

MESIVTA'S MESSAGE

A COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER FROM MISSOURI TORAH INSTITUTE

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 4

THOUGHTS *on the* PARSHA

Rabbi Mendy Rosner

At the end of this week's פרשה, the תורה commands the כהנים that תגלה אשר לא תגלה על מזבחי אשר לא תגלה עליו. "ערוך עלי". They may not walk up steps when ascending to the מזבח, and therefore they used a ramp instead. The reason for this מצוה as explained by the פסוק is to avoid revealing the ערוה of the כהנים on the מזבח. If the כהן were to walk up steps, the movement would result in his uncovering the private areas of his body. רש"י explains that even though this was not a real concern since the כהנים wore מכנסים (small pants under their כתונת) and would not be exposed, nevertheless since walking that way is close to ערוה גילוי, the תורה did not want the כהנים to do anything degrading. רש"י adds that we can learn from this that if the תורה instructs us to be sensitive and avoid degrading stones, which don't feel בזיון, since they are needed for our use, even more so should we be sensitive not to degrade our fellow man who is created in the image of ה' and does feel בזיון.

Rav Eliyahu Lopian זצ"ל asks, according to this understanding, why don't we forbid using stairs everywhere? If we need to use them to get to the second

continued on back

FEATURED TORAH *Message*

Aron Mazer, 12th grade

וישב משה את דברי העם אל ה' (יט, ח)

In this week's parsha, we learn about the giving of the תורה and all of the דברות. Before בני ישראל could accept the תורה, Moshe had to ask the elders, who then asked the rest of בני ישראל, if they would do everything that ה' commanded them to do. They immediately said back to Moshe that they will happily do whatever ה' commands them to do. Moshe then went back to ה' and told him what happened, that בני ישראל had said that they would follow the commandments.

The question is, why did Moshe have to go back to ה' to tell him what בני ישראל said? ה' knows everything, so why did Moshe have to tell Him what he already knew? The answer can be found in רש"י on that pasuk. He explains that this pasuk teaches us the proper conduct of speaking and acting to someone - when someone sends you to complete a task, you come back and report to him when you are done. From the fact that the תורה makes a point of teaching this, we see that the idea of acting with דרך ארץ is a תורה obligation. We can observe further that this imperative of דרך ארץ applies even at a busy and momentous time such as this, when Moshe was preparing for תורה מתן!

SPARKS *of* MUSSAR

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CARING FOR THE SICK

The Alter of Slabodka (1849-1927), R' Nosson Zvi Finkel, was one of the primary leaders of the mussar movement.

For the sick he had special regard. When he heard someone was ill, R' Nosson Zvi would

immediately ask his name and his mother's name and rise to pray for his recovery.

Sitting in the waiting room of a dentist's office in Jerusalem, R' Nosson Zvi heard the sighs of a patient whose tooth had just been extracted. R' Nosson Zvi expressed his sympathy and stood up immediately to pray for his well being.

One could tell from the atmosphere in his home whether one of the talmidim of the yeshiva was sick. It was the talk of the day in his house. No money was too much to pay for the most effective medical treatment, even when the yeshiva was in dire financial straits.

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MAZEL TOV

Rabbi & Mrs. Shmuel Wasser on the birth of a grandson!

Rabbi & Mrs. Shraga Zachai on the bar mitzvah of their son Naftali!

Jonny Rush on his engagement to Ms. Chana Staum!

RECENT Happenings

Dovid Stroh, 12th grade

On the Motzei Shabbos before winter break, the entire yeshiva gathered for a beautiful kumzits filled with words of chizuk and inspiration. Asaf Erez, Avrohom Yosef Staum, and Dovid Love led the music and rebbeim and talmidim spoke briefly between the songs. The music and speeches helped up focus on the eis tzara in Eretz Yisrael. As the night wore on, we reflected on the end of a successful zman of learning and growth, and the room came alive with dancing and music.

Besides the music and inspiration, there was an ice cream bar with a wide variety of flavors and toppings. I contributed by preparing a huge milkshake for everyone to enjoy.

Looking back on the night, it was clear that the kumzits had accomplished its goal of connecting the bnei hayeshiva with the tzaros in Eretz Yisrael and bringing everyone closer together. The memories of that amazing zman will stay with us for a long time to come.

THOUGHTS on the PARSHA continued

floor of our houses, then shouldn't it be a problem to degrade them by walking in a fashion that "resembles ערורה?" It must be that specifically in a מקום קדוש like the משכן the תורה requires a higher degree of sensitivity to avoid the slightest גילוי ערורה. But if so, then how can רש"י make a קל וחומר from the special sensitivity toward קדושה in the משכן and apply it to all human beings?

Rav Elya explains beautifully that to ask such a question is seriously undervaluing the חשיבות and holiness of man. If the מזבח is קדוש, then a human being is קודש קדשים, and we should be extremely

careful not to impugn his כבוד in any way. This insight informs us as well how to appreciate the elevated state of the things that man uses in this world. His house is a בית המקדש, his table a מזבח, and his food is like קרבנות! There are many הלכות dictating how to treat food (and particularly bread) with dignity. The fact that ה' created it to be used by the holy and refined אדם necessitates כבוד אובלין.

May we be זוכה to be aware and appreciative of our קדושה and חשיבות, and in turn interact with others and with ourselves in a manner that elevates and enhances our עבודת ה'.

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