

Family TORAH JOURNAL

ST. LOUIS

KOLLEL

PARSHA PERCEPTIONS

RABBI SAM GOLDENHERSH ESQ.



In the middle of this week's *parsha* there are two strange letters; two upside down *nuns*. *Rashi* comments that the upside down *nuns* are to separate between two sections of sin. The first section of sin was the fact that they traveled from Mount Sinai "a three day journey." The Talmud explains that their departure from Mount Sinai was like "a child running away from a schoolhouse." The *Ramban* (Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman 1194-1270) adds that they were afraid that if they stayed at Mount Sinai any longer, Hashem would have given them additional *mitzvos*. The second section of sin is that of the complainers. *Rashi* explains that their complaint centered on the fact that they had to travel so far during the three days of travel. The *Ramban* comments that the reason for the separation of the sections of sin was so that there would not be three consecutive sections of punishment that would establish a *chazakah* (?????) of sins. The third section of sin is the murmuring of the *eiruv rav*, the group of Egyptians that joined the Jewish nation in their exodus of Egypt, that prompted the Jewish people to desire and complain regarding the lack of meat.

Rabbi Yissocher Frand asks, if the reason for the upside down *nuns* is to prevent three consecutive sections of punishment, they should have come between the second and third incidents to effectively stop the *chazakah* from taking effect. Rabbi Frand explains that Hashem is particularly "annoyed" by inconsistency or hypocrisy. Hashem will deal less harshly with a person who may be bad, but who is at least consistent in his evil ways. However, a person who demonstrates hypocrisy and inconsistency really upsets Hashem. This is reminiscent of the *Midrash* regarding *Yosef's* first question to his brothers after revealing himself to them: "Is my father still alive?" The *Midrash* comments: "Woe to us from the Day of Judgment. Woe to us from the day of humiliation. The Tribes had no answer to *Yosef's* rebuke." What was the rebuke? It was *Yosef* pointing out their inconsistency. Their whole exchange with *Yosef* had been that they could not bring *Binyamin* because if they separated him from his father, their poor old father would die. *Yosef* questioned them, "If you are so worried about your poor father, why were you not worried about him 20 years ago, when you separated him from his favorite son?"

(continued on next page)

MOMENTS OF GREATNESS

RABBI SHLOMO EISENBERG



Living in Communist Russia was definitely not a picnic for anyone, but it was especially difficult for an Orthodox Jew. Performing a Bris Milah, circumcision, was outlawed and considered a terrible crime. A young Jewish woman gave birth to a son, and because the child was unwell, the bris was pushed off until the child was ten months old. After the secretive and private bris ceremony concluded, the mother ran over to her child, hugged and kissed her son, and promptly fainted on the floor. The small group of guests present quickly revived her and asked her what had happened. She said that she was fine and explained her fainting spell as follows: "When I gave birth I knew it would be difficult to perform a bris in this Communist country, as I would need to find a mohel and secret location. Additionally, the baby was sick and I understood that it would be a while until he was healthy enough to go through with the circumcision. I was afraid that I would lose my passion and determination for arranging the bris as time went on and would lose the courage to go through with it. I therefore took it upon myself not to hug or kiss my child until I had performed the bris. Finally after ten months of waiting, upon embracing my son for the first time, I couldn't help but faint." Would we have the courage and determination to go against our basic human emotions for the sake of Hashem and His Torah?

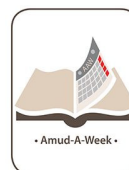


UPCOMING WEEK'S SCHEDULE: YEAR 3, WEEK 8—BRACHOS 52A

Rabbi Yonason Goldson
R' Avi Spira

Maggid shiur of the week for the Amud: R' Aaron Lefton

For more info, or to sign up to get the weekly video shiurim please contact Rabbi Yaakov Berkowitz



Sponsored by Rabbi Yaakov and Rivka Berkowitz for a refuah shelaima for Mordechai Dovid ben Leah—a 42-year old father of nine diagnosed with a brain tumor

ZMANIM: CANDLELIGHTING: 8:01 PM SOF ZMAN KRIAS SHEMA: M.A. 8:42 AM GRA": 9:18 AM

SHABBOS ENDS: 9:06 PM (RABBEINU TAM: 9:33 PM)

ALEF TO TAV: INSIGHTS INTO THE ALEF-BEIS



Letter: Hei
Numerical value: 5
Spelling: Hei, Alef



The Talmud teaches (Tractate *Menachos* 29b) that the letter *hei*, unlike the *ches* (ח) which means sin, has an opening on the side to encourage one who would like to return to Hashem, as if to say, “the door is open”. Furthermore, the two letters that make up the form of the letter *hei*, *dalet* and *yud*, spell the word *yad*, hand, to represent Hashem, so to speak, holding out His “Hand” ready to accept one who wants to return to following the Torah’s ways. This may also be an explanation of the verse (*Bereishis* Ch. 2 v. 4) “these are the products of the heaven and earth (בְּרֵאשִׁית) when they were created”. The small *hei*, as explained in “*Osiyos D’Rabi Akiva*”, is alluding to the fact that Hashem “created the world with the letter *hei*”. The verse says “*olam chesed yiboneh*”, and as *Rabbeinu Yona* of Girona writes, one of the greatest acts of *chesed* from Hashem, is our ability to rectify otherwise irrevocable wrong, with *teshuva*, repentance, as represented by the letter *hei*. Hashem should help all of us, in the areas that we need to work on, to be able to make our way through that opening, and get back to our true home, in the embrace of Hashem and His Torah.

PARSHA PERCEPTIONS (CONT.)

Returning to our *parsha*; what was the Jewish people's second sin? They complained, “We are traveling too far”. The significance of that complaint cannot be appreciated without considering the next section. They were not concerned about traveling so quickly when they fled Mount Sinai like a child running away from the schoolhouse, when they were worried about receiving more commandments. No one complained in that situation, yet a few days later, they are worried that they are going too far, too fast. This is inconsistent. It is hypocritical. When they were acting for themselves, it was not too difficult, but when it was for Hashem, it was too far, too fast?! This is why the pause is between the first and second sins, and not after the second. The glaring inconsistency in their deeds is manifest in the sharp contrast between these two sections. In order to dull the contrast we needed a break between these two sections.

We must always bear in mind the hypocrisy of glaring inconsistencies in our deeds. We are inconsistent when we complain that we do not have enough money for this charity or for that religious need and then we go spend great sums on other things that are perhaps not so important. Hashem can understand that a person may not have money, and in fact the *Torah* excuses one facing circumstances beyond his control. However, when we have money for our needs but not for Hashem’s *mitzvos*, that is unacceptable. The same applies when a person says that he has no time to learn or to do *chesed*, but has time for personal endeavors. Not having time is a reasonable excuse, but when one has time for mundane matters and not *mitzvah* matters, we are not dealing with lack of time, but with hypocrisy.

Rabbi Goldenhersh learned in the Kollel from 2006 to 2012 and is currently an Attorney Advisor for the Social Security Administration.

KOLLEL KASHA KORNER

RABBI YAAKOV SILVERMAN



Which four people in Sefer Bereishis share the same name?

Last weeks question: What are two grandfather and grandson combinations mentioned in Shemonei Esrei? (Answer: Avraham and Yaakov, Adom and Enosh)

I DIDN'T
KNOW THAT!

RABBI YITZCHAK KOWALSKY



Q. I have a bookcase which I used to use for *seforim*. I recently purchased new ones. Am I allowed to use the old one to hold children's toys?

A. The *Shulchan Aruch* (OC 154:3) rules that *tashmishei kedusha* - those items which directly serve the holy item, have a degree of sanctity and may not be downgraded to use for other uses. The *Mishneh Brurah* (ad loc) writes that our closets and bookcases which serve our *seforim* which are bound in a book form, have a status of *tashmish d'tashmish d'kedusha* - items which serve a secondary help to the holy item. Therefore their *halachic* status is not as severe, and they may be used for mundane purposes.

Q. Do I need to turn off the lights when reciting *havdalah*? I can see the *havdalah* candle even with the lights on.

A. The *Shulchan Aruch* (OC 298:4) writes based on the *Gemara* that one only makes a *bracha* on the *havdalah* candle when he is close enough to distinguish between two coins from different countries (which look similar). The *Mishneh Brurah* (ad loc) writes therefore it is appropriate for one who is fulfilling his obligation by listening to *havdalah* from another, to get close enough to the *havdalah* candle to fulfill this obligation. Based on this, it would be appropriate to turn off the lights so that others can easily fulfill their obligation without crowding the candle holder.

Consult your Rav for a final ruling.

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—Mimi Sabol



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FLEISHPHOBIA: DO YOU ALWAYS NEED TO WAIT AFTER EATING MEAT? (MEN)

MRS. SHOSHANA KOWALSKY-
WANDERING JEWS: TRAVELING THEN AND TRAVELING NOW (WOMEN)

RABBI YAAKOV SILVERMAN- LIVING LIFE BETWEEN THE NUN'S : UPSIDE DOWN LETTERS IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD (MEN & WOMEN)

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