



“Paying Tribute to your Wrinkled Hands”

November 2019

Just finished addressing roll call the other day, when one of our members called me over for a quick chat. Our member, "Jimmy" says to me, "Rabbi we live in interesting times, let me share a incident we had,

The other night we responded to the scene of a bad auto accident, a T-bone in a busy intersection. There was already a mob of people gathered on the street. By the time we reached the struck vehicle, it was smoking badly with visible flames and I noticed two unresponsive people stuck in the front seat. Wasting no time my partner and I jumped into action, working feverishly to get them out of the vehicle. Within seconds the complete vehicle was up in flames. One victim was badly banged up but conscious the second victim was unresponsive and CPR was started at once. What a warm grateful feeling, that after a few desperate rounds of CPR we brought him back. The man pulled me close, said thanks and kissed my hand, grateful to the Lord that our efforts paid off. Yet it never made the news, no recognition for saving a life, only from the man we brought back. But when I worked the marathon and I parked my squad at a corner, a journalist came over took a picture asked my name and gave me a lecture about parking illegal. It reminded that we do the work we do, not for those that look for fault, they will always find something to complain about. But for the moments when a heart feels a heart, and we get kissed on the hand". Powerful words, I took his hand , kissed them too and gave him a hug and told him "thanks for being the hands of our city". It reminded me of the story titled ..."And Don't Forget To Thank Your Wrinkled Hands" ...

My Grandpa, some ninety plus years old, came to visit us a few weeks ago. One afternoon I watched as Grandpa sat feebly on the patio bench. He didn't move, just sat with his head down staring at his hands. When I sat down beside him he didn't acknowledge my presence and the longer I sat I wondered if he was OK. Finally, not really wanting to disturb him, but wanting to check on him at the same time, I asked him if he was OK.

He raised his head and looked at me and smiled. Yes, I'm fine, thank you for asking, he said in a clear strong voice. I didn't mean to disturb you, grandpa, but you were just sitting here staring at your hands and I wanted to make sure you were OK I explained to him. Grandpa asked, "Have you ever looked at your hands". I mean really looked at your hands? I slowly opened my hands and stared down at them. I turned them over, palms up and then palms down. No, I guess I had never really looked at my hands as I tried to figure out the point he was making. Grandpa smiled and gently spoke the following: stop and think for a moment about the hands you have, how they have served you well throughout your years. These hands, though wrinkled, shriveled and weak have been the tools I have used all my life to reach out and grab and embrace life. They braced and caught my fall when as a toddler I crashed upon the floor. They put food in my mouth and clothes on my back. As a child, my mother taught me to fold them in prayer and ask G-d for His guidance and blessings. They tied my shoes and buttoned my shirt. They held my gear back as I headed out to work each morning.

They have been dirty, scraped and raw, swollen and bent. They were uneasy and clumsy when I tried to hold my newborn son. Decorated with my wedding band they showed the world that I was married and loved someone special. They wrote the letters that made my loved ones smile, and trembled and shook in sadness when I buried my parents and spouse. But also trembled with joy as walked my children down the aisle at their wedding. Yet, they were strong and steady when I needed to help a friend in need, and help carry their burden. They have held children, consoled neighbors, and shook in fists of anger when I didn't understand. They have covered my face, combed my hair, and washed and cleansed the rest of my body. They have been sticky and wet, bent and broken, dried and raw. And to this day when not much of anything else of me works real well these hands hold me up, lay me down, and again continue to fold in prayer. These hands! are the mark of where I've been and the ruggedness of my life. But

more importantly it will be these hands that G-d will reach out and take when He leads me home. And with my hands He will lift me to His side. I will never look at my hands the same again. But I remember the day G-d reached out and took my grandpa's hands and led him home. When my hands are hurt or sore or when I stroke the face of my children and loved ones, I will always think grandpa. I know he has been stroked and caressed and held by the hands of G-d, by the beautiful memories he left behind. End of story.

So while we still can, let's take a few moments to look around us and remember to thank all those that have been the "Hands" of our lives. May it be a sibling, a spouse, a friend, a partner, a coworker, we know who they are. They may have a few wrinkles, put on a few pounds, be a bit scratched up and show signs of wear and tear, but they were always there for us when we needed them. And for that they deserve to always be loved and cherished, even with all the 'wrinkles and scratches'. Reach out to them, let them know how much they mean to you, it will bring a smile to their hearts AND yours.

On Behalf of ALL your Chaplains, may G-d bless you, keep you safe, and always keep you in His loving care. Thanks to each of you, for going out every day and making a difference in people's lives, you DO make a difference and for that we are grateful.

Should you need a shoulder to lean on, an ear to listen, or have some good humor to share, don't hesitate to give us a call.

Compliments of your Police Chaplain, Rabbi Moshe Wolf

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