

A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

Depth Of Feeling

The Torah tells us that one who steals an ox and slaughters it must pay five times the value of the ox he stole. However, if he steals a sheep and slaughters it, he pays four times the value of the sheep he stole (*Vayikra* 29:37). Rashi brings a *Mechilta* to explain the discrepancy between the obligatory compensation for an ox versus the compensation for a sheep. Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakai says that G-d was taking the emotional conditions of the theft into account. When an ox is stolen, the thief walks the ox off the property and into his possession. When the thief steals a sheep, he carries out the sheep on his shoulders, and in doing so suffers disgrace. G-d deducts from his compensatory fees because of this emotional suffering he incurred while perpetrating the sin.

This basic lesson in sensitivity to another's plight is powerful. He is in the middle of both earning money and committing a crime. Yet, G-d sees the human, the *Yid*, suffering.

R' Yerucham Levovitz peels back another layer. "I've seen butchers carrying sheep on their shoulders, and I have not seen

unusual embarrassment." How much more would it be unlikely that a thief would feel embarrassed from doing so! We must conclude that there is some slight element of embarrassment the thief feels, and this barely detectably feeling is what Hashem is factoring in. Electrifying.

Now we proceed to the obvious conclusion: We must be concerned for the dignity of our fellow Jew to a far greater extent than we thought! A less obvious point, but something worthy of note in R' Yerucham's *vort*, is to observe what we are willing to do for money. How much more must we be willing to endure to fulfill Hashem's will! 🙏

A PARASHA Q 4 U

RABBI DOVID SPETNER

We are told that an animal that kills a human must be stoned to death. The Torah then tells us not to eat its flesh. Isn't it already forbidden to eat because it was not slaughtered properly?

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



RABBI
 EZRA
 STETTIN

THE RABBI WAS ASKED

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

A certain prison holding dangerous criminals held a few Jewish prisoners as well. The chaplain noticed a group of the prisoners praying, led by a gentile *chazzan*! This gentile learned about Judaism and wanted to convert, but was then detained for murder.

Q Should the chaplain stop the gentile *chazzan* from leading the prayers, or not, specifically because the *chazzan* influences the others to come pray, and when he summons them, they come? (Note: The *chazzan* is a strong, powerful man and the prison rabbi fears severe repercussions if he protests.)

A It would appear that he need not protest. The Talmud (*Brachos* 51b) states one doesn't answer *amen* to a gentile's blessing unless he hears the blessing in its entirety. This ruling is codified in *Shulchan Aruch* (O.C. 215,2 in *Rema*). Although *Bi'ur Halacha* (ibid) quotes Rambam's opinion that one never answers *amen* to a gentile's blessing, he rules that one may indeed answer *amen* since there are *halachic* authorities who rule that one may answer *amen* even without hearing the entire blessing, so it suffices that we at least require one to hear the whole blessing to answer *amen*.

In light of the above, it is permitted to answer to the *chazzan's* *brachos*, as if he was an individual making a blessing.

Rambam (*Melachim* 10;10) writes: We don't withhold a *ben Noach* (gentile) who wants to perform a Biblical *mitzvah* in order to receive reward from performing it properly, and if he brings an *Olah* offering, we accept it from him. We see from his words that one need not prevent a gentile who wishes to pray,

➡ CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE ➡



Sponsorship & feedback:
parasha@cincynollel.org

Sponsored by
 Mitch Liberman

Cincinnati Torah
 is distributed weekly
 to local shuls
 and the community
 e-mail list.



THE RABBI WAS ASKED

CONTINUED

and the prisoners may answer *amen*, and perhaps *amen yihe shmei rabbah*, and *Borchu* as well.

Radvaz (ibid) writes that, regarding certain *mitzvos* that have special sanctity and purity, like *Tefillin*, *Sefer Torah*, and *Mezuzah*, his inclination is to be stringent and prohibit a gentile from performing them. Based on this, we should withhold the gentile *chazzan* from being a *ba'al koreh* (reader of the Torah scroll) and from putting on *Tefillin*. 🕍

IT HAD TO BE HASHEM

Pearl Harbor has been attacked and the United States is now at war with Japan...

The majority of Jews who found themselves now in Shanghai were without means of supporting themselves and were relying on foreign aid to survive. Until Pearl Harbor, support could be sent from the Jewish Aid organization, the Joint Distribution Committee, or from the *Vaad Hatzalah*, directly to the refugees. Now that Japan was an enemy nation, money could no longer be sent using normal channels, as sending money was considered “trade” with the enemy. The JDC refused to find other channels to send money because it was illegal under American law. Not only that, even communication was almost cut off because sending telegrams to America was not permitted by the Japanese. The leaders of the Jewish community in Shanghai turned to the leaders of Switzerland’s community for help, as it was a neutral country. Still, because of restricted communication, all the needs of the refugees had to be sent in code until Japanese restrictions eased a little while later. From Switzerland, the ones to take

GLIMPSSES OF THE KOLLEL



on the cause of the refugees in Shanghai were the indomitable couple, Yitzchak and Recha Sternbuch, who were already totally consumed with saving as many of their brethren in Europe as was humanly possible. The first action they took was to make an emergency appeal to the Jews of Switzerland to send funds as soon as possible. Then they formed an organization, HIJEFS, so that their activities on the behalf of those in Shanghai could receive wider recognition. HIJEFS stood for *Hilfsverein für Judische Flüchtlinge in Shanghai*, or Relief Association for Jewish Refugees in Shanghai, in English. Being representatives of an official organization gave them more clout. The *Vaad Hatzalah* worked to find a way to send money to Sternbuch that would not

be blocked by the State Department. The plan was finally hit upon through contacts in the Polish consulate in America. They would wire money to the Polish embassy in Bern, Switzerland, and then Mrs. Sternbuch would send the money through the International Red Cross or the Swiss consul in Shanghai to the refugees. All messages to the refugees about even how the money should be distributed was sent in code so that the Japanese would not find out that the source of money was really America. Close to a million dollars was sent this way to Shanghai. Even though this crisis was averted, danger still lurked for the Jews taking refuge in Shanghai. *To be continued...* 🕍

BEYOND ELLIS ISLAND

THE TRAILBLAZERS, TRIALS, & TRIUMPHS OF AMERICAN JEWRY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

Among the pioneers of Eastern European *yeshiva*-style learning in America were Rabbi Yehuda Heschel HaLevi Levenberg, a student of the Slobodka Yeshiva, and Slabodka’s illustrious leader, Rabbi Nosson Zvi Finkel. Rabbi Levenberg was still learning in Slabodka as a married man when he traveled to America to raise funds on behalf of his *yeshiva*. He was offered a pulpit in Jersey City, New Jersey, and so he chose to stay in America. After living in Jersey City for several years, he went on to have an even greater impact in his next position as Rabbi and later Chief Rabbi of New Haven, Connecticut. Aside from his rabbinical duties and community initiatives such as founding a *Vaad Haair*, Rabbi Levenberg also founded the *yeshiva Beis Medrash LeRabbonim* in 1923 as a replica of the *yeshivos* of Europe, the first of its kind in America. While in New Haven, the *yeshiva* enjoyed a measure of success with several accomplished students, including Rabbi Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg. After seventeen years of serving the New Haven community, Rabbi Levenberg accepted a pulpit in Cleveland and brought the *yeshiva* with him. A new member joined the staff, Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchak Ruderman, who would go on to be a major influence on American Torah Jewry. Rabbi Levenberg and the *yeshiva*’s move to Cleveland did not end well, as Rabbi Levenberg dealt with much strife and was even mistakenly arrested in connection with the bombing of a poultry market! The stress of the position took a heavy toll on Rabbi Levenberg, and he passed away in his mid-fifties, while his *yeshiva* folded without its leader. 🕍

SOURCE: Levine, Dr. Yitzchak. *Rabbi Yehuda Heschel Levenberg (1884 – 1938)*. 2017.

Cincinnati Community Kollel

2241 Losantiville Avenue, Cincinnati OH 45237 • 513-631-1118 • kollel@shul.net • cincykollel.org

Please remember the Kollel with a gift in your will, trust, retirement account, or life insurance policy.



CREATE YOUR JEWISH
LEGACY