



Lost in Translation

By Pam Morris, Early Learning Center director

I have lived in many parts of the United States throughout my life. From the North East, the Southeast and now the southwest I have been a part of many different locales and communities. My educational experience has also been shaped by each of these places where I have lived. And while I am very grateful for all that I have learned, one of my biggest regrets is that I only speak English.

Speaking and understanding a little Hebrew and even less in Spanish and even less in French and Yiddish, all languages that I have studied or been exposed to defines my life. And because of my inadequacies when it comes to other languages, I try to be very careful about my use of the words. Google translate is usually my first resource after my limited knowledge but I then, always, check myself with a native speaker. Now, I am lucky because the languages I need to use, Hebrew and Yiddish and sometimes Spanish are all spoken by people with whom I am close.

Misusing a word or phrase in another language, to me, would be such an insult or at the very least, rude. And so, when I hear others use phrases without knowing the meaning, it really bothers me.

Now you need to know that I give people the benefit of the doubt. I automatically assume that you, or the person who is making a mistake, doesn't know any better. As my children know, it is just something that you don't know yet. Some might say that this is all tied to my search for goodness, for the positive. It isn't that a person is incompetent, she just doesn't know the subject, the correct way to do something yet.

And so when I hear the protesters using a phrase that begins "From the river" I want with every fiber of my being to believe that they just don't know what it means. It's words that they have heard used and think it sounds catchy.

Because if they knew that the phrase means the eradication of the country of Israel and the eradication of the Jewish people, that wouldn't be their chant of choice would it? Would those college students at those prestigious universities chant about the destruction of any entire group of people? That is unconscionable.

So I choose to believe the best in people and hope and pray they just don't know what they are saying. They just don't understand the meaning of their words, yet. Because if they did, they wouldn't say these things.

Is "Never Again" now?

Shabbat Shalom.