

Rabbi's Column

Within last week's Torah Portion, there are two inverted Hebrew letters that not only appear in a Humash, they appear in the actual Torah Scroll. These "inverted Nun" letters separate three kinds of text from each other. Before the first inverted Nun, the text involves the process of traveling in the wilderness, along with certain issues that come up when a large number of people are all traveling in the same direction. After the second inverted Nun, we begin all sorts of stories of how the current crop of Israelites - the ones who left Egypt - behaved poorly. Granted, Moses was not constantly telling them, "In order to get to where we are going, we need to spend a bit of time on travel and learning how to work together as a free people." He forgot, as it were, to give them the "No Pain No Gain" speech on a nauseatingly constant basis - so they were all "Oh, the pain of it all! Let's go back to when it was better!" In between the two inverted Nuns are a mere two verses. The statement Moses made concerning God when the Ark would begin to travel, and the statement Moses made concerning God when the Ark would be placed somewhere as a sign of a new encampment.

If you want to hear these verses used in context, go to any traditional Torah Service. We still use that first verse when we prepare to take a Torah Scroll out of the Ark, and we use the second verse when we are replacing the Torah Scroll back in the Ark. Every Shabbat and Yom Tov we symbolically relive the wilderness experience.

Todah Rabbah to all those who helped out at this year's Yiddish Food Festival. Samuel, our son, indicated he heard some young folk praising the event - so the combination of what we do seems to be working a bit.

There were also some new folks to town who showed up, as well as some folks who haven't been here in a while, and others whose ancestors helped build the shul. I am glad that the work y'all have been doing on being a welcoming community has been bearing some fruit.

If during this week of resting up you have a bit of time to think about it, I can always use a few more people to help lead bits and pieces of the High Holy Days. If you are interested, please let me know.

I know I say it often, (although it is not quite a tag line) - be kind to the folks you meet. Practically everyone bears invisible burdens, which by definition you have no clue about.