



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

On the last day of his life, Moshe gathered the entire nation together - from the great leaders to the wood choppers and water carriers - to bring them into a covenant with G-d. The covenant confirmed the Children of Israel as G-d's chosen, both for those present and for all future generations. Moshe warned them against straying after idolatry, and related its devastating consequences. If the people sinned, the nation would be punished and sent into exile. Moshe also prophesied that the nation would ultimately repent and G-d would, in turn, show His great love for the people and redeem them.

Moshe then revealed to the people that his leadership and life were drawing to a close and that G-d had chosen Yehoshua to assume the mantle of leadership and lead them into the Land. Moshe charged Yehoshua to be strong and courageous and to place his trust in G-d. Moshe then wrote the "song" of Haazinu at G-d's command, which was to be taught to the nation. The Book of the Torah, transcribed by Moshe, was given to the Tribe of Levi to be placed near the Aron (Ark) for safekeeping. Finally, Moshe assembled the leaders and once again warned them of the consequences of turning against G-d (31:28).

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein questions why this additional gathering of the leaders was necessary. Weren't they already gathered together with the rest of the nation?

In answering this question, Rabbi Feinstein shares with us the message which the Torah is communicating to us here. Moshe was keenly aware of the transformative powers of the Torah and understood the innate spiritual strength of the people. Each and every Jew - from the wise and righteous Tzaddik to the simple wood chopper - is capable of greatness. All that is needed is a true commitment and deep desire to climb ever higher. Hence, Moshe wasn't specifically calling the leaders. Rather, recognizing the greatness inherent in the entire nation, he was calling to each and every Jewish man, woman, and child to actualize their own great potential and to be worthy of being leaders themselves.

This powerful lesson is very relevant as we approach Rosh Hashana. Let us not be constrained by our imagined, and often self-imposed, limitations. Rather, let each and every one of us believe in the great power of Torah to transform and elevate us personally. We need only to truly desire it, for it is forever within our grasp.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Now, write this song for yourselves, and teach it to Bnei Yisrael (31:19).

"When Yehoshua was in Yericho, he raised his eyes and there was a man standing in front of him...Yehoshua asked him, "Are you from us, or from the enemy?" He told Yehoshua, "I am an angel of Hashem, now I have come..." (Yehoshua 5:13)

With the word "us" Yehoshua intended to reference Torah study, asking if he was in trouble for the lack of Torah study, and with the word "enemy" he meant to reference korbanos, which protects from the enemy (Tosfos Megilla 3a).

The angel rebuked Yehoshua, "Yesterday you did not bring the korban Tamid and today you have forsaken your learning." Yehoshua asked the angel, "For which issue are you rebuking me?" The angel answered, "I came for now (today's shortcoming)." (Megilla 3a).

The angel used the word now as a hint to Torah study because the word "now" is used in reference to Torah study in the verse, "So now, write this song for yourselves and teach it to Bnei Yisrael" (Tosfos).

Why did the angel use a different word from the word that Yehoshua had used to reference Torah study?

Parsha Riddle

What is the source in this week's Parsha implying it should be permitted to bring young children to Shul?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

What letter does not appear in the parsha of Bikkurim?

Answer: Samech

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In parashas Nitzavim (29:28), the Torah states: "The hidden [sins] are for Hashem, our G-d, but the revealed [sins] are for us and our children forever, to carry out all the words of this Torah." Rashi explains:

And if you say, But what can we do? You threaten the many with punishment because of the sinful thoughts of one individual ... But surely no man can know the secret thoughts of his fellow! Now, I reply: I do not threaten to punish you because of secret thoughts, for these belong to the L-rd our G-d and He will exact punishment from that individual; but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children that we may put away the evil from our midst; and if we do not execute judgment upon them, the whole community will be punished. ... (Cf. Sanhedrin 43b-44a)

According to this approach, Hashem does impose collective punishment on the entire nation for the sins of individuals, but only for those sins that are "revealed"; there is a collective duty to punish the perpetrators of such sins, and Hashem punishes delinquency of this duty. Absent such delinquency, however, Hashem does not impose collective punishment for the sins of individuals, and human courts are certainly barred from doing so, as per the Torah's admonition in parashas Ki-Seitzei (24:16):

Fathers shall not be put to death because of sons, and sons shall not be put to death because of fathers; a man should be put to death for his own sin.

The single exception to this rule (at least with respect to human courts acting in accordance with normal Torah law) is the case of the city that was lead astray to worship idols (*ir ha-nidachas*), where some authorities maintain that the wives and minor children of those who sinned are executed along with the sinners, despite their innocence. Others, however, utterly reject the idea of executing innocent people, declaring (with regard to children) that "it would be sacrilege to Hashem to (prescribe) evil!" (See *Tosefta Sanhedrin* ch. 14; *Yalkut Shimoni* 888; Rambam *Avodas Kochavim* 4:6; *Kitab al-Rasa'il* pp. 17,45-46; Ramban and Ralbag to *Devarim* 13:16.)

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. We are over "for us and our children."
2. We are for delayed punishment.
3. We are not polka.
4. We can be found on the kiss.

#2 WHO AM I?

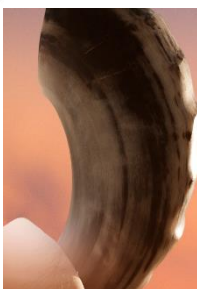
1. I am caused by sinning.
2. I cause destruction.
3. I hint to Esther.
4. Hidden.

Last Week's Answers

#1 *Parshas Bikkurim* (I am caused by the first, I am part of the 'order,' History is my essence, I am loud.)

#2 *Maaser* (You Confess for me, I am a tenth but I don't make a minyan, I am holy, I cause blessing.)

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Introductory remarks by
Rabbi Menachem Winter
Rosh Kollel, Greater Washington Community Kollel

PRE-ROSH HASHANA

virtual EVENING OF INSPIRATION

featuring words of insight and inspiration from Rabbis of our community.

Wednesday, Sept 13 at
8:15pm on Zoom

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