



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

In Your Heart or in the Heavens? ... It's Up to You.

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"For this commandment that I am commanding you today...it is not far. It is not in the heavens... And it is not across the sea...rather it is very close to you, [it is] in your mouth and in your heart to do it" (Devarim 30:11-14).

With these verses, Moshe Rabbeinu assures the Jewish people that proper fulfillment of the Torah and its commandments is entirely within their reach. It is noteworthy that Moshe contrasts the closeness of one's mouth and heart to the distance of the heavens and the other side of the sea. Why are these the subject matter of the comparison when it is clear to all that one's own mouth and heart were not as far away as the heavens? Surely no one would make a mistake of such proportions.

In his work *Ohr Yahel*, Rabbi Yehuda Leib Chosman gives a profound answer to this question. A human being is composed of two completely opposite parts: a physical body and a spiritual soul. The body has no interest in spirituality and seeks only material pleasures, while the soul has no interest in material pleasures and yearns for spirituality and meaning. From the perspective of the body, the Torah is indeed in heaven, far out of reach. For the soul, on the other hand, the Torah is close and attainable. What Moshe Rabbeinu is telling the Jewish people in these verses is that it is our choice. It is up to each individual to choose which path he or she will take, and consequently how far away the Torah will be from him or her.

For most people the choice is far from binary. Sometimes we choose one way, sometimes we choose another. With Rosh Hashana and the awakening sound of the shofar right around the corner, let each one of us take the opportunity to examine our choices. *"Is this what I should be doing? Am I doing this for the right reasons?"* Through honest introspection and a commitment to follow the desires of our soul, may we all merit a good judgment and a sweet new year.

Have a wonderful Shabbos and Yom Tov!

TABLE TALK

POINT TO PONDER

For you to pass into the Covenant of Hashem, your G-d... with whoever is here, standing with us today before Hashem, our G-d, and with whoever is not here with us today (29:11, 14).

"Whoever is here standing with us today" only teaches that those who stood at Har Sinai were sworn into the Covenant. How do we know that all future generations were also sworn into the Covenant? The posuk continues, "Whoever is not here today." I only know that they were sworn into the Covenant of Hashem regarding the mitzvos given on Har Sinai. What about the mitzvos that were commanded later (i.e. reading the Megilla), how do we know that Bnai Yisrael were sworn to fulfill those also? Therefore, in the Megilla it is written, "The Jews confirmed and undertook upon themselves" (Esther 9:27) to teach that they confirmed what they had already committed to fulfill (on Har Sinai) (Shavuos 39a).

If someone swears that he will not fulfill a Rabbinical mitzva (reading the Megilla), he is bound by his oath (Yoreh Deah 239).

How can one swear not to fulfill the mitzva of Megilla, when he is bound by the oath that he swore on Har Sinai that he would fulfill the Rabbinic mitzvos and read the Megilla?

PARSHA RIDDLE

Why do we call a ger (convert) a ger shenisgayer (a convert that converted)? Shouldn't he be called a goy shenisgayer (a non-Jew who converted)?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Which letter does not appear in the Parsha of Bikurim?

Answer: Samech

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Parshas Nitzavim is always read on the Shabbos before Rosh Hashanah. When there are two non-holiday Shabbosos between Rosh Hashanah and Sukkos (which, in the modern fixed calendar, occurs if and only if the first day of Rosh Hashanah falls on either Monday or Tuesday), *Nitzavim* and *Vayeilech* are split: *Nitzavim* is read by itself on the Shabbos before Rosh Hashanah, and *Vayeilech* and *Haazinu* on the following two Shabbosos. When either Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kipur falls out on Shabbos (and that Shabbos's normal *parshas hashavua* reading is preempted by the special holiday reading), *Nitzavim* and *Vayeilech* are combined and read on the Shabbos before Rosh Hashanah, and *Haazinu* is read on the following Shabbos.

The medieval authorities wonder why in the former case we choose to split *Nitzavim* and *Vayeilech*. An apparently more logical solution to the need for an extra *parashah* would be the splitting of *Matos* and *Masei*, which are (much) longer. They provide two explanations, both of which assert a rule that *Nitzavim* should always be read before Rosh Hashanah, albeit for opposite reasons:

1. The Talmud (Megilah 31b) establishes a rule that the curses in "*Mishneh Torah*" (i.e., *chumash Devarim*) are to be read before Rosh Hashanah, in order to "complete the year and its curses." Although the primary curse-containing *parashah* is *Ki-Savo*, R. Nissim explains that *Nitzavim*, too, contains curses, and should therefore also be read before Rosh Hashanah.

2. *Tosafos* and the *Rosh* (Megilah *ibid.*) reject this explanation, arguing that the "curses" covered by the Talmudic rule are limited to the ones in *Ki-Savo*. They posit instead a desire to read a non-curse-containing *parashah* (*Nitzavim*) before Rosh Hashanah, in order to create an interruption between the reading of the curses (in *Ki-Savo*) and Rosh Hashanah (see *Tosafos* and *Rosh Megilah ibid.*).

So while according to R. Nissim, *Nitzavim* is read before Rosh Hashanah because it does contain curses, according to *Tosafos* and the *Rosh*, it is read then because it does not!

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

WHO AM I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. My quiet contains 30 (for some).
2. Aloud has 30 (for all).
3. King Remember Shofar.
4. I am neither a cow nor the last letter.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. 3
2. 30
3. 100
4. I make you quiet.

Last Week's Answers:

#1 Bikurim (I am caused by the first; I am part of the 'order'; history is my essence; I am loud.)

#2 Maaser (Confess for me; I am ten, but do not daven with me; I am holy; I cause blessing.)

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

win a



MICKEY
MINI
WAFFLE
MAKER!

Congratulations to Meir Feldman 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.

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

Greater Washington Community Kollel wishes all of its friends, supporters, participants, and the entire community a sweet New Year.

May you and your family be blessed with health, happiness, and all the wishes of your heart.

