

Dear Chavraya,

A sacred text of a different sort came to me as a gift recently. The place of its giving became as Sinai in that moment, a place of revelation and delight in the transmission of Torah from generation to generation. In this case, it was the handing of Torah from younger to older, a child unassuming and unaware of the gift transmitted. On our recent trip to Los Angeles to meet our newest grandchild, we went to pick up our eldest grandchild from school, not so little Leo, now six years old. Leo proudly took us on a tour of his school, showing us the playground first, and then the synagogue around which the school is configured, and then the music room, and the science room, so much opportunity, all part of his life and in some six-year old way seemingly appreciated and not taken for granted.

Finally we came to Leo's classroom. He opened the door and led us in with a great smile, showing us where he sat to read, where he did math, where he washed his hands. He stopped with us in front of a large, brightly colored poster, seeming to know that it would mean as much to his zayde as to him. Of course I realized immediately from its color and illustration that it was a teaching of Reb Seuss. His oma Mieke and I held his hands as we read the words together with all the appropriate drama of something important, of a moment to be marked and remembered.

As you can see in the attached gift that comes now from Leo to you, the words jump with the timeless cadence of Dr. Seuss, and with the excited voices of grandparents and grandchild reading together, students all:

**TODAY
You are You!
That is
TRUER
Than TRUE!
There is no one alive
who is
You-er Than You!**

Of common threads upon the loom of life, the words sing of universal truths in different tones and hues that each one might recognize in their own way the melody that is truer than true. It is the essence of the Slonimer Rebbe's signature theme: *No human is just the same from the day of the human's creation and onward; and one person cannot repair that which devolves upon another person to repair. Therefore, there is to each person their own task and purpose through which it is upon them to bring repair in their lifetime* (Par. Lech L'cha).

We are each unique in who we are and in the gifts that we bring to this world and its repair. In the essence of who each one is we become part of something

greater than ourselves and are yet integral to that greater whole. It is the nature and lesson of the *minyan*, a symbolic representation of the community and yet counted by ones. Of that which joins us one to another as a community, each of us in our uniqueness, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch offers a beautiful insight, so simple and so profound from this week's Torah portion, *Parashat B'har-B'chukkotai*. It is a portion that emphasizes human equality and the responsibility of one for another, to be learned through the profound reorganization of society that is experienced every seventh year through the laws of *Sh'mita/the Sabbatical year*. Fields are to lie fallow and all are to gather food from what grows of itself. Reminded that the land belongs to its Creator, landowner and tenant, stranger and home-born are all equal, gathering together shoulder to shoulder, a reminder of how it is meant to be, none with the upper hand, wealth redistributed and shared by all.

Drawing together all the preceding verses that bring home God's vision of human society, become again as the Garden that was in the beginning, the Torah says, *v'chey achicha imach/your brother's/sister's life shall be bound up with you*. Rabbi Hirsch takes the word *im/with* and explains that it is this simple word that makes us an *am/a people*. The two words, *im* and *am*, are formed of the same two letters, *ayin* and *mem*, but one small difference of a vowel allowing for the collective blossoming of individuals into a people. We can only be a people when we are with each other. As the people is reflected in the ways of our being in community with each other, so we are joined in all of our uniqueness, each one's task and purpose needed to bring repair and make us whole.

In the delighted sharing of a child with his grandparents, we learn from a sacred text so brightly colored what each of us needs to know if within ourselves we would be whole and yet be part of a greater whole. It is, of course, that "you are you, and that is truer than TRUE!

Shabbat shalom,
Rabbi Victor

TODAY

**You
Are You!**

**That is
TRUER**



than TRUE!

There is ^{no} _{one} alive

**who is
You-er Than
You!**

-Dr. Seuss