



# Greater Washington Community Kollel SHABBOS DELIGHTS

## TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

### *Prayer: Defying the Odds*

Presented by Rabbi Yisrael Glassberg

*Director of Kollel Alumni*

This week's Torah portion recounts Avraham's valiant efforts to save the inhabitants of Sodom and Amorah after Hashem had decreed their destruction. Avraham pleads with Hashem to spare the cities provided that he can identify no fewer than ten righteous individuals. Avraham argued that the desecration of Hashem's sacred name (*Chillul Hashem*) was at stake if the righteous, notwithstanding their small numbers, were to be swept away with the wicked. Despite Avraham's attempts, there were no righteous people to be found, and Sodom and Amorah were ultimately annihilated.

Referencing the verses that describe the fate of Sodom and Amorah, the Rambam states that any country whose sins outweigh their righteous acts will similarly be destroyed (Hilchos Teshuva 3:2). The implication of the Rambam's words are that Hashem calculated the fate of Sodom and Amorah based on them having engaged in more wicked acts than righteous ones. If so, the commentaries wonder what difference it would have made had Avraham been able to locate ten righteous individuals in Sodom and Amorah. It seems unreasonable to assume that the deeds of a few individuals would somehow outnumber the multitude of punishable acts of the wicked.

The commentaries explain that there was one crucial ingredient that could have changed the entire calculation: *heartfelt prayer*. The inherent power of prayer, with its limitless potential, was the secret weapon that Avraham called upon. Of course, Avraham did not rely on prayer alone and attempted to find additional merit generated by the local *tzadikim*, but the true engine and force behind the request were his prayers. What seemed bleak and predictable could have been altered and redirected. Avraham knew this principle quite well, having just been told that he and Sarah would be blessed with a child despite their old age. Their many years of fervent prayer for a child had been answered. Avraham demonstrated that despite challenging and difficult times, both personally and collectively, a Jew always has a means to reach out and connect with our loving Father in heaven.

*Wishing you a Good Shabbos!*

## TABLE TALK

### POINT TO PONDER

#### **Hashem appeared to him in the plains of Mamre... (18, 1)**

He (Mamre) is the one who Avraham asked if he should follow Hashem's command regarding circumcising himself. Mamre encouraged Avraham to fulfill the command. (Rashi)

Hashem commanded Avraham to circumcise himself. Was there any doubt in Avraham's mind whether to execute the command? If Mamre had told Avraham not to circumcise himself, would Avraham have listened to him? So why did Avraham ask him?

### PARSHA RIDDLE

#### **Why is the halacha that one must tie their left shoe first?**

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

#### **Last week's riddle:**

**How old was Avrom when he went to Eretz Yisroel for the first time?**

**Answer: 70**

## HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

### HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Vayeira*, Lot makes the terrible choice to offer the savage Sodomite mob his daughters in an attempt to save his guests. I am not aware of much significant *halachic* discussion of this choice; we will set forth here the general framework for analyzing these sorts of dilemmas and the legitimacy of sacrificing an individual where this is arguably the lesser of two evils.

The *halachah* is: "A group of travelers who are told by non-Jews: 'Give us one of you and we will kill him, and if you do not, we will kill all of you', let them all be killed, rather than turn over a single Jewish soul to them. But if they designate a specific individual, as Sheva Ben Bichri was designated, they should give him to them and not be killed." (*Tosefta Terumos* end of ch. 7, loosely translated)

Sheva Ben Bichri was a rebel against the authority of King David. King David's general, Yoav, hunted down Sheva Ben Bichri and threatened to destroy the city to which he had fled unless the rebel was handed over to him. The city's inhabitants, guided by the counsel of a local "wise woman", responded by cutting off Sheva Ben Bichri's head and throwing it to Yoav (*Shmuel II:20*).

The Talmud Yerushalmi (*Terumos 47a*) cites a debate over the rigorosity of the analogy to Sheva Ben Bichri: R. Shimon b. Lakish understands it to imply that the designated individual may only be turned over insofar as he is guilty of a capital offense, analogous to Sheva ben Bichri who was guilty of lese majesty. R. Yochanan, however, understands that anyone who is singled out may be turned over, regardless of guilt or innocence. The Ran (*Yoma 4a* in Rif pagination) and the Rash (*Terumos ibid.*) rule in accordance with R. Yochanan, but the Rambam (*Yesodei Hatorah 5:5*) rules in accordance with R. Shimon ben Lakish, and this seems to be the consensus of later authorities (see *Bach YD siman 157; Taz ibid. s.k. 7*).

Some authorities, however, maintain that even according to R. Shimon b. Lakish's stringent view, it is sufficient that the designated individual be guilty of a capital crime under the laws of the non-Jews, even if this is not the case according to *halachah* (*Shut. Ha'Bach (yeshanos) #43; Beis Hillel YD ibid. s.k. 5*).

PRESENTED BY

**RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH**

## KIDS KORNER

### WHO AM I?

#### **#1 WHO AM I?**

1. Blow to remember.
2. In a bind
3. I caused blindness.
4. I am tenth.

#### **#2 WHO AM I?**

1. I made people laugh.
2. I am the second.
3. Mincha is mine.
4. Korban

#### **Last Week's Answers:**

**#1 Sorah** (I was in the teiva; my end was Yehoshua's beginning; my father also had a Lot; I am not sorry.)

**#2 Bris Milah** (My time is 8; I was at 13; 1 before 100; I override Shabbos.)

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

*Win a*  
**LASER PEGS**  
HELICOPTER SET



Visit [gwckolle.org](http://gwckolle.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!**

THE NEXT  
RAFFLE WILL BE  
DECEMBER 26<sup>th</sup>.

## KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

Sunday  
Nights  
with  
GWCK

*Parsha Explorations with Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman - For Men and Women >> 7:15pm @ KMS, 11910 Kemp Mill Rd.*

*Pearls of Prayer with Rabbi Yonatan Zakem - For Men and Women >> 8:00pm @ YISE, 1132 Arcola Ave.*

*Potomac Programming For Men >> 8:15pm @ YIEIP, 11618 Seven Locks Rd.*

- *Chumash Expositions with Rabbi Zacharia Schwartz*
- *Yesodei Hatorah: Talmud Skills Building with Rabbi Moshe Sadwin*
- *Advanced Talmud with Rabbi Menachem Winter*