtues outwardly,  
Has them inwardly because she is part of the Jewish family.  
True Torah virtues are not ones that are temporary,  
They are the virtues that are like family, which are transmitted eternally.

Once we determine every Jewish daughter's inward excellency,  
Then the Beraisa comes and says we can also praise her physical beauty,  
Because it stems from her spiritual beauty clearly,  
The beauty of her soul is visible openly.

The ones with "distinguished lineage," we are certain,  
Will give their children a Torah education,  
Even though their positive attributes aren't seen in the open,  
Because they come from Torah scholars generation after generation.

The ones who are "homely,"  
Had no one to educate them properly,  
A spirit of bitterness was aroused within them,  
They feel what it means that it is bitter to forsake Hashem.

There is nothing as whole as the broken heart of a Jewish woman,  
They themselves accepted upon themselves the yoke of heaven.  
They desired grooms who for the sake of Hashem were motivated entirely,  
And weren't thinking about any positive quality.

It was later discovered that even the "homely,"  
Possessed the virtue of family.  
From being the daughter of Sarah, Rivkah, Rochel and Leah did spring,  
The bitter feeling and yearning.

They all danced together in peace and unity,  
Not because their virtues were nullified completely,  
But although their differences were articulated explicitly,  
They realized that we are truly one family!

