



"The Precious Gem"

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We have all found ourselves in this situation in life at one time or another. May it be at a party when all are dancing but you don't want to dance in case you were not blessed with grace and you think you will be laughed at. Or you might be in a class and you are asked to get up to speak but you are embarrassed because you might have a bit of a speech impairment. Or how about getting injured on duty and it changes your life forever, because you might not be able to do the physical things you were able to do. And then there are those of us that might not be as blessed as others with the talent or looks or family structure or finances, etc., etc. And how we handle our situation is strictly up to the person in the mirror. I met with an old friend who was seriously hurt in an accident, and after many months of physical rehab he returned to work. I asked him "how did you have the courage and strength to keep on going, after having such a major setback in life"? I'll never forget his response, he said, "Rabbi, I can't turn the clock back and make a new beginning, but we ALL can start today and make a better ending". We hugged and shed a tear, he made me proud, because that is what life is all about. He brought to mind the story of "The King and The Precious Gem"

There was once a great king who owned a precious gem, without peer compared to all gems in the world, in terms of size, color, clarity, and cut. It was a magnificent and precious stone. The king was so proud of his unique stone that every visiting dignitary who would visit would come see the stone, and would be very moved by its grandeur.

On many occasions the king would go into his treasure vault and admire it privately. On one of these occasions when the king was privately viewing this stone, the gem fell from his hand and fell against some other stones, apparently even harder stones, for when he picked the gem up there was a gash on its face. The king was grief-stricken. He immediately called the royal jeweler who examined it and said based on his assessment "Your Majesty, there is nothing I could do. I could cut the gem up or shave it down and it would be just as perfect but considerably smaller - this stone could never be of the same quality as it was. The king, unwilling to accept that his precious jewel would never be the same, continued calling other craftsmen and artisans who delivered the same verdict, to the king's great dismay.

The king decided to issue a proclamation throughout the kingdom: "Anyone who can restore this stone to its former beauty will be rewarded with the greatest honor and riches, however anyone who attempts to do so and fails will forfeit their lives." Thousands of people came from throughout the land and upon examination would only shake their heads sadly, realizing full well that it was practically impossible to restore the stone, and they would not dare risk their lives to attempt it.

The stone remained blemished and untouched for many months, when finally an elderly man came to the king, presented his credentials and references, and claimed that he could indeed restore the stone. The king investigated the man's reputation and credentials, discovered he was in fact a craftsman of note and an accomplished artist, and eventually gave his consent for the elderly artisan to ply his craft. The old man submitted a list of requirements, including a private room to work in, special tools, care for

his family, etc, and specified that he could not give a timeline for when it would be ready, only promising that he would indeed restore the diamond to a state as extraordinary as it once had been. The king agreed and met the old man's requests, providing all that was necessary.

Over the course of the following months, people would see this elderly workman walking the corridors of the royal palace, and when asked about progress, the man would simply reply that he was working on it. Eventually, after many long months passed, he announced to the king that he had completed his task. The king summoned all the dignitaries to celebrate this historic and momentous occasion, when the world would see the restoration of one of its greatest prize jewels.

The great unveiling day came, and before the nation the king went up and opened up the box - and there was the stone - still containing the same gash on its face...

BUT the elderly craftsman had etched an intricate and unique flower into the face of the stone around the gash. It was done in such a way that the stem of the flower was made up by the gash, and surrounding it was an absolutely stunning masterpiece, a blossom of unparalleled beauty exquisitely done. As beautiful and unique as the gem had once been before, it was even more so now. End of story.

Many of us have some (serious) gashes in our lives that will never go away. We can unproductively proceed through life feeling sorry for ourselves, as the "victims" of this terrible tragedy or incident and blame everything else in our lives on this or these event(s) or placing blame on others. OR we can begin carving something magnificent around that gash, finding ways to transform the difficult experiences we endured into positive forces, something that can enrich our lives and those around us, transforming our gashes into the stems of magnificently beautiful blossoms!! Not always easy, but then again what worthwhile in life comes easy???????

On behalf of ALL the Chaplains, may G-d bless you and keep you safe. Amen.

P.S. Should you wish company for a ride along don't hesitate to give us a call. Have you heard any good jokes or funny stories lately? Please pass along a copy my way. Thanks

Compliments of your Police Chaplain

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