



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

***It is an honor to present this week's Torah Minute from our archives.
The following was penned by our founder, Rabbi Kalman Winter ZT" L, in 2010.***

This week's Torah reading of Ki Sisa details one of the great historical transgressions of the Jewish nation, the sin of the Golden Calf. As a consequence of their deed, the Torah records in Chapter 32, verse 26, "Moshe stood at the gateway of the camp and said, whoever is for the Lord, join me, and all the Levites gathered around." G-d enjoined Moshe to solicit men and arms who would take retribution upon the perpetrators of this great transgression. However, only the members of the tribe of Levi joined forces with Moshe, thus distinguishing and consecrating themselves for the future privilege of serving in the Holy Temple.

In the context of this event, I share with you a beautiful and instructive story. One of the great scholars of the previous generation, Rabbi Shimon Schwab, recorded his memorable meeting with the illustrious and venerable sage, the Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Yisroel Meir Hakohen of Radin, Poland. The sage asked Rabbi Schwab if he was either a Kohen or a Levite. He responded neither. The sage said, "how unfortunate, the messiah will come, the Temple will be rebuilt, and you will want to participate in the service of the temple. However, being neither a Kohen nor a Levite, you will not be able to enter to do the ritual service." The sage continued, "fortunately, I am a Kohen. And might I ask why are you not a Kohen or Levite?" Rabbi Schwab answered simply, "my father wasn't a Kohen." The sage then asked, "and why was your father not a Kohen?" Understanding the line of reasoning that his father's father wasn't a Kohen was not the desired answer, he remained silent waiting for the sage's deeper intention. The sage turned to him and said, "I'll tell you why truly you are not a Kohen. When Moshe asked for volunteers to join with him that fateful day, your ancestors failed to come forth, failed to rise to the challenge and be counted. Not so my ancestors, those from the tribe of Levi who with passion and zeal captured the moment, stood in the breach and with sacrifice and valor took up arms to meet the challenge." The sage concluded, "take this as a life lesson. When you hear the call, who is for G-d, strengthen yourself, rise above, with passion and alacrity." Rabbi Schwab became the leader of the German Jewish community for many years, inspired that day for a lifetime of communal service and leadership. Likewise, we must ask of ourselves, have we answered the call?

*Have a wonderful Shabbos,
Rabbi Menachem Winter*

TABLE TALK

POINTS TO PONDER

Hashem said to Moshe, "Carve for yourself..." (34:1)

Hashem showed Moshe a block of sapphire and told him, "The trimmings should belong to you." It is from there that Moshe became wealthy (Rashi).

Rav Yochanan said, "Hashem rests his Shechina on someone who is strong, wealthy, wise... as we see by Moshe... he was wealthy as the posuk says, 'Carve for yourself...'" (Nedarim 38a).

If one must be wealthy in order for Hashem to rest his Shechina on the person, why did Hashem wait until this point to make Moshe wealthy? He should have made Moshe wealthy earlier.

PARSHA RIDDLE

How does this parsha cause the Kohen Gadol to dress and undress on Yom Kippur?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Which Kohen, besides Aaron and his sons, needed to be anointed as a Kohen?

Answer: Pinchos

HATORAH V' HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Parshas Ki Sisa opens with Hashem's instructions to Moshe that when he counts the Jews, "then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto Hashem ... that there be no plague among them" (*Shemos* 30:12). Centuries later, the Bible records that King David committed a grave sin by counting the Jewish people, and was punished by a plague that killed seventy thousand people (*Shmuel* 2 24:1-15).

R. Eliyahu Mizrahi (*Shemos ibid.*) notes that earlier in his career, in his military campaign against his rebellious son Avshalom, King David had also counted his forces, and yet then he was not punished, but on the contrary, was successful and emerged victorious in battle (*ibid.* Ch. 18)! He tentatively proposes that counting is only problematic when the entire nation is counted together, as King David did later in his career, but in the battle against Avshalom he was only counting "the people that were with him," and such a partial counting is unproblematic.

Numerous scholars, however, reject the idea that a partial counting is acceptable, noting that the Talmud (*Yoma* 22b) explains that when the Kohanim were counted for the purpose of awarding the privilege of performing various of the Temple rites, they were not counted directly, since "it is prohibited to count Israel." This clearly indicates that counting even a subset of the Jewish people is prohibited. Some therefore reject the Mizrahi's distinction entirely, while others explain that he merely means that a partial counting will not trigger a plague, and may not be Biblically forbidden, but he concedes that it is nevertheless prohibited, at least Rabbinically (see the numerous sources cited in *Shut. Tzitz Eliezer* 3:7:6 (31-37), and *Shut. Yabia Omer* 10 *choshen mishpat* #10).

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

WHO AM I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. Failed replacement
2. The Menorah and I have something in common.
3. I destroyed tablets, yet tablet created me.
4. My end was a drink.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I am for fundamentals.
2. I am for Hashem's Ways.
3. I am for mitzvah obligation.
4. I am for expounding the Torah.

Last Week's Answers:

#1 Shemone B'godim/the 8 clothing articles of the Kohen Gadol (shatnez; 4 more than the 'regulars'; uniforms; we are called 'gold')

#2 Urim vTumim (I created lights; I gave answers; I was in the fold; I was only for the first Beis HaMikdash))

All children 13 and under who answer a "Who Am I?" correctly will be entered into a raffle to

Win a pair of portable camping lantern flashlights!

The next raffle is April 12th.

Congratulations to Daniel and Yonatan Rutstein and others for answering last week's questions correctly!

Visit gwckollel.org to submit your answers.

Answer as many as you can - each correct answer will entitle you to another raffle ticket and increase your chances of winning.

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GWCK Shabbaton at SEHC

Join the GWCK on Shabbos Parshas Vayakhel, March 4 - 5, for a Shabbaton at SEHC, featuring insightful and inspiring classes and lectures by the Kollel Scholars, a ruach-filled Friday night dinner, and a delicious and spirited oneg.

To place a dinner reservation or sponsorship, email GWCK.SEHC.Shabbaton@gmail.com

