



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

Sefer Devarim begins with the nation on the banks of the Jordan River, finally poised to cross the river and enter the Land. Moshe, in the last few weeks of his life, prepares the people for the inevitable temptations and challenges they would encounter in their new life. Drawing on their past missteps in the desert, Moshe fortifies them with faith in G-d and warns against deviating from a path of righteousness and goodness. Interestingly, Moshe does not explicitly reference their sins, but alludes to them by means of mentioning the places where they occurred. This, Rashi tells us, citing the Medrash, is in order to preserve the people's dignity.

This explanation is very puzzling. We see many instances, even in Sefer Devarim itself, where Moshe explicitly mentions the past errors of the nation. Why is Moshe specifically concerned over the people's dignity here?

The Ohr Chodosh proposes a very insightful and relevant answer. True, Moshe would eventually rebuke the people and refer to their errors directly. But when initiating this undertaking to admonish the people and call attention to their lapses, it was necessary to begin in the gentlest of ways. Once the people felt Moshe's love and saw his concern for their dignity, a powerful and enduring bond was formed. They understood that he was urging them as a caring father. Confident now that his words would be accepted as such, Moshe was able to be more direct in drawing attention to their misdeeds.

As community leaders, educators, or parents, we are often called on to discipline or rebuke our charges. Success is determined by first forming a loving bond with our congregants, students, or children. When they feel our devotion to their welfare and concern for their dignity, our words will have its desired effect.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

It was in the fortieth year... Moshe spoke to Bnei Yisrael... (1:3)

This teaches us that Moshe chastised Bnei Yisrael shortly before his death. He took a lesson from Yaakov who waited to chastise his children until he was on his death bed. Yaakov said, "Reuven, my son, I did not chastise you until now, so you should not leave me and go to Eisav." There are four reasons why a person should wait to deliver mussar until it is closer to his death... as Yehoshua did not chastise Bnei Yisrael until it was close to his death, and so did Shmuel and Dovid HaMelech conduct themselves... (Rashi)

Does this mean that the mitzvah, "Rebuke your friend," (Kedoshim 19:17) only applies shortly before a person's death?

Parsha Riddle

Where is there a source in this week's parsha that one should not eat food that was cooked by a non-Jew?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

When does a person need atonement, even though they did not perform a sin?

Answer: If they intend to sin, but end up doing a permitted act, as in the case of the woman who violates her vow, yet unbeknownst to her, her husband had already annulled it.

HATORAH V' HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Devarim* (1:9-15), Moshe relates: "I said to you ... Provide for yourselves distinguished men, who are wise, understanding, and well known to your tribes, and I shall appoint them as your heads. ... So I took the heads of your tribes, distinguished men, who were wise and well known, and I appointed them as heads over you, leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, and leaders of tens, and officers for your tribes."

The Rambam (*Sanhedrin* 2:1) writes: "We appoint to a *Sanhedrin* - both to the Supreme *Sanhedrin* and to a minor *Sanhedrin* - only men of wisdom and understanding, of unique distinction in their knowledge of the Torah and who possess a broad intellectual potential. They should also have some knowledge concerning other intellectual disciplines, e.g., medicine, mathematics, the fixation of the calendar, astronomy, astrology, and also the practices of fortune-telling, magic, sorcery, and the hollow teachings of idolatry, so that they will know how to judge them."

R. Moshe ha-Cohen of Lunel (the Remach) is baffled by the rationale for the requirement that judges have knowledge of "medicines, mathematics, and the wisdom of the astronomy." R. Yosef Karo justifies the requirement of knowledge of "the fixation of the calendar and astronomy" as necessary for the establishment of the calendar, but has no suggestion as to the relevance of knowledge of medicine and mathematics to judges. R. David ibn Zimra (the Radvaz) explains that knowledge of medicine is necessary in order to distinguish between remedies that are based on natural law and those that are rooted in the paranormal, since the Sabbath may only be desecrated to save a life by the utilization of the former (see *Mishnah Yoma* 8:6, Commentary of the Rambam *ibid.*, and *Shut. ha-Radvaz* 1526), and to assess the lethality of particular poisons (which is relevant to establishing the perpetration of a murder). The *Mirkevot ha-Mishneh* explains that knowledge of mathematics and geometry is necessary in various *halachic* contexts, such as the determination of whether a *mikveh* has the requisite *halachic* capacity. The *Ha-Meir la-Aretz* explains that knowledge of medicine is necessary since it is the prerogative of the court to authorize physicians to practice (see *Shulchan Aruch YD* 336:1). (Note that some maintain that in contemporary times, this role is filled by the government - see *Tzitz Eliezer* 5 *Ramas Rachel* 22:1-4. Cf. R. Yossi Sprung, *Ha'im Rabbanim ve-Dayanim Tzrichim le-Havin be-Refuah?*)

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. We were from the father.
2. We were given to Lot.
3. Our men are prohibited.
4. Do not fight us.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I am nine of ten.
2. I have nothing to do with a father.
3. One day I will be happy.
4. I was caused by crying.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Nedarim (Vows) (I am binding even before Bar Mitzvah, I begin the Yom Kippur service, I am for Erev Rosh Hashanah, Watch your words.)

#2 Kohen Gadol (My death is prayed for, I must remain holy, I was anointed, I have more clothes.)

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