



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

# SHABBOS DELIGHTS

## TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

### Giant Deeds

Presented by Rabbi Moshe Sadwin, Kollel Adjunct

**"Hashem said to Moshe, 'Do not be afraid of him, for I have delivered him into your hand.'" (21:34)**

At the end of our Parsha, the Jewish nation reach the land of Og, king of Bashan. Hashem reassures Moshe that he should not fear Og. Why would Moshe be afraid that he needs Hashem's reassurance? He had just witnessed how Hashem had destroyed the powerful Emorite nation, so why would Bashan be any different?

Rashi quotes the Gemara (Niddah 61a) that explains that Moshe was afraid because Og, king of Bashan, actually had a unique merit. He had done a good deed hundreds of years prior. In Parshas Vayeira, during the war between the four kings and the five kings, Avraham's nephew, Lot, was captured by the four kings and held hostage. Og was the person who fled from the battlefield and alerted Avraham resulting in Avraham entering the war and ultimately rescuing Lot from their hands. This was Og's sole merit – revealing to Avraham that his nephew Lot was captured.

This is puzzling, however, because our Sages reveal to us that Og's intentions were far from noble. Og's reason for telling Avraham about Lot was in order that Avraham would go to war against the powerful kings and inevitably fall in battle. Then, Og reasoned, he would be able to marry Avraham's wife Sara, his ultimate goal. Why would there be any thought that this should be a source of merit for Og? Og's sole purpose was to get Avraham killed!

The answer is that Moshe recognized that any positive action – even devoid of good intent – is still a source of merit. A good deed, no matter how small, opens a wellspring of goodness from Hashem. Therefore, since Og played an important role in rescuing Lot, there was cause for concern on Moshe's part, and Hashem had to reassure him that the Jewish people would still be victorious. We learn from here that every *mitzvah* has a power that cannot be underestimated – and how much more so one that is done with the proper intentions! Let us strive to take advantage of every mitzvah opportunity both small and large!

**Wishing you a Good Shabbos!**

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## TABLE TALK

### Point to Ponder

**The Canaanite king of Arad... warred against Bnei Yisrael... Bnei Yisrael made a vow to Hashem, "If You deliver this people..." (21:1-2)**

These were people of Amalek who changed their manner of speech to be like that of the Canaanites. They did this in order that Bnei Yisrael should think that they are from Canaan, and would daven to be saved from the Canaanites. Since they were really Amalekim, their prayer would not be effective. However, Bnei Yisrael noticed a discrepancy. The clothing was that of Amalek, but the speech was that of Canaan. Unsure as to which nation was attacking them, they asked Hashem to deliver them from "this people", and were answered (Rashi).

If they were trying to fool Bnei Yisrael, why did they only change their language? They should have also changed their clothing, and would not have given Bnei Yisrael any leads as to their true nationality. Why couldn't they dress up as Canaanites as well?

### Parsha Riddle

**Which three mountains were not flattened by the Ananei HaKovod (Clouds of Glory)?**

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

**Last week's riddle:**

**What is the connection between Akeidas Yitzchak and the swallowing of Korach?**

**Answer: Both the ram that replaced Yitzchak and the mouth of the earth that opened to swallow Korach were created during *bein hashmoshos (twilight)* of the first Friday night of creation. (Avos 5:6)**

## HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

### HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

*Parashas Chukas* contains the narrative of the crisis of "the *mei merivah* – waters of strife" in which Moshe and Aharon are condemned for sinning, although its language is very unclear about the precise nature of the sin, resulting in numerous different interpretations being offered by the commentators.

The interpretation of Rabbeinu Chananel, cited and endorsed by the Ramban, is as follows:

[T]he sin consisted of their saying, are 'we' to bring you forth water out of this rock? They should [not have said "are we", but] "shall the Eternal bring you forth water?" ... And [since they did not say so], perhaps the people thought that Moshe and Aharon brought forth the water for them out of the rock through their own wisdom [and that it was not a Divine miracle]. ...

According to R. Chananel, the sin of Moshe and Aharon was their failure to ensure that the people understood that they were mere emissaries of Hashem, and were not performing this great feat by their own power.

Five centuries after R. Chananel, a certain orator (whose identity is apparently unknown), expounding upon the sin of the Golden Calf, asserted that the Jewish people had actually deified Moshe, and that when the Torah recounts that "Moshe pleaded before Hashem, **his** G-d" on their behalf (*Shemos* 32:11), Moshe meant to say: "If **they** have made me a god, it does not matter, because **I** accept You as G-d." R. David ibn Zimra (the Radvaz) was appalled at this idea, since if Moshe actually knew that the people had deified him, why did he not correct them and explain to them the truth that "there is no G-d besides Hashem" (see *Tehillim* 18:32)? And if he indeed corrected them and they refused to repudiate their deification, he should have judged them as idolaters (i.e., and executed them – *Shut. Radvaz chelek 4 simanim* 1211 and 1258).

The unknown orator's idea is somewhat similar to that of R. Chananel, but he goes much further than him; while R. Chananel merely asserts that Moshe used, on one instance, language that (may have) led people to believe that one particular miracle that he performed was by his own power rather than Hashem's, the orator (as understood by the Radvaz) was apparently asserting that Moshe had knowingly allowed the people to believe that he was actually G-d, an idea that the Radvaz finds outrageous.

PRESENTED BY  
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

## KIDS KORNER

### Who Am I?

#### #1 WHO AM I ?

1. I am one of ten.
2. I am not a book, but I am red.
3. For the wisest I am a mystery.
4. I was a reward for honor.

#### #2 WHO AM I ?

1. I was hurt for words.
2. I hurt for words.
3. My replica was the salvation.
4. Adding a 'saf' makes me copper.

#### Last Week's Answers

**#1 The mouth that opened in the earth** (With this you shall know, I was a new creation, Steaming, I got a mouthful.

**#2 Reuven** (I was the neighbor, I am the firstborn, See son, Impulsive.)

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