



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

We all know the axiom, "you don't get a second chance to make a first impression." Nowhere is this more evident than the job interview. It is crucial for the interviewee to make a good impression, and he has only this one opportunity to share his pedigree, demonstrate his various skills, and strike a rapport with the potential employer. A successful interview usually requires research beforehand to discover the corporate culture and learn the company jargon, all in order to enable the interviewee to ingratiate himself with the potential suitor.

As our Parsha begins, Yosef is still imprisoned in an Egyptian jail. Separated from his beloved father as a mere teenager, sold into slavery by his own brothers, and unjustly accused and incarcerated for a heinous crime he did not commit, Yosef is now presented with a chance for freedom. Pharaoh, king of Egypt, has a vivid dream that he senses is fraught with meaning and import, but all the king's wise men and advisers are unable to decode it. The royal butler, having experienced firsthand Yosef's prowess in dream interpretation two years earlier, steps forward and tells of Yosef and his skills to Pharaoh. Yosef is hurriedly taken from the jail, prepared for the royal audience, and presented to the king. Yosef's chance at liberty, wealth, and prestige is at hand, if only he can effectively ingratiate himself to the powerful king.

Unlike modern interviews where the potential employee must perfect the art of self-promotion, Yosef takes a decidedly different approach. When Pharaoh tells Yosef of his reputation as a skilled interpreter of dreams, Yosef responds "it is not my wisdom, rather G-d will answer regarding Pharaoh's welfare." Not only does Yosef not take credit for his skill, he wholly and definitively ascribes credit to G-d. Later, after Pharaoh relates his dream, Yosef begins his interpretation with the words "what G-d is about to do, He has related to Pharaoh," once again invoking G-d and His powers. And just to make sure the message was clear, Yosef twice more invokes G-d and His guiding role in relaying advice concerning Egyptian affairs.

After failing to adequately promote himself to ensure his liberty, what was the end result of the royal interview? The verses following Yosef's interpretation provide the answer: Pharaoh said to his servants: "Will we be able to find a man like this, who has the spirit of G-d within him?" Pharaoh then said to Yosef: "Since G-d has made all this known to you, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace and by your word shall all my people be sustained; only by the throne shall I outrank you." Then Pharaoh said to Yosef "Look, I have placed you in charge of all the land of Egypt." Pharaoh then removed his ring from his hand and put it on Yosef's hand. Thus, he appointed him over the entire land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh said to Yosef "I am Pharaoh; but without you no man may lift his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt." Not bad! Yosef deflected any credit from himself and directed it to G-d instead. Pharaoh rewarded him with not only his freedom, but made him viceroy and ruler over Egypt!

Whether we are searching for employment, making an effort to secure or enhance our livelihood, or attempting any important endeavor, we may think it expedient to adopt the customs and values of the people around us. The Torah reminds us otherwise. When we remain true to our timeless values and eternal morals, not only will we merit G-d's Divine assistance, we will be recognized and appreciated as a person rooted in unshakable principles, transcending the protean and mutable values of society.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

The opinion of the Rambam is that women are not obligated to recite Hallel on Chanukah. (Sdei Chemed Chanukah 9)

Women are obligated to light a menorah on Chanukah. They are forbidden to perform work for half an hour after lighting the menorah because they were also saved by the miracle of Chanukah. (Orach Chaim 670:1)

Tosafos (Sukka 38a) explains that women are obligated to recite Hallel on Pesach because they were also emancipated from Egypt.

Since women were also saved during the war with the Greeks, why aren't they also obligated to recite Hallel on Chanukah?

Parsha Riddle

What hint is there in Parshas Mikeitz (which is almost always read on Chanukah) about Chanukah?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

At what point/points during the year does the Kesones Pasim (Yosef's striped coat) get mentioned during davening? Answer: In one of the prayer's recited by the congregation during Birchas Kohanim.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In parshas Mikeitz (44:1-17), Yosef frames his brother Binyamin for the theft of his goblet. Another Biblical account of a frame-up is the framing of Navos by King Achav and Queen Izevel (Melachim I 21), and a third account of a frame-up in our tradition appears in the Talmud Yerushalmi (Sanhedrin 6:3):

Shimon ben Shetach's hands were hot (this is apparently a reference to his zealotness in the punishment of sinners). There came a group of scoffers who said, let us take counsel, testify against his son, and kill him. They testified against him. He was sentenced to be executed. When he was taken to be killed, they told him, our Master, we are liars. His father wanted to return him; he told him, my father, if you want that salvation come through you, treat me as a target.

The Babylonian Talmud (Sanhedrin 44b) rules that a man sentenced to death based on the testimony of witnesses is executed even if the witnesses retract their testimony, due to the principle that "once a witness has stated his testimony, he may not then state a revision of that testimony," and this applies if they "[give] an explanation for having lied in their initial statement." How, then could Shimon ben Shetach have "wanted to return" his son upon the recantation of the witnesses?

A possible answer to this question is based on the Talmudic doctrine of the "fraudulent verdict":

From where is it derived that in a case where a judge who knows that the witnesses testifying before him are lying even though he is unable to prove it through their cross-examination and with regard to the verdict the result will be that it is fraudulent, that he should not say: **Since the witnesses are testifying** and I cannot prove their deceit, **I will decide** the case based on their testimony, **and let the chain [kolar] of culpability for the miscarriage of justice be placed around the neck of the false witnesses?** It is derived as **the verse states: "Distance yourself from a false matter."** (Shevuos 30b-31a)

Some accordingly suggest that since in the case of Shimon ben Shetach's son it had become clear that the witnesses had given false testimony, there were indeed grounds for his exoneration (but the heroic son urged his father not to avail himself of this opportunity in order to avoid the appearance of favoritism and a double standard – see Kinsei ha-Dayanim [5779] pp. 399-400).

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I am hot.
2. Do I go up or down?
3. Publicity is my aim.
4. Do not put me around.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. We were in the mouth.
2. We caused worry.
3. Is it a plot?
4. We were returns.

Last Week's Answers

#1 The Sale of Yosef (I was caused by tranquility, I was caused by dreams, I was to Egypt, I was a blessing in disguise.)

#2 Yosef's Kesones Pasim (I caused jealousy, I was a proof of death, I was a sign of love, I was colorful.)

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