



Tiferet

ת פ א ר ת



TIFERET HASHABBAT

This Week in Tiferet

This week in Tiferet saw the culmination of our Hilchot Berachot campaign, in which many of our students spent their free time reviewing and studying this important and complicated halachic topic. After the written test on Tuesday, five finalists participated in an intense live competition. The judges declared a tie, when our two winners, **Madison Schechter** and **Tehila Schwartz**, both answered every single question correctly! Congratulations to them, to our finalists **Jennifer Gardner**, **Rivka Schuss** and **Yael Skurowitz**, and to all of the many students who took part in this project!

תורת תפארת

All About that נ Rav Elie Mayer Parshat Behaalotcha

The philosophy of Modern Orthodoxy is being engaged in the world while being fully committed to Torah. Balancing these worlds has been the charge of our people for millennia but can be extremely challenging, even more so when society allows full integration of Jews. Blending with the modern world is a temptation that all too often comes at the expense of Halacha. Two letters in this week's Parsha give insight into this challenge.

There is an anomaly of two inverted *nuns* that separate the final two pesukim of the tenth perek of Sefer Bamidbar. The Gemara (Shabbat 116a) claims that this actually constitutes a sefer of its own. The Midrash HaNe'elam, a Kabbalistic midrash, attributes great significance to the *nunin hafuchin*. The author calls them, "the very glory of Hashem, and the foundation of the world... and Hashem will redeem Yisrael and bring Mashiach in the merit of these two *nuns*." What is so significant about a couple of inverted *nuns*?

The Midrash HaNe'elam finds a correlation between the *nuns* and the bracha of Yaakov, "vayidgu larov - that they should be plentiful like fish". He notes that the word for fish in Aramaic is *nun*. Rabbi Norman Lamm explains that the *nunim hafuchin* symbolize fish that are willing to swim upstream and against the tide. When we take our Torah with us into the world as Bnei Yisrael were about to take the Aron into the desert, we must remember the lesson of the inverted *nuns*.

This is the last Shabbat of Tiferet 2015. As our alumnae before them, our students are about to take their Torah with them into a spiritual wilderness, aka 'the real world'. They will face environments that are in opposition and even hostile to the values and commitment that they have worked so hard to inculcate. The lesson of the *nunim hafuchin* is to remind us that as children of Yisrael we are called upon to go against our desire to follow the culture and practices of the Gentile majority. This is what Rav Soloveitchik meant by "The Lonely Man of Faith."

Avraham was called Avraham ha'Ivri. The Midrash teaches that ha'Ivri means 'on the other side'; therefore, Avraham is called the man who stands on the other side. The whole world stood on one side and Avraham on the other. Rav Lichtenstein zt'l teaches that Avraham demonstrates to us that it is possible to free oneself from the pressures of society and family

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Mazal Tov!

Mazal Tov to Zevi and Brie Reich (rakezet) on the birth of a baby boy! May they be zochim to raise him l'Torah, l'chupa, u'l'maasim tovim!

Mazal Tov to Aliza Shapiro (5771) on her marriage to Ben Niewood! May they be zochim to build a bayit ne'eman b'Yisrael together!

תורת תפארת (המשך)

and to swim against the current. Maaseh Avot Siman L'banim.

The Midrash teaches that the word Yehudi derives from the word yechudi - unique, individual. Sometimes being a Jew means being different, to stand out and even to be unpopular. After all, we are an 'Am levadad yishkon' - a nation that stands alone. This is true both collectively and individually.

As we try to navigate the difficulty of being a Torah committed Jew in the modern world, we ask Hashem to "yafutzo oyvecha" - to help us overcome the enemy within and without who attempt to have us swept away by the tides of secular culture and give us the strength to be an authentic Jew even and especially when that involves swimming upstream.

Inferiority Complex Tara Steinberg (5772)

"V'haish Moshe anav me'od mikol haadam asher al pnei ha'adama"

We learn in this week's parsha that Moshe was the most humble man to walk the earth. Being humble is one of the key traits that Judaism values. How can we come to understand the meaning of "anava" or humility? According to *Messilat Yesharim*, *anava* is described as inner lowliness and inferiority. The Torah is teaching us that all our achievements in the broader perspective are trivial and insignificant. If Moshe, one of the greatest leaders of all time was humble and able to make himself seem smaller, how much more so should we make ourselves feel smaller than we are.

Inferiority however, often leads one to have an unappealing view of himself or a lack of self-worth. This feeling may interfere with his performance in life. This can't be what Judaism is all about. The Netziv offers another definition to the word "anava." He describes it not as humility but as meekness. It does not refer to inferiority and self-deprecation but to self-restraint. A person should not have a lack of appreciation of himself or his attainments but simply have a lack of arrogance. *Anivut* means not assuming that because you have more competence than others, you become more of an important or superior person. A humble person believes himself to be, not incompetent, but unimportant. An *anav* recognizes his true worth but does not impose it on others. It means recognizing your own talents and achievements while refraining from making others aware of them at all times. Lastly, *Anivut* is recognizing that your achievements are simply gifts from Hashem and not your own personal power or merit.

Greatness and humility in Judaism are not incompatible. Rather they complement one another. Rav Kook says that humility makes sincere and genuine leadership possible. The more humble a person is, the greater a leader he will be. A humble person has no interest in his own honor. He solely cares about the needs of his people. We see this with Moshe Rabeinu. Looking out for his people and doing what was right for his nation was all that mattered to him. Furthermore, we see a level of *anava* from Moshe in his response to Aaron and Miriam speaking *lashon hara* about him. Aaron and Miriam by all means were not as great as Moshe and yet spoke poorly about him. An average person might respond with anger and irritation for his ego was now hurt. Moshe however, aware of his achievements and role as a leader, did not show any feelings of hurt, sensitivity or damaged *kavod*. Hashem saw Moshe was such an *anav* who did not defend himself and therefore Hashem acted for him.

The trait of *anava*, as defined by the Netziv, is one of the greatest midot we can aspire to. An *anava* does not need to feel inferiority or lack of self worth. He should recognize his achievements and success, understand they all come from Hashem and still walk around with a level of humility. He recognizes the successes he has achieved but avoids attaching great importance to himself because of these successes. May we all lead a life with true inner worth and greatness like Moshe Rabeinu himself.