

# Dear Brothers and Sisters



*“Amen I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place.” (Matt 5, 18)*

The smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet is the ‘yod’.

This is the letter Jesus is referring to in today’s Gospel.

The yod is the tenth letter of the alphabet, and its presence or absence changes the tense from past to future. If no yod is present the tense is perfect – past. If the yod is present the tense becomes imperfect – the future, that which is to come, that which is open. Because of this the yod is also the first letter in the name of God – Yahweh. Every time the yod is written/ pronounced, the name of God is invoked.

This yod is written only once in the Law of Moses as a capital letter, in a text of the Book of Numbers. This occurs when the people of God (us) were complaining and being obstinate, refusing to listen to Moses or to believe what God was telling them. Finally, God got fed up and decided to forsake this people, and choose another who would obey him and listen to him. It is then that Moses intercedes and asks God not to do this, but rather to let his power grow (Yigdal) by displaying his mercy and patience. God listens and relents, he is merciful, and Moses says: “Yahweh is slow to anger and rich in graciousness, forgiving faults and transgression...” Numbers 14, 18

The heart of the Law, the center of all the precepts given in the Scriptures, the essence of the commandments, is this mercy and forgiveness. God’s name is made great, his true power is manifest in his capacity to forgive, in his willingness to be merciful.

How many times has he been merciful to us, we who are often stiff necked and obstinate?

He has not acted according to what we deserve, but out of his patience and mercy. This is the heart of the law.

Having experienced the mercy of God, we can be merciful to others.

There are times when we have had enough, when we get fed up, when we went to take matters into our own hands. People can be unreasonable, they can push our buttons, and drive us nuts. It is then that the yod comes to our salvation.

It helps us not to forget who we are, and to remember who God is.

We are invited to be aligned not to what is below, but to what is above.

We are invited not to dwell on the past, but to look to the open future, the eternal life to which we have been called.

May the heart of the law find a home in our hearts today.

Fr. Sean