

# YOU THE MAN; NO, YOU THE MAN

by Jon Erlbaum

- This Week's **RRR** (Relevant Religious Reference): "... **Love your Neighbor like yourself...** " - *Genesis, 25:30*
- This Week's **SSC**(Suitable Secular Citation): " **You the man!" "No, you the Man!" "How can I be the Man when you the Man?" - a dialogue of mutual admiration, found in various forms in various places, such as the movie "Do the Right Thing"**

## YOU THE WOMAN

A beautiful thing happened to me around this time in 2007, and I'm thankful not only that it occurred but that I noticed it! It was actually a "You the Woman" mutual caring exchange (exactly where do I fit into that, you may justifiably wonder), in which two women were selflessly looking out for each other without realizing that the other was doing so. The quick background: quite a few of our Chevra participants had decided to go to Israel for extended learning opportunities. Two of the women who went, named Alina & Rachel, journeyed there together in the early summer for about 5 weeks. On July 24th, which coincided with Tisha B'Av, Alina called me and left a message about Rachel that went something like this: "Rachel just left Israel, but she didn't really didn't want to; she was crying; and I just thought you and Jess (my Wife) could call to comfort her, make sure she has a place for Shabbat, and help her feel better about having to leave Israel...". I was so impressed by what a loving, heartfelt message it was.

## NO, YOU THE WOMAN

Two days later, when Rachel was back in America, she sent me an email which essentially said the following: "Hopefully you or Jess can be in touch with Alina soon, who is still in Israel and is feeling a little lonely. I missed her call yesterday and I'm unable to reach her today; perhaps you or Jess will find some time today just to touch base with her. She has such a big heart and I don't want her feeling sad, lonely, or bored. I heard that Alina has Shabbos plans for this week, but..." When I first

saw Rachel's email in my preview pane, I was expecting her to let us know that she really wanted to speak with us about her own experiences, how she wishes she could still be in Israel, etc., all of which would be quite understandable. While her email did briefly mention those items, Rachel's main focus was on the well-being of her friend Alina! In fact, both of them were looking out in such a beautiful way for the other: making sure we would call the other, making sure the other would be taken care of for Shabbos, and more. I was so touched when I realized what had just happened.

## THE ORIGINAL "CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE"

As I was telling my Wife about these events, we were both reminded of the following story\*:

*"Among the great achievements of (King) Solomon, first place must be assigned to the superb **Temple** built by him. **He was long in doubt as to where he was to build it.** A heavenly voice directed him to go to Mount Zion at night, to a field owned by two brothers jointly. One of the brothers was a bachelor and poor, the other was blessed both with wealth and a large family of children. It was harvesting time. Under cover of night, the poor brother kept adding to the other's heap of grain, for, although he was poor, he thought his brother needed more on account of his large family. The rich brother, in the same clandestine way, added to the poor brother's store, thinking that though he had a family to support, the other was without means. This field, Solomon concluded, which had called forth so remarkable a manifestation of **brotherly love, was the best site for the Temple**, and he bought it."*

## A COMFORTING CONSOLATION (SINCE THIS SHABBOS IS "SHABBOS NACHAMU: THE SHABBOS OF CONSOLATION")

When I realized the similarities between these two uplifting stories, another connection occurred to me: Alina had called me from Israel and set into motion this chain of kindness **ON TISHA B'AV**, the anniversary of the day on which the Temple was destroyed. And according to our sages, what is the metaphysical cause that allowed the Temple to become vulnerable enough to fall? The sin of "baseless hatred" among Jews! In fact, our sages tell us that we are fated to remain in spiritual Exile from the Temple until we collectively rectify the flaw of "baseless hatred" with sufficient acts of loving-kindness.

Thus, it was a tremendous tiding that our chain of kindness performed by our heroines was **initiated on Tisha B'Av, the day of the Temple's destruction: if the original Temple may have been built specifically in a place where brotherly love prevailed, then the acts of mutual caring demonstrated by these wonderful women can certainly be a stepping stone towards our long-awaited redemption** - may it come swiftly in our days!

Have a Wonderful Shabbos! Love, Jon & The Chevra

\*As recounted in [The Legends of the Jews Volume IV: Bible Times and Characters](#), by Louis Ginzberg.

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