



Tetzaveh

The Little-Known Origin Of The Printed Double Yud

Have you ever thought about the origin of the printed name of Hashem being Yud Yud? That's how we print Hashem's name in siddurim and in machsurim. But where does it come from?

It was a phenomenon introduced at the time when the printing press came about. There was a desire to print a siddur or a machsur, in a way whereby it wouldn't have the holy name of Hashem in the Torah. So we needed a less holy version.

So where does Yud Yud come from?

In the ספר נחלת חמשה, he gives a beautiful answer. He says it's from the parsha of Tetzaveh. You see, previously in Parshat Terumah, the Torah had said

“וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכְכֶם”
“I will dwell within them”

But in Tetzaveh Hashem says:

“וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל”
“I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel”

It's extra words. What is the message? Well, let's look at 'בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל'. The last letter of בְּנֵי is a Yud. The first letter of יִשְׂרָאֵל is a Yud. So what do we find in the midst of בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל? Yud Yud - the presence of Hashem.

And where do we find large numbers of Jewish people who have gathered together as בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל? When we daven in our shuls. That's why Yud Yud represents Hashem's name in our printed siddurim and machsorim.

The great Hasidic master Reb Naftali of Ropshitz gave a Hasidic angle to this. He said in Hasidic thought, Yud stands for Yid, a Jewish person. So two Yuds are two Yidden. And what does that mean for us? When two Yidden, when two Jews, are close to each other and are united, that is when the presence of Hashem is to be felt. That is when we can say “וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל” Hashem's presence is to be there in the midst of the children of Israel.

This is a very relevant thought at Purim time, because it is during the festival of Purim that we recall a time when there was an attempt to annihilate the Jewish people, which sadly has happened from time to time. And in the midst of it all, the worst possible response for us is to be divided and factionalised within our own nation.

With all these troubles from without, we need to be strong and united within. This is a time for Yidden to come together. For the Yuds to be as one. And if we show strength through unity, there is no doubt that Hashem will always be in our midst.

Shabbat Shalom and Purim Sameach.