



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

Presented by Rabbi Menachem Winter, Rosh Kollel
From our archives

You shall observe My decrees and My laws which man shall perform them and by which he shall live, I am G-d (18:5).

The Sages derive a fundamental principle from the verse above. If observance of a Torah law may endanger life, preservation of life supersedes the commandment in all but the three cardinal sins (idolatry, murder, and illicit sexual relations) or an instance of the desecration of G-d's Name (Talmud Sanhedrin 74a). Thus, if one only had non-kosher food and would die of starvation if he did not consume the food, he is mandated to eat it and preserve his life.

Homiletically, the verse may be understood as an insight into how to overcome a common challenge. In contrast to the physical and sensual world, the spiritual domain may not impart immediate and intense gratification. This may lead to a lack of connection with and engagement in Torah and mitzvos.

To this the Torah responds: if one dedicates himself or herself to the commandments and performs them determinedly, even in the absence of a pleasure loop, he or she will soon taste their sweetness and the mitzvos will come alive for them. If, however, one tepidly nibbles at Torah and mitzvos, and does not uncover their beauty and luster, one will find them tasteless and unappealing. Through the earnest performance of the mitzvos themselves, one gains a capacity for the spiritual and is enveloped by its majesty.

It may indeed be that half-hearted spirituality doesn't appear to have the allure of its sensual counterpart. But with effort and determination, the spiritual universe is revealed and far outshines anything the physical world has to offer.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

When they approached before Hashem and they died (16:1).

They approached the upper light with their work in the Mishkan and they died. This is the "death of the kiss" that is the way the Tzadikim die... (Ohr HaChaim)

Six people did not die through the Angel of Death, Avraham, Yitzhak, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon and Miriam (Bava Basra 17a).

It seems that only six people died by a kiss from Hashem. How could the Ohr HaChaim attribute the death of Nadav and Avihu to a kiss from Hashem? Furthermore, how could this be attributed as the method that the Tzadikim die if it was only for six people?

Parsha Riddle

On which day of the week are people the weakest?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

When did Bnei Yisrael sing 'Az Yashir'? (Two answers)

Answer: 1) After they crossed the Yam Suf 2) Before they crossed the Yam Suf to be saved. Due to their great trust in Hashem, they were singing for the salvation they were confident Hashem would deliver. (Mechilta)

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In parashas Acharei Mos, the Torah commands:

You shall not lie with a man as one lies with a woman, it is an abomination.

Various medieval commentaries relate this commandment to the imperative of "the preservation of the human species," since the union of males "will not beget offspring" (Ramban), and while some of them also assert that the act is inherently abominable, R. Yehudah ha-Chassid explains simply that:

The reason the Torah prohibited male homosexuality is in order that they marry women, and thus fulfill the commandment to be fruitful and multiply.

This idea appears in the commentary to the Torah attributed to R. Yehudah ha-Chassid (and is also cited in his name in the medieval Tosafist anthology *Moshav Zekeinim*). When this commentary was published from manuscript for the first time, R. Moshe Feinstein vehemently opposed the publication, arguing that the work was a forgery containing noxious heresy, and one of the passages he declared unacceptable was the aforementioned rationale for the prohibition against male homosexuality. R. Moshe argued that the agenda of the "villains" who authored this passage was to weaken the severity of the prohibition: firstly, since problematizing the issue of why the Torah prohibits the practice implicitly denies that the act is self-evidently abhorrent, whereas it is actually universally reviled. Additionally, R. Yehudah ha-Chassid's actual explanation further diminishes and weakens the prohibition, by implying that such a union is not categorized as a form of forbidden sexual union (*arvah*) but is merely related to the fulfillment of a positive commandment, something that is not that important to people. It is thus prohibited to print such a thing just as it is prohibited to print heresy, since this constitutes "revealing aspects in the Torah that are not in accordance with *halachah*." (*Shut. Igros Moshe YD 3:115*)

R. Moshe's position here is in line with his stark view elsewhere that:

The desire for homosexual relations is against natural desire, and even the wicked do not have an inherent desire for it. Rather, their entire desire for it is only because it is something prohibited and the evil inclination seduces them to rebel against the will of G-d (*Ibid. OC:4:115*)

Other rabbinic thinkers, however, accept that "those with a homosexual orientation do indeed have a genuine desire for intimacy with members of the same gender." (See R. Chaim Rapoport, *Hakirah* vol. 13 pp. 33-34.)

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. We are double.
2. Totally similar.
3. Our end is different.
4. One would make the red white.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I cause wealth.
2. I allow entering.
3. I am for smoke.
4. Breath is good for me.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Hallel (My half is almost whole, At night I am for some, I am split in the Order, Don't confuse me with sleeping on the roof.)

#2 Pesach (I am a talking mouth, I jumped, I could be a korban, I could be your brother.)

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