

## A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

### For Shame!

The saga of Yosef and his brothers comes to a culmination in this week's *parasha* with Yosef's words, "I am Yosef, is my father still alive?" As the Torah records, the brothers were too ashamed to speak. Classically, one feels ashamed after knowing of something that he or she has done that causes loss of estimation in the eyes of another. This makes the brothers' shame somewhat interesting. They all knew what they were doing when they sold Yosef to Egypt, and obviously Yosef was also aware of their deeds. So what was the source of this shame? Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz offers a moving explanation. The brothers were not experiencing disgrace by another, but rather a different feeling of shame altogether.



RABBI  
MOSHETZVI  
CRYSTAL

They experienced the feeling of being ashamed of themselves, an entirely personal emotion that is caused by what you yourself know, unrelated to what anyone knows about you. They were not ashamed because someone else had taken a peek into their history. Rather, they looked inward and realized that their actions, which at the time had seemed appropriate for the circumstance, had been far below what they should have done. They had thought that they should get rid of Yosef because they saw him as a threat to their spiritual existence; as such, they thought that their father's pain was justified for their sake. Now they saw that their motivations had not been completely pure and the ends did not justify the means. This was their shame.

The Jewish people are praised for three character traits. One of them is the ability to feel this shame. We have the power to look ourselves in the mirror and privately say, "I am better than this." Because of it, we can dig into ourselves and pull out reserves of strength to accomplish amazing things. We have the ability to pick ourselves up from the deepest morass because we can look inside and say, "This is not who I really am, I am so much more." 🕒

### Mazal Tov to

the **Chavrei HaKollel** on their completion of the laws of **Niddah, Meseches Niddah, and on passing Rabbi Moshe Heinemann's bechina on the laws of Tevilah** as well 🕒



The Yungeleit saying the Hadran

### A PARASHA Q 4 U

RABBI DOVID SPETNER

What inanimate object in this week's *parasha* alludes to an animate object.

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

### THE RABBI WAS ASKED

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

A certain *shul* owned an expensive *Megillas Esther* which had been the object of many attempted thefts. An idea was brought up to drill a small hole in the *aron* (ark) and place a security camera there, enabling the recording of the thieves.

**Q** Are they permitted to install the camera, or would that constitute a disgrace of the holy *aron*, compromising the honor it deserves?

**A** I asked this question to my father-in-law, Rav Elyashiv, who answered me that any action done to safeguard *tefillin* or a Torah scroll may be done, even if some disgrace to them is entailed. For example, the Talmud (*Brachos* 23a) rules that one may even bring *tefillin* into a bathroom to protect them. Rashi (*ibid*; 24a) explains that protecting them from mice, thieves, or the like is more important than avoiding their disgrace. Since he is attempting to protect them, the action done would not be considered disgraceful.

Similarly, *Shulchan Aruch* (Y.D. 282;1,3) rules that one must honor a Torah scroll exceedingly. But if one is afraid of thieves, he may place them on top of his donkey and ride on it! Here too, it would be permissible to drill a hole in the *aron* to guard the *Megilla*.

However, Rav Elyashiv points out, we only find permissibility to do a potentially disgraceful action to the *tefillin* or Torah scroll directly, for their own protection. In our scenario, however, making the hole in the *aron* wouldn't be for its own benefit, rather for the *Megilla*'s, so we can't

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## THE RABBI WAS ASKED

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extrapolate the permissibility from the former cases to ours.

Nevertheless, said Rav Elyashiv, if there's a concern that if the thieves would be successful stealing the exquisite *Megilla*, they would attempt stealing Torah scrolls in other places, we would permit the installation of the camera.

We may add that the greatest honor for the Torah is honoring and upholding its commandments (see *Ramba"m Hil. Sanhedrin*, 24:10). Therefore, installing a camera in the *aron* to catch thieves and teach them to observe the Torah Laws, specifically the commandment "do not steal," would not constitute a disgrace to the Torah. 🕒

## GLIMPSES OF THE KOLLEL



## IT HAD TO BE HASHEM

*The Japanese consul, Sempo Sugihara, has been asked to provide travel visas to all Jews who hold "visas" for Curacao and Sugihara and cabled Tokyo for instruction...*

A response from Tokyo was not immediately forthcoming, and understanding the plight the Jews were in, Sugihara decided to act on his own and began to issue the travel visas. Sugihara was helped in stamping passports by his German anti-Nazi aide named Goetke and a yeshivah student named Moshe Zupnik. Nine days later, the response from Tokyo came through. Sugihara was told that all visa rules should be upheld, which meant that the applicants for a visa would have to prove that they had the money for travel until their final destination and to pay for their time in Japan and a valid end visa. Sugihara

decided to disobey orders and continue to issue the travel visas. The cables from Tokyo did not stop, warning him to comply with regulations. Sugihara cabled back trying to explain the extraneous circumstances that these Jews were in, but the reply was the same: NO. Sugihara ignored the subsequent cables as well and would issue approximately 3,500 transit visas over the course of the summer months until the Soviets forced him to leave Kovno, eventually stamping any paper presented to him whether it was a passport or not. Even when he was on the train to leave town, he was handing visas out the window until the train pulled away

from the station. The next step was possibly the most audacious: to ask the Soviets to issue travel visas to allow them to cross the Soviet Union on the 5,772-mile-long Trans-Siberian railroad to the eastern port of Vladivostok in order to catch a boat to Japan. The Soviet Union did not look kindly upon anyone who tried to leave the "fatherland." Additionally, they

were still officially in a state of war with the country of Poland and it was not likely that they would be interested in letting citizens of Poland travel freely across their country  
*To be continued...* 🕒

## BEYOND ELLIS ISLAND

### THE TRAILBLAZERS, TRIALS, & TRIUMPHS OF AMERICAN JEWRY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

With its growing population, the American Jewish community became increasingly influential in the United States' diplomatic relationship with Russia. In 1893, the State Department received several complaints of American Jews being denied visas to travel to Russia because of their religion. There were also incidents of Jewish American citizens evicted from St. Petersburg because it was outside the "Pale of Settlement" to which Russian Jews were confined. This was difficult for Jews who had emigrated and become American citizens, and now tried to visit their immediate families or other relatives in Russia. However, protest from State Department officials seemed to be ignored by their Russian counterparts, who responded that they were not obligated to treat Jews from friendly nations any better than they treated Jewish citizens of their own country. Discussion of how to proceed continued for years. America believed it had a bargaining chip by threatening to do away with the treaty of commerce between the two countries which had been in place since 1832. In 1911, a lengthy hearing in the U.S. House of Representatives resulted in a 301 to 1 vote to end the commerce treaty with Russia. The Senate approved the House's action several days later, and a joint resolution was adopted calling for termination of the treaty if nothing was done to ameliorate the situation within that year. The treaty was indeed terminated. 🕒

SOURCES: "United States Relations with Russia: Establishment of Relations to World War Two." U.S. Department of State Archive.  
United States. Congress. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs. "Termination of the Treaty of 1832 Between the United States and Russia." U.S. Government Printing Office, 1911.

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