



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

Influencers and Influencers

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

"They went up by the south, and he came to Chevron..." (13:22)

When describing the route taken by the spies sent to the Land of Canaan, the Torah shifts from plural to singular when mentioning their approach to Chevron. Rashi explains that this is because only Calev went to Chevron. Concerned that he might be enticed by the other spies to side with them in speaking negatively about the land, Calev went to *daven* at the burial place of the Forefathers for Divine assistance in resisting the influence of the other spies.

Rav Aharon Leib Steinman zt"l draws an essential lesson from Calev's decision. Apparently, Calev was fully aware that the other spies were a negative influence. Yet, that awareness was not sufficient to prevent them from impacting his own perspective. We are all extremely susceptible to the influence of the people with whom we associate. In the words of the Rambam (De'os 6:1): "It is human nature for a person's character and actions to be influenced by his friends and associates and for him to follow the local norms of behavior." Views and behaviors that at first seem questionable or even abominable can, over time, become our own despite our initial opposition. It was out of this concern that Calev felt the need to *daven* for Divine assistance in resisting the influence of the other spies.

When choosing a community, social circle, or workplace, we must be aware of the way we are impacted by our environment and aim to surround ourselves with positive role models. If we find it necessary to be in a place where there is a potential negative influence, we should take Calev's example and *daven* that G-d help us remain true to ourselves.

Rav Mattisyahu Solomon, based on a published letter of the Chazon Ish, shares an additional strategy for resisting negative influences: Recognize your role as an influencer. When a person embraces the idea that he or she can act as a positive role model for others, the dynamic changes. *We* are the role models for others to learn from. If one consistently maintains this outlook, it can help shield a person from conforming to the negative ideals and values of their environment.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

"How much longer must I endure this evil assembly (eidah) that provokes to complain against Me?" (14:27)

From where do we know that ten people are necessary for a minyan that is engaged in a holy matter? Rav Chiya bar Abba said, the verse says (Vayikra 22:32): "I shall be sanctified amongst (mitoch) B'nei Yisrael." The amount of people needed to create a group worthy of being called amongst (mitoch) is ten, as the verse says (Bamidbar 16:21) "Separate yourselves from amongst (mitoch) the assembly (eidah)." An assembly/eidah is ten people, since Hashem referred to the evil spies as an assembly/eidah (twelve minus Yehoshua and Calev). Therefore, a quorum for holy matters requires ten people (Talmud Megilla 23b).

How can a requirement regarding holy matters be derived from the spies who did not act in a holy matter? In fact, they even denied Hashem's capabilities (Sotah 35a)! This does not seem to be a befitting source for a halacha regarding a holy matter.

Parsha Riddle

Which mitzvos (other than those dependent on being in the Land of Israel) did all the B'nei Yisrael not fulfill in the desert?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

What connection is there between our Parsha and Shlomo Hamelech's throne?

Answer: The image of the Menorah was engraved on the back of Shlomo HaMelech's throne.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Shelach* (14:29-35), the Torah relates the doom that Hashem pronounced upon the Israelites due to the sin of the spies:

In this Wilderness shall your carcasses drop; all of you who were counted in any of your numbering, from twenty years of age and above, whom you provoked against Me; if you shall come to the (promised) Land ... But your carcasses shall drop in this Wilderness. Your children shall roam in the Wilderness for forty years and bear your guilt, until your carcasses shall cease to be, in the Wilderness. Like the number of the days that you spied out the Land ... shall you bear your iniquities – forty years – and you shall comprehend straying from me. ... In this Wilderness shall they cease to be, and there shall they die!

But despite this explicit, reiterated explanation for the fate of the Israelite population that had left Egypt, the Rambam and Ibn Ezra offer an alternate rationale for this fate:

It is contrary to man's nature that ... a person trained to work as a slave with mortar and bricks, or similar things, should interrupt his work, clean his hands, and at once fight with real giants. It was the result of G-d's wisdom that the Israelites were led about in the wilderness till they acquired courage. For it is a well-known fact that travelling in the wilderness, and privation of bodily enjoyments, such as bathing, produce courage, whilst the reverse is the source of faint-heartedness: besides, another generation rose during the wanderings that had not been accustomed to degradation and slavery. (Guide to the Perplexed 3:32, and see Ibn Ezra *Shemos* 14:13)

It is unclear how this explanation for the fate of the Israelites who had left Egypt can be reconciled with the seemingly different Biblical one, but in any event, this perspective of the Rambam and Ibn Ezra is consistent with a general principle of our tradition that Hashem generally prefers to maintain the natural order to the extent possible, and although He occasionally does perform miracles, He does so only when necessary. Thus, although He could have miraculously granted the Israelites who had left Egypt victory over the giants of the Promised Land despite their unmartialness, He preferred instead to engineer their demographic replacement by a generation better suited for fighting.

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I caused joy on Mordechai.
2. Don't use a calzone.
3. You can sea my color.
4. I was lost.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I am four yet eight.
2. I am knotty.
3. I am wrapped.
4. I equal 613.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Mon/Mannah (I was a riddle, I caused complaining, I was bottled, I revealed your piety.)

#2 Menorah Lights (We were tilted, We were all day, Step up for me, We caused a holiday.)

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