

And he shall not have too many wives. (17:17)

Shlomo *Hamelech* thought that his superior wisdom would protect him from the pitfalls which the Torah specifies await the king who transgresses its limitations on horses, wives and wealth. *Chazal* (*Midrash Rabbah Shemos* 6:1) teach that when Shlomo violated the *mitzvah* of *Lo yarbeh lo nashim*, “He shall not have too many wives,” the letter *yud* of the word *yarbeh* (too many) came before the Almighty, bowed and said, “*Ribon HaOlomim*, Master of the Universe, Did You not say that no letter of the Torah will ever be abrogated? Yet Shlomo stands here and has nullified me. Perhaps today he is nullifying only one *mitzvah*, but tomorrow he might decide to do likewise with another *mitzvah* until, Heaven forbid, he will nullify the entire Torah!” Hashem replied, “Shlomo and thousands like him will be nullified (come and go), but not one point of you will ever be nullified.” (The *yud* will never be abrogated.)

The commentators ask the obvious question: *Yarbeh* is comprised of four letters. Why was the *yud* the one letter that took a stand? The *Chida*, *zl*, offers an insightful explanation which is as brilliant as it is simple. The sole reason that Hashem permitted David *Hamelech* and his son, Shlomo, to gain entry into *Klal Yisrael* was the *yud*. When Rus married Boaz, some protested that the Torah prohibits a convert from Moav from being accepted into the Jewish fold. *Lo yavo Amoni u'Moavi b'k'hal Hashem*; “An *Amoni* or *Moavi* shall not enter the congregation of Hashem” (*Devarim* 23:4). *Chazal* (*Yevamos* 76b) expound that this prohibition applies only to the males, and not to the women: *Amoni v'lo Amonis*; *Moavi v'lo Moavis*. Had it not been for the *yud* at the end of each word, which designates only the male converts as unacceptable, David and Shlomo would not have been permitted into the fold. Thus, it was for good reason that the *yud* claimed its honor. After all, it was the reason that Shlomo achieved status as a Jew.

The *Lev Simchah* observes (based on a commentary of the *Sfas Emes*) that one who sins annuls his letter in the Torah. This is based on the *Sifrei Chassidus*, which note that the Torah contains 600,000 letters, just as *Klal Yisrael* contains 600,000 *neshamos*. Thus, each Jew has his personal letter designated in the Torah, from which he receives spiritual sustenance. Shlomo *Hamelech* was endangering his letter *yud* by ignoring the Torah's prohibition.

The *Chafetz Chaim*, *zl*, explains this further, asserting that even if one Jew were to violate or ignore one of the 613 *mitzvos*, it would not be negated because someone else would perform the *mitzvah*. The *mitzvos* that apply to the *melech Yisrael* pertain to one – and only one – person: the *melech*. Thus, if Shlomo would not fulfill the *mitzvah*, no one else could step in and save the day. If Shlomo ignored the prohibition, the *mitzvah* would be vacated, and, with it, a letter of the Torah.