

CURRENT TALMUD PASSAGE

"A TALMUD TALE" PREMIERS THIS FEBRUARY IN HOUSTON, TX!

Posted February 16, 2007, by Rabbi Judy Abrams. Please refer to Maqom's home page for information about previous passages.

BH

THE PLACE OF SHOW BUSINESS IN JEWISH LIFE

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I have spent the last six weeks immersed in the life of the theater, preparing for the world premier of "A Talmud Tale." What an education! It was like being back in my first year of rabbinical school. I knew close to nothing about Judaism then and I was continually bumping into obstacles that everyone else neatly walked around. It has been the same in the theater world. Everything has been new to me and it has been quite a learning experience.

The question is, "Why?" Why have I known so little about show business? Could it be that I accepted the teaching found in this passage of Ruth Rabbah?

"And Ruth said: Entreat me not to leave you and to return from following after you.(Ruth 1:16)"...I am fully resolved to become converted under any circumstances, but it is better that it should be at your hands than at those of another. When Naomi heard this, she began to unfold to her the laws of conversion, saying: My daughter, it is not the custom of daughters of Israel to frequent Gentile theaters and circuses, to which Ruth replied, "Whither you go, I shall go." (Midrash Rabbah Ruth 1:22)

The theater of those days was a lewd kind of entertainment that women, at least, were well-advised to avoid. Which brings us to questions about the entertainment world of our day.

Discussion Questions:

1. What limits, if any, should we put on our participation in the world of entertainment today?
2. Does today's entertainment industry have any commonalities with the sort of spectacles the Romans put on? If so, how?
3. How can entertainment be put to good use?
4. It seems that there are a great many Jews in America's entertainment industry. Why do you think it seems that way? Is it, in fact, true?

On a personal note: A Talmud Tale is entertainment with no lewdness and it truly brings the delight of Talmud study to life. If you live in the Houston area, please come see the show, Feb 17, 18, 24, 25 at the JCC 5601 S. Braeswood, 8:00 on Saturdays and 3:00 on Sundays. It's for kids, families and adults. On with the show!