



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

Demonstrating His Beauty

Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps, Kollel Scholar and Director of Special Projects

"This is my G-d and I will beautify Him" (15:2)

Deeply moved by the wondrous miracle of the splitting of the sea, the Jewish people respond with song and praise and the singing of "Az Yashir." Among the most stirring lines of the song is the declaration, "This is my G-d and I will beautify Him." Rashi explains that this was an expression of intent to declare G-d's beauty and praiseworthiness to the world. The Talmud (Shabbos 133b) brings two more elaborate interpretations of this verse. "It was taught in a Braysa: Be beautiful before Him with Mitzvos – make a beautiful sukkah before Him, a beautiful lulav, beautiful tzitzis etc. Abba Shaul said: Be similar to Him – just as He is gracious and merciful, so you should be gracious and merciful."

It is apparent how the first interpretation in the Talmud stays true to the concept of "beautifying" G-d. By observing Mitzvos in a beautiful manner, we demonstrate the beauty of His Torah and sanctify His name. The interpretation of Abba Shaul, however, seems unrelated to the concept of beauty. How does being gracious and merciful relate to beautifying G-d?

The Torah Temima explains that just as building a beautiful sukkah or writing a beautiful Torah brings forth G-d's beauty in the world and sanctifies His name, so too imitating G-d by refining one's character brings out G-d's beauty for He is the one who provided us with the means to develop these fine character traits.

But perhaps there is something even deeper at play here. The Tomer Devorah explains that our various limbs and organs are physical representatives of the various traits of G-d. This is one explanation for the concept of being created in the "image of G-d." Our actions and our character traits, however, must also reflect those of G-d. Otherwise, we become a walking contradiction – with a body that reflects G-d's traits, but with actions and attributes that do not. When we make ourselves similar to Him – by being gracious and merciful, we truly exemplify the intent of having been created in "the image of G-d." Thus, our refined character traits are a reflection of G-d's traits and will beautify and sanctify Him in the eyes of others.

May we merit to beautify our Mitzvos and our character traits and demonstrate G-d's beauty to all the world!

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

It happened when Pharaoh sent the people... (13, 17)

Rebbi Yehoshua ben Levi taught, in merit of the four steps that Pharaoh escorted Avraham, Avraham's children were enslaved to Pharaoh for four hundred years. (Sotah 46b)

If the four hundred year enslavement was a reward that Pharaoh deserved, how could Hashem redeem Bnei Yisroel 190 years early? That is unjustly taking away Pharaoh's reward.

Parsha Riddle

What connection is there between the Parsha and how we make Hamotzi on the challah on Shabbos?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Which halacha is derived because of the addition of the letter "hay" in this week's parsha?

Answer: The extra "hay" in yadcha teaches that tefillin are worn on the yad kayho / weaker hand.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In parshas Beshalach, the Torah commands: "Let every man remain in his place; let no man leave his place on the seventh day." (16:29) We have previously noted that there are a variety of interpretations of the prohibition conveyed by this verse, one of which is the law of techumin ('boundaries'): the prohibition against traveling beyond a certain distance on the Sabbath.

There is considerable dispute over whether the law of techumin is actually Biblical: there is a Geonic opinion that travel beyond two thousand cubits is Biblically forbidden (Sheiltos #48, Bahag beginning of hilchos Eruvin); some medieval authorities maintain that only travel beyond twenty four thousand cubits is Biblically forbidden, but travel beyond two thousand cubits is only rabbinically prohibited (Rambam hilchos Shabbas 27:1); while other medieval authorities maintain that as a matter of normative halachah, there is no Biblical prohibition at all, and the interpretation of our verse as referring to techumin is merely an asmachta (an allusive reference - Rosh Eruvin end of perek 1, Tur OC siman 397. Cf. Nesivos Shabbas 39:1-2; Torah Sheleimah Beshalach miluim end of perek 22). [There are numerous opinions as to the length of a cubit: 18.9, 21.25, and 24 inches are the opinions of R. Chaim Naeh, R. Moshe Feinstein, and the Chazon Ish respectively.]

A person's possessions are also subject to the laws of techumin: they may not be carried beyond the limit of their owner's techum. There is a dispute among the later authorities over whether this rule is Biblical as well (according to the opinion that the basic law of techumin is Biblical - Keneses Ha'Gedolah ibid., Nesivos Shabbas ibid. n. 15).

There is also considerable dispute over whether the Biblical prohibition of techumin applies only to areas Biblically classified as public domain (reshus ha'rabim - Biur Halachah siman 404 s.v. ve'hoil ve'ain, Nesivos Shabbas ibid. paragraph 5).

The primary ramification of the question of the Biblicality of techumin is the requirement for stringency in cases of doubt. Insofar as it is Biblical, we are required to be stringent, but insofar as it is rabbinic, we are permitted to be lenient (Shulchan Aruch OC 404:1).

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I am a source for resurrection.
2. I am one of ten.
3. I'm like a wall.
4. I am read daily.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. We did not fight.
2. We needed support.
3. We inspired heavenward looking.
4. We were heavy.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Plague of Darkness (My seventh was at sea, I restricted movement, I allowed searching, I allowed death.)

#2 Eating the Korban Pesach (Belt-tied, Shoes on, Hold your stick, Don't confuse me with a roast.)

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