



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

Believing in Ourselves

Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps

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After G-d tells Avraham that his offspring will be like the stars in the sky, the Torah records: "And he (Avraham) trusted in G-d, and He considered it an act of righteousness." The Sefer Shir Maon questions why trusting in G-d was considered especially righteous in this instance. While we find in the writings of the Sages that *emunah* (trust) in G-d is a source for great merit, that is typically reserved for *emunah* that G-d will perform an act outside the laws of nature. Here, it would be completely natural that, were Avraham to have a son, that son would then have children, they in turn would have children, and a great population of Avraham's offspring would eventually walk the earth. Why was Avraham's *emunah* in this instance considered particularly righteous?

The Shir Maon answers: The natural way of the world is that things that exist in abundance are not given much attention or value, while things that are more rare are considered special and given extra respect. Grass, for example, is abundant and trampled upon, while a different inedible plant that is much more rare would be carefully maintained and certainly not stepped upon. The stars, however, are an exception. Despite existing in great numbers, each one remains unique and beautiful and retains its own identity. G-d's promise to Avraham was twofold: First, that his descendants would be as abundant as the stars. This could happen quite naturally and in a manner that even someone with less *emunah* could easily accept. Second, that his offspring would rise above the natural way of the world and, despite being a population of such great numbers, each one would be special and important in the eyes of G-d. It is because of his trust in this second point that Avraham is praised.

Each of us was created uniquely and each remains special in the eyes of G-d; we each have a role in bringing honor to G-d in this world. It is incumbent upon us to realize that, rather than fade into the background and let others attend to the needs of the community, every one of us has an important role in the Jewish nation and can find a way to make a positive impact upon those around us.

Have a wonderful Shabbos!

TABLE TALK

POINT TO PONDER

... and you shall be a blessing (12:2)

This refers to what we say in davening 'the G-d of Avraham' (Rashi).

The merits of our forefathers have expired (Shabbos 55a).

Why do we mention our forefathers in Shemoneh Esrei if their merits have expired?

PARSHA RIDDLE

Who was the father of Eliezer, the servant of Avrohom?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Where do we find in this week's parsha the prohibition to hunt just for sport?

Answer: "He was a mighty hunter before Hashem, therefore it is said, like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before Hashem" (10:9). Why does the Torah repeat that Nimrod was a mighty hunter? To teach that although Nimrod was a mighty hunter for game, Jews should not behave in that manner (Noda BeYehuda).

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Parashas Lech Lecha contains one of the very few *mitzvos* in all of *Sefer Bereishis*, the commandment of circumcision. Our tradition emphasizes two very different aspects of this commandment: on the one hand, it is associated with particular joy – the verse in *Tehilim* (119:162) "I rejoice at your word, as one that finds great spoil" is interpreted as a reference to our *mitzvah*, and this is connected to the custom of celebrating its performance with a party (*Shabbas* 130a and Rashi there). On the other hand, the Talmud and the *halachic* tradition acknowledge that circumcision involves the risk of death – the verse in *Tehilim* (44:22) "Yea, for your sake are we killed all day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter" is also interpreted as a reference to our *mitzvah* (*Gittin* 57b).

The *Chasam Sofer* notes that despite this assertion of the danger of circumcision, "our eyes see that not even one in a thousand Jews dies due to circumcision." He explains that according to the laws of nature, we would indeed expect a (small) number of fatalities, and it is the protection provided by the *mitzvah* that serves to avert this. Since the Torah does, however, enjoin us to perform the ritual despite this expectation of some fatalities (according to the laws of nature), we can conclude that the normal rule that "we do not follow the majority in situations of danger to life" does not apply in the context of circumcision (*Shut. Chasam Sofer YD #245*). The *Avnei Nezer* infers from this that unlike most other commandments, the obligation of circumcision applies even in the presence of some level of danger (*Shut. Avnei Nezer YD 323:2-5*). [Of course, circumcision is generally postponed or even avoided entirely in the face of serious danger; the *Avnei Nezer* is discussing certain specific cases where the level of danger is non-negligible but still very low.]

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

WHO AM I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I was a sister.
2. I caused suffering.
3. Beauty was my fame.
4. I was one-seventh of 'profit'.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. We tested.
2. We begin with fire.
3. We end in a bind.
4. Ten for Ten

Last Week's Answers:

#1 Har Ararat (Don't confuse me with a rat; the Torah is not on me; I was the resting place; I was the Haman family climb.)

#2 Noach (I mean easy; I was a captain; I was a favorite; was I righteous?)

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

win a



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MINI
WAFFLE
MAKER!**

THE NEXT
RAFFLE WILL BE
NOVEMBER 15TH!

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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