

THE KOTEL

by Joshua Kruger

Abie and Benji began walking back from their visit to the Kotel, to the parking lot where their bus was due to arrive.

"I'm glad that we got a chance to come here. It's such a hot day, but I really wanted to say those Tehillim" said Abie

Benji looked ahead towards their bus and said "Gosh, there are lots of people waiting to get on the bus. We'll have to wait for the next one."

Abie sighed. "I don't want to stand out here in the boiling sun. The next bus won't be here for another 20 minutes. Let's go back to the Wall to cool off a bit."

The boys headed back and sat by the Kotel wall, enjoying its shade. As they sat there, one of the older boys from their Yeshiva named Chaim was walking past and stopped near them.

"Hi, guys," said Chaim, "I'm heading to the bus stop to get back to Yeshiva, aren't you heading back too?"

The boys explained to Chaim that they were just enjoying the shade of the Kotel until just before the bus arrived.

Chaim hesitated for a moment and then said, "You know...this may sound strange, but I'm not sure that you're really allowed to do this."

"Not allowed?" asked Benji, "Not allowed to sit near the Kotel?"

"Yes," answered Chaim, "Have you learned this idea of "hekdesch" yet in class? "

The two boys shook their head, and looked at each other puzzled.

Questions

Q: What is the connection between our story and the parasha?

A: Parashas Terumah teaches us about important objects in the the *Mishkan* and *Beis Hamikdash*, such as the *aron*, the *shulchan*, and the *menorah*. Unfortunately today we do not have a *Beis Mikdash*. The *Kotel* is all that is left.

Q: What is *hekdesch*?

A: *Hekdesh* is a word that refers to the *Beis Hamikdash* and the things inside it. It all belongs to Hashem, and we are not allowed to use it for our personal benefit.

Q: Should the *Kotel* be considered *hekdesh*?

A: Some rabanim believe that the *Kotel* is a wall of the actual *Beis Hamikdash* (*Radvaz*, vol. 2, no. 648, 691; *Chayei Adam*, *Shaarei Tzedek*, *Mishpetei Eretz*, chap. 11, no. 8; Responsa of the *Ridvaz*, no. 38). According to these opinions, the *Kotel* would be considered *hekdesh*. We would have to make sure that we are pure when we come near the wall and also that we shouldn't get any personal benefit from it. However, most rabbanim today believe that the *Kotel* is actually part of the wall that was surrounding the Beit Hamikdash (*Avnei Nezer*, *Yoreh De'ah*, 450; *Tzitz Eliezer* 10:1; Rav Ovaya Yosef, *Yabia Omer* Rav Ovadya Yosef, vol. 5, *Yoreh De'ah*, no. 27). This would mean that it isn't *hekdesh*.

Q: Are the boys allowed to use the *Kotel* for shade?

A: Even if the *Kotel* is not actually a wall of the actual *Beis Hamikdash*, it still has great *kedusha* and it is therefore inappropriate to use it for purposes such as shade (*Iggros Moshe*, *Yoreh De'ah* Vol. 4, no. 63).

(Written by Josh and Tammy Kruger, in collaboration with Rabbi Yehoshua Pfeffer, and based on the following article by Rabbi Pfeffer:

<http://www.dinonline.org/2011/02/03/parshas-teruma-halachos-of-the-western-wall>)