



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"ל

Moshe ascends Mount Sinai and remains there atop the mountain for forty days and nights, while G-d imparts to him all the secrets and wisdom of the Torah. As the days go by, the people grow increasingly fearful that their beloved leader will never return. Anxious and searching for a new "intermediary," the people gather their gold together and fashion a golden calf. The people proceed to worship it, offering to it sacrifices, while singing and dancing around it. Angered by the brazen display of heresy, G-d informs Moshe of the nation's actions and sends him down from the mountain. Moshe makes his way down the mountain, carrying the two tablets of stone on which G-d engraved the Ten Commandments. When Moshe draws near to the camp and sees the golden calf and the revelry that surround it, Moshe's anger flares. He casts down the tablets and shatters them. The Torah, when it records the narrative above, employs a "Kri and Ksiv" - a word that is written one way but by tradition is meant to be read a different way. Here the Torah writes "he cast down the Tablets from his hand" (Miyado) - in the singular, but it is read "from his hands" (Miyadov) - in the plural.

Rabbi Yisroel Salanter provides us an insight into the meaning of this "Kri and Ksiv." Upon seeing the idolatrous conduct of the Jewish people, Moshe knew that their relationship to G-d had been grievously harmed. He therefore intended to throw down the first tablet, which contains the first five commandments that legislate man's conduct with G-d. Moshe reasoned though, that the second tablet, which legislates man's relationship with his fellow, could be preserved because the worship of the golden calf did not contravene those laws. Moshe, however, concluded that man's relationship with G-d and his relationship with his fellow man are inextricably linked. If man does not have a healthy and wholesome relationship with G-d, he cannot have a true and proper relationship with others. Likewise, if man does not have a healthy and wholesome relationship with other people, he cannot have a proper relationship with G-d. This is the meaning of the "Kri and Ksiv." Initially, Moshe intended to only throw down one tablet ("from his hand") but concluded that both had been violated and, therefore, both should be cast down ("from his hands").

What a powerful lesson to take to heart! We can never be true G-d fearing individuals if we don't treat G-d's children with respect and compassion. And likewise, without a firm and committed relationship with G-d, we will not attain a truly upright and virtuous affiliation with those around us.

Have a wonderful Shabbos!

Rabbi Menachem Winter

TABLE TALK

POINT TO PONDER

Hashem passed before him and proclaimed, "Hashem, Hashem..." (34:6)

This refers to Hashem's attribute of mercy. These two mentions of Hashem's name, one is before a person has sinned, and one is after a person has sinned (Rashi).

If a person will not sin in the future, there is no need for the Torah to tell us that Hashem will act mercifully to the person. Therefore, this posuk must be referring to a situation where Hashem knows the person will sin in the future. Still Hashem will act mercifully. This is understandable on account of that which Hashem always judges a person based on his present situation (Vayeira 21:17).

However, once a person has sinned, why would Hashem act mercifully to him? Albeit the person may repent, but according to his present state he is a sinner!

PARSHA RIDDLE

Where in the Parsha is the source that one should wash his hands before davening?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last issue's riddle:

How do we benefit from the fact that the Romans stole the Bigdei Kehuna, instead of destroying them?

Answer: Since the Bigdei Kehuna are still in existence they can still create atonement for Bnai Yisroel.

TIMELESS WISDOM

He threw down the Luchos, and shattered them at the foot of the mountain (32:19).

During the first yartzeit of the Alter of Novardok, his disciples asked Rav Shmuel Weintraub to eulogize their Rebbe. He began, "If we were to try to eulogize Moshe, we would be speechless, scared and confused how to properly eulogize this great leader. But we are lucky, for the Torah already said a eulogy for him. The posuk says and Rashi explains:

And by all the strong hand and awesome power that Moshe performed before the eyes of Bnai Yisroel (V'zos Habrocho 34:12).

The strong hand refers to Moshe's resilience that he was able to bring himself to break the Luchos (Rashi).

The greatest praise the Torah could find for Moshe is this. Why? We invest much effort into creating and building, and sometimes we lose focus. The goal is not to build, the goal is to serve Hashem. If sometimes in order to serve Hashem destruction is needed, then we must destroy.

Moshe invested so much effort to reach this point to bring the Luchos down to B'nai Yisroel. When he saw that it was not good, he continued his commitment to Hashem, and destroyed the Luchos. The Alter opened up various Yeshivos and Mosdos throughout Europe, setting up all the necessary components that a functioning institution requires. Yet when powerful elements form the "enlightenment" tried to tamper with the curriculum of the Mosod, the Alter was quick to close the institution. The goal is to serve Hashem, not merely to build."

KIDS KORNER

WHO AM I?

#1 WHO AM I?

- I caused plagues.
- For me some use a posuk.
- Sometimes a half shekel.
- I give you numbers.

#2 WHO AM I?

- I was bright.
- Even though it wasn't Purim, I wore a mask.
- I am from the small "Aleph".
- I was misunderstood as horns.

LAST ISSUE'S ANSWERS

#1 M'eil (I make you knock and fix your speech; I had the bells but not the whistles; my pomegranates were not full of seeds.)

#2 Tzitz (I could mean to shine and mean to look; I caused atonement and proclaimed holiness.)

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Rabbi Biberfeld's 4th Grade Class

To see the complete list of those who answered correctly, visit the Kollel website.

Please see next week's issue for the answers to this week's questions.

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

The Kollel is proud to present a community-wide series: Peace in the Home.

Wednesday, February 26th

"Making a Good Marriage – Great"

Rabbi Shraga Neuberger

SEHC, 8:00 PM

Monday, March 10th

"How to Get Your Spouse to Listen:

10 Minutes a Day to Effective Communication"

Dr. Meir Wikler

Woodside Synagogue, 8:00 PM

Monday, March 24th

"Two Parts of a Whole:

Self-Actualization and Marriage"

Rabbi Moshe Hauer

YISE, 8:00 PM