

Stop Stampeding!

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Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller zt"l

"Boys," said Rebbe Caplan. "Please open your Chumashim to this week's Parsha - perek yud, posuk lamed-hei. Do you notice anything interesting?"

Effy raised his hand. "Yeah, this is where the backwards nuns are," he said.

"Very good," Rebbe Caplan answered. "Now, does anyone know why there are upside-down nuns surrounding these two pesukim? Yes, Yitzzy?"

"It's because these two pesukim don't really belong here," Yitzzy said. "The Torah just put them here in order to separate two sad stories from each other. So the nuns are there to show that those pesukim are out of place."

"That's correct, Yitzzy!" said Rebbe Caplan. "Do you want to tell us what the two sad stories are?" Q

"Sure!" Yitzzy replied confidently. "One of them is about the Bnei Yisroel complaining. And the other one is..."

Yitzzy's voice trailed off as he looked into his Chumash. "Uh, I don't know," he said. "It just talks about the Bnei Yisroel traveling." He looked at his Rebbe. "Why is that sad?"

Just then, the recess bell rang, but the boys in Rebbe Caplan's fourth-grade class stayed in their seats to hear the answer.



“That’s a great question, Yitzzy,” Rebbe Caplan said, as the sound of doors slamming open could be heard from the hallway. “So let’s look at posuk lamed gimmel. It says...”

Rebbe Caplan’s voice was drowned out by the stampede of children rushing from their classrooms to play in the schoolyard.

“IT SAYS HERE...” Rebbe Caplan tried raising his voice, but it was impossible to make himself heard over the thunderous noise. He waited a minute for the commotion to die down before continuing.

“Okay, let’s try again,” he said with a smile. “It says here ‘Vayis’u mehar Hashem’ - they traveled from the Har Hashem - does everyone know what that means?”

“Har Sinai!” the boys called out.

“Correct. So the Bnei Yisroel were moving on from Har Sinai, the place where they got the Torah. They had built the Mishkan there and spent a year sitting and learning next to the Mishkan and the ‘Har Hashem’. And now it was time to leave. It was a sad occasion.”

Yitzzy raised his hand again. “But they were moving on, heading to Eretz Yisroel - shouldn’t that have been a happy event?”

“There is no doubt that going to Eretz Yisroel was a good thing for Klal Yisroel. Our nation was moving on towards its next great stage. But let’s spend a minute thinking about this.” - “Don’t worry, you’ll still get your recess,” Rebbe Caplan added with a wink.

“In life we are hopefully always heading towards good things. One day all of you will leave this cheder and move on to yeshiva. Tonight you will go home, eat a healthy supper, spend time with your family, and get a good night’s sleep b’ezer Hashem. These

are all good things. Even going to recess in a few minutes is important to allow you to burn off your extra energy so you can come back into the classroom and continue learning.

“So what was so sad? Chazal tell us that Klal Yisroel left Har Sinai with a little too much excitement. You can be sure that the Tzadikim of the Dor Deiah were sad about leaving, but on some level, some part of them was happy to be moving on. And **that** is what is sad about this Parsha - that we weren’t sorry enough about the fact that we were leaving Har Sinai.

“This is a really important lesson, kinderlach. Of course we are hopefully always doing what Hashem wants. But when we leave a special place, we must think about what and where we are leaving. In this room, for example, we spend all day learning Torah. And we cannot stay in this classroom 24/7 - there are times we must leave. But when we do, it must be with the thought ‘oh, how I wish I could stay and continue learning with Rebbe Caplan!’ We must value moments of kedusha and feel bad about the fact that we have to leave the shul or beis midrash. We must close our Chumash or Mishnayos with a heavy heart and yearn for the next opportunity we have to open them again.

“Okay boys, I think I’ve held you long enough. Now go run and play and have fun. I’ll let you know when to come back to the classroom.”

The boys got up from their seats and headed to the schoolyard. But this time they didn’t burst out of the classroom door like lava erupting from a volcano. They walked out calmly and thought “we can’t wait to get back to the classroom and learn more Torah!”

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!

let’s review:

- What are the two sad stories which are separated by the backwards nuns?
- What was sad about Klal Yisroel heading towards Eretz Yisroel?



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