



The Greater Washington Community Kollel SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

Just You and Hashem

Presented by Rabbi Zacharia Schwartz, Kollel Adjunct

Parshas Ki Sisa recounts one of the most tragic stories in the Torah – the story of the golden calf. Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi, in Sefer HaKuzari, explains that the Jewish people did not intend to substitute the golden calf for Hashem, but rather that it should replace Moshe. The Jews felt that they needed some type of intermediary between them and Hashem and that if Moshe was gone, as they believed he was, someone or something would have to replace him. Among the many mistakes that led to this great sin was the belief that they could not directly interface with Hashem on their own.

On the flip side, we see from here that every Jew does have the ability to have a personal connection with Hashem. Every time we daven, learn Torah, or do a mitzvah, we have an opportunity to come close to Hashem in a powerful and intimate way. Connection, however, doesn't happen by itself. Instead, it comes from focusing one's heart, mind, and soul on the One with whom we wish to connect. Let us put in the focus and the effort to create a real connection during the many opportunities that we have to connect with Hashem. If we do, we can be sure that Hashem is on the other side, waiting to reciprocate.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Hashem said to Moshe, "Carve for yourself..." (34:1)

Hashem showed Moshe a block of sapphire and told him, "The trimmings should belong to you." It is from there that Moshe became wealthy. (Rashi)

Rav Yochanan said, "Hashem rests his Shechina (Presence) on someone who is strong, wealthy, wise... as we see by Moshe... he was wealthy as the verse says, 'Carve for yourself...'" (Nedarim 38a)

If one must be wealthy in order for Hashem to rest his Shechina on the person, why did Hashem wait until this point to make Moshe wealthy? He should have made Moshe wealthy earlier.

Parsha Riddle

Why was the Machatzis HaShekel collected in the month of Adar (during the time of the Bais HaMikdash)?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

How many books of Tanach are named for women?

Answer: 2 – Esther and Rus

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Parashas Ki Sisa contains the episode of the Golden Calf. A central problem of this narrative is the role of Aharon in the affair: Aharon is revered in our tradition and universally described as a very righteous man and a great leader, but a simple reading of our *parashah* seems to indicate that he played a leading role in the sin of the Golden Calf, and indeed, Moshe later related to the Children of Israel that "Hashem became very angry with Aharon to destroy him, so I prayed also for Aharon at that time" (*Devarim* 9:20).

Many midrashic and medieval commentators understand that Aharon was choosing the lesser of two evils, and attempting to mitigate as best as he could the terrible sin that the Children of Israel were intending to commit. Rashi, citing *Vayikra Rabbah*, explains:

Aharon saw many things; he saw Hur, his sister's son, who had reprimanded them, and whom they had killed [and understood that he, too, would be killed if he opposed them]. ... He saw what the situation was and said: It is better that the offense should attach itself to me than to them. ... He looked into the matter and said: If they build this altar themselves, one will bring a clod and another a stone and the result will be that their work will be accomplished all at once; through myself building it and being dilatory in my work, in the meantime Moshe may come.

Even his fear of being killed by the mob was not a selfish one, but rather a concern for the irreversible spiritual consequences to the Children of Israel of such a sin:

Aharon said to himself: **If I do not listen to them now, they will do to me as they did to Hur**, and the verse: **"Shall the priest and the prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the L-rd?"** (Lamentations 2:20), **will be fulfilled through me, and they will never have a remedy** for such a sin. It is **better** for them **to worship the calf**, as it is **possible they will have a remedy through repentance**. (*Sanhedrin* 7a)

Aharon's calculus – and the question of whether it was ultimately correct or not – has ramifications for the general question of the permissibility of condoning some degree of sin in order to forestall greater sin, a topic which is unfortunately beyond the scope of this column.

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I am for fundamentals of faith.
2. I am for Hashem's Ways.
3. I am for mitzvah obligation.
4. I am for expounding the Torah.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. Moshe's writing.
2. I raised a king.
3. I am not a cow.
4. I formed an idol.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Olive Oil (I was for the constant one, I was crushed, Only use my first, I float to the top.)

#2 Wine (I make you lose your mind, I am so you can't differentiate, Sometimes I am four times, I was present for the request.)

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