



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

Strangers in a Foreign Land

Presented by Rabbi Moshe Sadwin, Kollel Scholar

"The name of one was Gershom, for he said 'I was a stranger in a foreign land.' And the name of the other was Eliezer, 'for the G-d of my father assisted me and saved me from Pharaoh's sword.'" (18:4-5)

In Parshas Yisro, the Torah elaborates on the names of Moshe's two sons. Moshe named his eldest Gershom as a reminder that he (Moshe) was a stranger in a foreign land, while he named his younger son Eliezer in recognition of the fact that Hashem came to Moshe's assistance and saved Moshe from Pharaoh's sword.

Two questions arise from this passage. First, why would Moshe give his son a name that reminds him about his having been a stranger in a foreign land? That hardly seems worthy of commemoration. Second, the naming of the two boys does not fit chronologically -- the incident of Moshe's escape from Pharaoh's sword occurred right before Moshe fled Egypt, while his having been a stranger in a foreign land occurred only after he fled. Why did Moshe name the boys out of chronological order?

One potential explanation for why Moshe named his son after the period of his life spent as a stranger in a foreign land was so that he would have a constant reminder as to where his true home lay. When Moshe was living in Midian – after he fled Egypt – he was the only person in the entire vicinity who believed in Hashem. Moshe was concerned that his adherence to Hashem's ways would wane because he was disconnected from other Jews. He therefore specifically named his first son after his predicament of being alone in a strange place to remind himself that his real home and people were far off in Egypt and that's where he belonged. That concept, though out of chronological order, took precedence over his gratitude to Hashem for saving him from Pharaoh's sword.

The Chofetz Chaim explains that we are all strangers in a foreign land. Our souls, our true essence, traveled from Hashem's throne of glory to this physical world to amass Mitzvos and achieve eternal reward. Let us always remember where we came from and the true purpose for our existence in this world.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

The name of one was Gershom, for he (Moshe) had said, "I was a sojourner in a strange land." (18, 3)

Since Moshe was still living in a strange land when he named his son, why did he say, "for I was a sojourner;" he should have said, "for I am a sojourner in a strange land"?

Parsha Riddle

Where in this week's Parsha is the source to 'shuckel' while learning?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

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

Answer: We use two challahs for Hamotzi to remind us of the double portion of Mon that fell in honor of Shabbos.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Parshas Yisro contains the first version of the "Ten Commandments", the fifth of which is: "Honor your father and your mother" (kibud av va'aim). Some commentators declare that the first five commandments comprise obligations of man to G-d, while the latter half comprise obligations to one's fellow man (Chizkuni). The inclusion of kibud av va'aim among the former therefore implies that it is between man and G-d. This can be understood in light of the idea that kibud av va'aim is a stepping stone toward honoring G-d. The obligation to honor one's parents is rooted in the gratitude one should have to them for bringing him or her into the world, and this leads one toward gratitude to G-d, the Ultimate Cause of oneself along with all one's ancestors (Sefer Ha'Chinuch #33).

Other commentators, however, adopt the simpler understanding that kibud av va'aim is a mitzvah "for the benefit of others" (Rambam, commentary to Peah 1:1). A compromise approach is that it is both "between man and his fellow" (as per the mitzvah's simple understanding) as well as between man and G-d (as implied by its inclusion in the first five commandments - Kli Yakar).

A practical ramification of the above dispute is the need to ask forgiveness of one's parents for failing to honor them. The general rule is that a sine qua non of repentance for a violation of an obligation toward one's fellow man is asking forgiveness of the victim of the offense; whether one must seek his or her parents' forgiveness for failing to honor them is thus dependent on the above dispute about the character of the obligation of kibud av va'aim (see Minchas Chinuch ibid.).

But despite the idea that kibud av va'aim is based on an obligation of gratitude toward one's parents for their efforts and expenditures in raising him or her, even one who has been abandoned by one's parents must nevertheless honor them, just as the Jews in the wilderness were commanded to honor their parents despite the relatively little effort that child-rearing entailed there, due to the Heavenly provision of manna, water (from the well of Miriam), quail, and laundry of clothing (performed by the Cloud [of Glory] - Meshech Chochmah Devarim 5:16).

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

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

Win a
NERF
Laser-Ops
Set!



THE NEXT
RAFFLE WILL BE
February 26.

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I am equal to the plagues.
2. I was split in two.
3. Stand for me.
4. I can be read from both sides.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I am one of seven.
2. I mean more.
3. I added to the Torah.
4. I also left Egypt.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Az Yashir (I am a source for resurrection, I am one of ten, I'm like a wall, I am read daily.)

#2 Moshe's hands (We did not fight, We needed support, We inspired heavenward looking, We were heavy.)

Congratulations to
Eli Kinzbrunner
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 in conjunction with YISE invites men and women of the community to a lecture on:

The Making of a Minhag:

The Laws and Parameters of Jewish Customs

Presented by Rabbi Moshe Walter,

Rabbi of Woodside Synagogue Ahavas Torah and author of The Making of a Minhag

Sunday, Feb 10
at 9:30AM at
YISE, 1132
Arcola Ave.

