

The Daily Portion **- Sivan Rahav Meir**

On self-protection and redemption

Translation by Yehoshua Siskin

I am still trying to digest the number of participants and its significance. More than 12,000 girls and mothers registered during the last three days for a special zoom meeting on self-protection as part of the Nifgashot workshop series.

Ayala Barnea from the Latet Peh (speak up) organization that offers programs on self-protection for children and teenagers, opened the session with a question that surprised me: "What are the most important values in your lives, values that you will always preserve?" What's the connection to self-protection, I thought to myself as, meanwhile, thousands of answers appeared in the chat box: family, friendship, joyfulness, caring, volunteering.

"You see?" Ayala said, "Look at how much good there is in the world. So many good values and good people. Most of the world is good. This is where we begin. And one of the important values that help preserve the good in the world is to guard the

body's privacy, whether it's our body or someone else's."

And then she gave a series of rules for self-protection, including these two:

1. No one has the right to touch us in a private place. It does not matter who it is, even if it's a family member, a famous person, a teacher, or the big brother of a friend.

2. We are at an age when it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between right and wrong. Therefore, we should become familiar with the word "confusing". If something confusing happens that we are uncertain about, it is necessary to simply tell an adult whom we trust (and then each girl was asked to think of five adults to whom she could turn).

I looked at Ayala as she was giving the girls exercises, I looked at the thousands of girls and mothers from Israel, London, the U.S., Russia, and many other places. I understood that the quantity of participants testified to the importance of the subject: Our session was a statement, a shout, an expression of a deep longing for change. When we learn this week's Torah portion, Bo, it is customary to say that every generation needs to leave Egypt, to go out from slavery to

freedom. It seems to me that uprooting this problem is essential to uprooting ourselves from confusion to redemption.

May everyone have a good month with much good news.