

A PARASHA THOUGHT

[No] Time to Mourn

WHEN B'NEI YISRAEL ACCEPTED THE Torah unconditionally, Hashem decorated them with special crowns. Then, less than six weeks later, they violated their commitment with the sin of the Golden Calf.

Hashem said to Moshe, "...I will not go in your midst, because you are an obstinate people..."

The people heard this bad news; they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments.

Hashem said to Moshe, "Say to B'nei Yisrael: 'You are an obstinate people... Remove your adornments now...'"

B'nei Yisrael [then] stripped themselves of their ornaments from Mount Chorev. (33:1-6)

Why did Hashem need to tell Moshe twice that the people were obstinate? And why did Hashem tell them to take them off their crowns, if they already had?

Rabbi Shimon Schwab, ז"ל, (*Ma'ayan Beis haSho'eiva*) also points out that, over the course of this passage, there's a shift: First the Torah refers to the Jews as "ha'am, the people," then as "B'nei Yisrael." Why?

Rabbi Schwab answers all of these questions by explaining that the Torah is talking about two different groups. "The people" refers to those who had actually worshipped the Golden Calf. They acknowledged their guilt; they mourned. Mourners don't wear jewelry, so they didn't wear their crowns. Everyone else, "B'nei Yisrael," felt no need to mourn because they hadn't worshipped the Calf, and they kept their adornments on. But they were mistaken. Hashem told Moshe that they were also guilty, because they hadn't protested—so they too must remove their crowns.

Rav Moshe Feinstein, ז"ל, offers a different perspective. He says the whole passage is about the entire people. Everyone felt bad about the sin of the Calf, and they all took off their crowns. However, they now made a second mistake: They mourned.

GUEST CONTRIBUTOR
RABBI ALTER RAUBVOGEL

In *Kol Ram*, Rabbi Feinstein explains that this mourning was because they didn't see how they could possibly erase the blemish of their sin. They gave up. They stopped repenting.

In *Darash Moshe* (Part II), Rabbi Feinstein adds that giving up on repentance, and resigning oneself to a compromised level of spirituality, was dangerous. Who could guarantee that they wouldn't sin again, and then feel compelled to live with even worse situations?

Either way, by not repenting or by resigning themselves to decline, they were renegeing on the commitment they had made at *Chorev* (Sinai)—and they no longer deserved their crowns.

What can we learn from this?

Rabbi Schwab might say that it demonstrates the responsibility we have for our fellow Jews' relationship with Hashem.

Rabbi Feinstein says that we should never give up on becoming better—closer to Hashem, greater in Torah and *mitzvos*. And if we do occasionally stumble, we must have faith that Hashem will always accept heartfelt repentance and bring us back. 🕊️

THE RABBI WAS ASKED
ON THE PARASHA

THIS WEEK WITH
RABBI YITZCHAK PREIS

Ki Sisa

Q. When discussing the *mitzvah* of *aliya l'regel* (pilgrimage to the Temple on the major holidays), Hashem promises that our borders will not be invaded while the border towns are vacated for the holidays. But, back in *Mishpatim*, when we were first told about this *mitzvah*, no similar assurance was mentioned. It seems ironic that post *cheit ha'eigel* (Golden Calf) we are treated as being on a loftier state and have greater Divine protection than before! Why?

A. The *Meshech Chochma* explains that this new promise of protection is actually reflective of our *reduced* state at this juncture. Sans this sin, we would have been recipients of the original *luchos* (tablets) and we would have been elevated to a spiritual elevation that would have made border security superfluous – all the time. It was only due to our spiritual fall that we were susceptible to attack in general, thereby requiring an infusion of Divine Protection when our borders would be abandoned on the holidays.

Tetzaveh

Q. The very beginning of *Tetzaveh* describes Ahron and his sons as being in charge of kindling the Menorah. But it is only in the *pesukim* (verses) that follow this section that Ahron and his sons are to be chosen as *Kohanim*. Why this order?

➡ CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE ➡

KOLLEL DIRSHU
LOOKS FORWARD TO STARTING

**MASECHES
CHAGIGA**

ON WEDNESDAY FEB 23

The Dirshu chaburah meets daily, early AM @ the kollel and has built in chazara (review), voluntary tests, and stipend options.

For those currently learning Daf Yomi this could be a great way to reinforce gain mastery of a current Masechta!

For information or assistance with finding a chavrusah, please contact RabbiPreis@CincyKollel.org

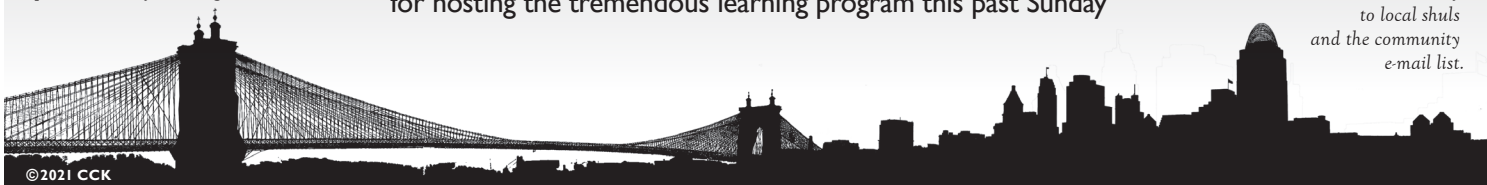
Sponsorship & feedback:

parasha@cincykollel.org

Sponsored in appreciation to the Kollel
for hosting the tremendous learning program this past Sunday

Cincinnati Torah

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



THE RABBI WAS ASKED ON THE PARASHA

CONTINUED

A. Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l, answers that the Menorah represents Torah's "light" (wisdom) and each of the nuances of the Menorah (purity of the material, patiently igniting each wick, etc.) provide instruction for the Torah educator. Ahron's deeds reflected his being a teacher par excellence and made him particularly suited for this *mitzvah*. Rav Moshe suggests that it was in fact due to his playing that role that he merited the other aspects of *kehunah* (priesthood). 🕊️

Something always bugged you about the upcoming parasha (or last week's)? Ask! Submit a question on the parasha by Monday at noon by emailing parasha@cincykollel.org. Questions will be selected to address at the discretion of the Rabbi who is answering that week. Questions may be edited for brevity/clarity.



A SHINING EXAMPLE

RABBI EPHRAIM SKOLNIK

Asher Freid had a son named Shaya. Shaya was severely autistic and needed to be in a school for special children to help care for all his physical and emotional needs. Caring for Shaya had its many ups and downs, and there were many unknowns due to his erratic and unpredictable behavior. One day Mr. Fried was walking with Shaya past a bunch of boys playing baseball. Shaya turned to his father and said "I want to play." "Sorry Shaya but I think they have enough players already and they are in middle of the game," said his father, knowing full and well that Shaya couldn't really play baseball. But Shaya was persistent and started getting agitated, saying he wanted to play. Asher started getting nervous, knowing that things could quickly spiral out of control with his son and not knowing what to do. All of a sudden one of the boys, the captain of one of the teams, heard the commotion and said, "sure Shaya can play; he will be on our team," despite knowing full well Shaya's handicaps. Soon it was the bottom of the 9th and Shaya's team was losing by 2. There were 2 outs and 2 men on base and it was Shaya's turn to bat. His father was now very nervous that they were not going to give him his turn because of the circumstances, but they let him step up to the plate. The pitcher pitched the ball very slowly, but Shaya swung and missed. The pitcher moved in even closer and lobbed the ball again, but Shaya still missed. The pitcher came even closer and pitched again. Shaya hit the ball and it rolled slowly straight to the pitcher. He picked it up and threw it way over the first baseman's head. Everyone screamed "Shaya run to second!" and Shaya continued running. Then the first baseman threw it way over the second baseman's head and everyone

TEFILLA TIDBITS

RABBI YAAKOV MARCHUK

Of the many *brachos* we say throughout the day, only *Birchas Hamazon* and *Birchas Hatorah* are *D'oraysah* (biblical). The ramification is that that when someone is unsure if he made a *bracha* he wouldn't need to remake it. However, if one is unsure if he said *Birchas Hatorah* and *Birchas Hamzon*, he may need to make a new *bracha* (*Mishna Breurah* 47). The Gemara in *Nedarim* (81a) writes that the second *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed because the Jewish people "forsook the Torah" (*Yermiyah* 9:11-12). The Gemara asks how this could be if we know the Jewish people did study Torah? The Gemara says that only G-d himself was able to explain the cryptic meaning of the *passuk*, that they did not make the *bracha* before studying Torah. Why is that a sin worthy of the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*. The *meforshim* explain that when we make a *bracha* before studying Torah we demonstrate that the Torah is unique from all other subjects, and is the special gift given to the Jewish people. Not making a *bracha* before learning showed a lack of appreciation for our special gift, and warranted destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*. 🕊️

screamed "run to third!" Shaya kept on running and everyone yelled "Shaya run home!" and Shaya ran home scoring the winning run. All 18 boys picked up Shaya onto their shoulders and danced around the field with him as he smiled from ear to ear feeling like a million dollars. On the sideline Asher smiled with tears streaming down his face as he saw his son the happiest he has ever seen and 18 boys who on that day became angels. 🕊️

THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE ZOHAR

RABBI NOSSON WIGGINS

The Testimony of Rabbi Yitzchak of Akko (Part IV)

Recap: Rabbi Moshe de Leon is no longer among the living and the only way for Rabbi Yitzchak of Akko to verify the facts is through second-hand information. Rabbi Yitzchak meets Rabbi David de Pancorbo, who asserts with great confidence that the *Zohar* was a product of Rabbi Moshe de Leon based on the information told to him by Rabbi Joseph de Avila when he offered his son as a match for Rabbi Moshe de Leon's daughter. The only condition in the match was that Rabbi Joseph of Avila receive a copy of the *Zohar*.

To continue, Rabbi David de Pancorbo related to Rabbi Yitzchak of Akko:

The wife of Rabbi Joseph did as her husband instructed her. When she suggested the match and requested the *Book of the Zohar*, the widow responded: "My husband never possessed such a book. He wrote everything with his own brain. When I questioned why he didn't want to take credit for his own work, he responded, 'if it is known that this book is my own, no one will pay any money for it, but when they hear that it is a copy of the *Book of the Zohar* authored by Rebbi Shimon bar Yochai, they will pay a large sum of money to obtain a copy.'" When the wife of Rabbi Joseph de Avila approached the daughter of Rabbi Moshe de Leon, her response was exactly the same, no more and no less. This, Rabbi David de Pancorbo, is how I know without a doubt in my mind that Rabbi Moshe de Leon created the *Zohar* himself.

To be continued... 🕊️