

Cincinnati Torah מס'ני

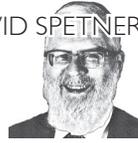
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Acharei Mos–K'doshim

A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

I'm Right Here!

RABBI DOVID SPETNER



TRUE STORY: A FRIEND OF MINE VISITED A SHUL on the Shabbos of Parashas Bo. After the Torah reading and just before the rabbi's sermon, a loudmouthed fellow came in and sat near my friend. As the rabbi began to speak about the Jews leaving Egypt, the loudmouth blurted out, "Hey! Why's the rabbi talking about Pesach in the middle of January?!"

With this in mind, I would like to share a thought about Yom Kippur.

On the morning of Yom Kippur, we read from the beginning of Acharei Mos (part of this week's Torah portion), which details everything that was to be done that day in the *Beis Hamikdash* (the Temple).

In the afternoon, at Mincha, we again

read from Acharei Mos, discussing all the prohibited relationships, incestuous and otherwise. This seems like a strange choice for such a holy and lofty day.

The *Rishonim* (medieval authorities) address this choice in various ways. Rashi explains that the flesh is weak, and it is an exhortation to desist from these types of sins. Tosafos write that this exhortation is needed particularly on a holiday, when someone may see members of the opposite gender dressed in their holiday finery. Tosafos also suggest that the subject matter is a metaphor—just as we are careful not to expose the "shame" (*erva*, in Hebrew) of those forbidden to us, we ask Hashem not to expose the shame of our sins.

I would like to offer an additional explanation.

Some *ba'alei k'ri'a* (those who perform the Torah reading in shul) have the custom that if an *aliya* (one person's part of the reading; there are seven on a regular Shabbos) ends with Hashem's name, they end it on a high note. One Yom Kippur Mincha, as our *ba'al korei* ended on that high note, it made

— CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE —>

THE RABBI WAS ASKED

ADAPTED BY RABBI DOVID TZVI MEISSNER
FROM *ME'AH SHE'ARIM*
BY RABBI YITZCHOK ZILBERSTEIN

A hospital raffled off a new, expensive baby carriage every day to new mothers who had given birth there. One day, Rachel was informed that she had won the raffle. She immediately responded that just the day before, she had received a stroller as a present; they should give the prize to a different mother who could benefit from it. The staff told her that the raffle wasn't just to benefit those in need and, therefore, she could sell the stroller and keep the

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MAZAL TOV!

...to Rabbi Mechael & Kayla Soroka and family, on the birth of a boy. 🎉

COMING UP

- "Everyday Holiness" KWL women's class, with Mrs. Aviva Minster—this Shabbos, at the Travis residence

TIDBITS OF CINCINNATI JEWISH HISTORY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

On *11 Iyar, 5699 (1939)*, the kosher kitchen at Jewish Hospital came into use. This followed years of advocacy on the part of Rabbi Eliezer Silver, and it is considered one of his major achievements in Cincinnati. Within several months of his arrival in 1931, Rabbi Silver had sent letters to the superintendent and president of Cincinnati's Jewish Hospital, inquiring about adding a kosher kitchen. After being rebuffed, he contacted other spiritual leaders in Cincinnati, who responded that he should rather start his own hospital. When Jewish Hospital added a new building in 1939, Rabbi Silver finally received a "yes," and he raised twelve-thousand dollars to pay for the new kitchen. 🎉

SOURCE: RAKEFFET-ROTHKOFF, AARON. *THE SILVER ERA*. FELDHEIM, 1981, PP. 81-82.

Cincinnati Community Kollel

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THE RABBI WAS ASKED

CONTINUED

money. Rachel, however, stood her ground and didn't accept.

The hospital held a second drawing, and a different mother won. But before the staff had informed the second winner, Rachel came back and said she had changed her mind. She wanted the carriage after all, since she'd found out she could easily sell it. The staff gave her the carriage. Rachel only later found out that the hospital had made a second raffle and a different mother had won. At that point, she asked her rabbi:

Q "Am I allowed to change my mind? On the one hand, when I told the hospital to give it to someone else, perhaps that was considered a "mitzvah vow," which one is not allowed to retract. Or would we say that since, in Jewish Law, what a woman acquires belongs to her husband, and my husband was unaware of the exchange, the vow is not binding?"

[A relevant note: Rachel took care of the finances in her home, with her husband's consent.]

A When Rachel told the staff to give the carriage to someone else who needed it, that was indeed a vow to charity. The hospital then automatically reclaimed it, and she wasn't entitled to retract her offer. (See Talmud, Bava Kama 36b.)

A woman's acquisitions, by default, belong to her husband, so one would think she has no power to give them away. However, that is not the case.

- In our scenario, where the woman runs the family's finances, she may give even large donations to charity without her husband's knowledge, for she is considered to be acting as his agent. (See *Yad Avraham*, gloss to Y.D. 248:4). Therefore, Rachel had the right to give up the carriage, even though it was expensive, and give it to those in need.
- Furthermore, her husband's implicit permission might not have even been necessary. When the hospital staff informed Rachel that she had won the stroller, she immediately responded that she didn't want it—so she never acquired it to begin with, and consequently, neither did her husband. 🕊

GREAT ACTS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE

KAILY RAY, AN AUSTRALIAN, DECIDED SHE LIVED too far from her daughter and granddaughter, who were in Nevada—Fernley, Nevada, to be exact. So she packed up and moved.

She didn't know of any other Jews in Fernley; in fact, her granddaughter asked if there were any other Jews in the *world*—because she had never seen any!

Wishing she could show her granddaughter other Jews, Kaily heard about the Shab-

bos Project, and she had an idea. She posted an online message, saying, "If you're Jewish in Fernley, and you want to join a Shabbos meal, respond to this message."

To her happy surprise, several people responded. They got together and made a Shabbos meal. And her granddaughter got to see that yes, indeed, there are other Jews in the world. 🕊



I'm Right Here! CONTINUED

me realize that every aliya ended with "Ani Hashem—I am Hashem!"

The Gemara in Rosh Hashanah tells us that Hashem is closer to us during the *Aseres Yemei Teshuva* (from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur), than He is throughout the year. All the more so on Yom Kippur itself—and exceedingly so at Mincha, just before Ne'ila. Perhaps we read from the end of *Acharei Mos* because Hashem declares to us, at the end of each aliya, "I am Hashem—I'm right here!" When we're about to daven the last

tefillos of Yom Kippur, we must fully realize that Hashem is right there and accessible. 🕊

A PARASHA Q 4 U

RABBI DOVID SPETNER

Which two of the three cardinal sins must one keep away from, to achieve *k'dusha* (holiness)?

Bring this question to the Shabbos table and see who knows the answer! 🕊