



Parashat Chaye Sarah 27 Cheshvan 5784 – November 11, 2023

In these times of radical college campus demonstrations against Israel and Jews, we must evaluate what has gone wrong. The haftarah this week comes from the Book of Kings I. “And his father had never grieved him at any time in saying; Why have you done so? And he was also a very good-looking man, and he was born after Avshalom.”

Where did we go wrong? A past president of Rutgers University put an answer to the question. He wrote, “We were children of poverty who came into affluence. We knew the relationship between disciplined effort and reward. We knew what wanting, doing without, and waiting was like. They have lived with affluence all their lives and have not learned to want, to wait for, or to work for what they enjoy. We grew up in a world where parents said, NO! even when they had some doubt about what was right and wrong. And our parents disciplined us as an act of love.”

Discipline, as an act of love, is a foundation of Jewish tradition. In Mishlei (Proverbs) it is written, “...he that loves his son (children) chastises them early.” Needless to say, King David had an issue with his son Adoniyah. He did not grieve his son means he did not rebuke him and because of that Adoniyah was self-absorbed.

The radical demonstrators (and sad to say, there are Jews among them) have lost (or maybe never had) their perspective. The key to “moral” discipline, as an act of love, is found among parents who hold a strong code of ethics and are willing to affirm that code of ethics by their actions.

Our campuses today are devoid of moral ethics because they were not taught. The students' moral barometer is therefore eschewed. For there to be an ethical understanding, effective discipline needs to take place and it must reflect sound convictions and proper examples.

Good Shabbos!

Rabbi Nathan W. Langer