



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

# SHABBOS DELIGHTS

## TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

### Who Really Benefits?

Presented by Rabbi Zacharia Schwartz, Kollel Adjunct

**“Count the heads of the sons of Kehas... from thirty years and up... this is the work of the sons of Kehas... the holy of holies” (4:2-4)**

Our *Parsha* describes the role of the Levite family of *Kehas* including tending to the “the holy of holies” – the responsibility of carrying the *Aron Kodesh* during the Jewish People’s travels in the wilderness. The *Torah* describes this service as belonging to men aged 30-50. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein explains that this age requirement was mandated, apparently, because people in this age group typically possess the physical strength necessary for the task. But, asks Rabbi Feinstein, *Chazal* tell us that the *Aron Kodesh* didn’t really need to be carried – it was able to carry itself. Accordingly, why would any age requirement be necessary?

Rabbi Feinstein answers that, although the *Aron Kodesh* did not truly need anyone to carry it, once there was a *Mitzvah* for the members of *Kehas* to carry it, the *Mitzvah* needed to be carried out with a full complement of strength.

There is a lesson here for all of us. *Hashem* has a plan for the world, and it will ultimately be achieved, one way or another. But *Hashem* gives us the opportunity to do our part in bringing that plan to fruition. When we do so with love and dedication, we are the ones who truly benefit. *Hashem* is perfect and all-powerful - our performance of *Mitzvos* does not benefit Him in any way. Rather, *Hashem*, in His great kindness, has given us the opportunity to perfect *ourselves* and become part of His eternal plan by doing His will. What a profound way to think about our *Torah* learning and *Mitzvah* performance as we approach *Shavuos* – the celebration of our receiving of the *Torah* – as well as throughout the entire year!

**Wishing you a Good Shabbos!**

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**This week’s Shabbos Delights is sponsored l’iluy nishmas Shlomo Yaakov ben Yosef a”h, father of Diana Ruchelman. His yahrzeit will be on the 8<sup>th</sup> of Sivan.**

## TABLE TALK

### Point to Ponder

Four times a year the world is judged: On Pesach regarding the grain, on Shavuot regarding the fruit of the tree, on Rosh Hashana all mankind is judged, and on Sukkos regarding water (Rosh Hashana 1:2).

Ezra set up the reading of the Torah, as such, that we read the curses in Sefer Devarim before Rosh Hashana and the curses in Sefer Vayikra before Shavuot. Why? Abaye explained, in order that we should have the year and its curses finish. We understand how the curses in Sefer Devarim accomplish this, since it is read before Rosh Hashana, the Day of Judgment, but why is Shavuot considered to be a new year? Since we are judged regarding the fruit of the tree on Shavuot (Megilla 31b).

As Pesach is also a Day of Judgment, why did Ezra specifically set up the reading this way? He could have considered Pesach to be the beginning of a new year.

### Parsha Riddle

**Besides Matan Torah, which famous event occurred at Har Sinai?**

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

**How does the letter vav "guarantee" the coming of Moshiach?**  
**Answer: Yaakov Avinu took the letter "Vav" from Elyahu. Five times Elyahu's name appears without a vav and Yaakov's appears with an extra vav as collateral that Elyahu will ensure the coming of Moshiach. (Rashi 26:42)**

## HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

### HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Bamidbar* (2:2), Hashem commands: "The Children of Israel shall encamp, each man by his banner (*diglo*) according to the insignias of their fathers' household (*be-osos le-veis avosam*) ..." The Torah then proceeds to list four banners, of the camps of Yehuda, Reuven, Ephraim, and Dan. Some commentators understand that only these tribes had their own banners, while others understand that each of the twelve tribes had their own (see Abarbanel). The Netziv goes so far as to explain that each family (*beis av*) within a tribe had its own version of the tribal flag, differentiated by letters of the *aleph beis* (*osos – Ha'amek Davar*).

The Biblical text itself is silent on the appearance of these flags. Some explain that each tribe's flag was the color of its stone on Aharon's breastplate (*Tanchuma* 12, Rashi); others explain that each tribe's flag contained an image associated with that tribe, such as a lion for Yehuda and an ox for Ephraim as per Yaakov's similes in *parashas Vayechi* (*Lekach Tov*, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra).

It seems that this system of flags was only used during the sojourn of the children of Israel in the desert; the *halachic* tradition contains no discussion of flags. Various contemporary authorities have considered whether the modern Israeli flag has any *halachic* significance. The general consensus is that it does not have a formal *halachic* status of holiness, and thus flags that are no longer usable do not need to be buried the way "*sheimos*" do, although some Religious Zionist thinkers recommend that they should nevertheless be treated respectfully, e.g. wrapped and sealed in a bag before being placed in the garbage (R. Zalman Baruch Melamed, R. Yaakov Ariel, R. Yuval Cherlow). R. Yosef Dov Soloveitchik considers the flag to have an element of holiness, since it is associated with the blood of thousands of young Jews who died in the defense of the Land of Israel and its inhabitants during the War of Independence (*Chamesh Derashos*, cited by R. Ari Yitzchak Shvat, *Degel Yisrael be-Mekorot ha-Yahadut*).

R. Moshe Feinstein, on the other hand, considers the Israeli flag to be a "memorial to the acts of the evildoers" (i.e., anti-religious individuals) and thus ideally should not have a place in Jewish society, but he admonishes that "*chas ve-shalom* to make *machlokes* out of this." (*Igros Moshe* OC 1:46)

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

## KIDS KORNER

### Who Am I?

#### #1 WHO AM I?

1. I pre-dated the world.
2. I am written in black, yet I was a blueprint.
3. I am for all.
4. I am named for Moshe.

#### #2 WHO AM I?

1. I can cause a plague.
2. Use money.
3. For me some use a verse.
4. Don't confuse me with royalty.

#### Last Week's Answers

**#1 Extra "vav" in Yaakov** (I come from Elyahu, Guarantor for redemption, I usually connect, I can be a hook.)

**#2 Shalom** (I equal all, The blessing container, Birchas Shema shows my importance, I am not complete.)

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