



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

Sponsored by the Cypess Family Foundation

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

The Company We Keep

Presented by Rabbi Zechariah Schwartz, Kollel Adjunct

In Parshas Vayeira, we find Avraham Avinu fervently praying to Hashem to spare the city of S'dom from destruction, as had been decreed by Hashem on account of their evil ways. The idea that Avraham would pray for such evil people is puzzling, especially considering that the nature of their wickedness was cruelty towards other people. Given that Avraham's core characteristic was kindness, it would seem that he should be on board with the destruction of an evil so diametrically opposed to his values.

Commentaries explain that the answer lies in the fact that Avraham only asked that the city should be saved if there was a critical mass of righteous people in the city. Avraham understood that as long as a quorum of people with the right values lived in the city, then all was not lost as the rest of the city could be influenced to mend their ways through their example.

This gives us a powerful insight into the impact that our surroundings have upon us. Whether or not we notice it, everything that we are exposed to influences us and our way of thinking in some way. The key to becoming the people that we want to be and achieving the personal growth that we desire, is to surround ourselves with the right influences.

There is another benefit to ensuring that we only expose ourselves to the right influences. Chazal tell us, "On the path that one wishes to travel, to there does [Hashem] lead him". By carefully curating the influences that we allow into our hearts and minds, we declare to Hashem who we really want to be, and Hashem, in kind, lends us the Divine support that we need to get there.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

Point to Ponder

For I (Hashem) have loved him (Avraham), because he commands his children and his household after him that they keep the way of Hashem. (18:19)

Why do I (Hashem) love him (Avraham)? Since he commands his household to follow My ways. (Rashi)

Hashem tested Avraham with ten tests, and he passed them all. That should be a greater sign of commitment to Hashem, and should cause Hashem to love him. Why does Hashem say He loves him because he commands his children to follow the way of Hashem?

TABLE TALK

Parsha Riddle

From where, in this parsha, do we learn the importance of Bikur Cholim?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Why are the tallis and tefillin worn specifically at Shacharis?

Answer: We merited the Mitzvah of Tallis and Tefillin as reward for Avraham denying strings and straps from the King of Sodom. Since Avraham instituted the tefilla of Shacharis we wear these mitzvos then. (Meshech Chochmah)

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Parashas Vayeira begins: Now the L-rd appeared to him (Avraham) in the plains of Mamre, and he was sitting at the entrance of the tent when the day was hot. And he lifted his eyes and saw, and behold, three men were standing beside him, and he saw and he ran toward them from the entrance of the tent, and he prostrated himself to the ground. And he said, "My lords (adonai), if only I have found favor in your eyes, please do not pass on from beside your servant."

The above translation of *adonai* as "my lords" follows the first interpretation offered by Rashi, that Avraham was addressing the men and beseeching them to partake of his hospitality. Rashi proceeds to offer a second interpretation, however, that Avraham was addressing Hashem and asking Him to wait while he attended to the men. As the Talmud (*Shabbos* 127a) explains:

Hospitality toward guests (*hachnasas orchin*) is greater than receiving the Divine Presence, as when Avraham invited his guests it is written: "And he said: L-rd (*Adonai*), if only I have found favor in Your eyes, please pass not from Your servant."

The *Toldos Yaakov Yosef* (*Devarim she-shamati mi-mori* 24) cites the Ba'al Shem Tov as explaining that "sometimes *hachnasas orchim* constitutes disruption of Torah study or tales of slander, etc., but nevertheless, 'Hachnasas orchim is greater.'"

R. Yitzchok Zilberstein (*Chashukei Chemed Sukkah* pp. 441-42) considers the case of a pauper who knocked on Reuven's door on Sukkos night and requested hospitality, since he had no place else to eat or sleep. Reuven's wife did not wish to grant the request, apparently due to her parsimony, and Reuven knew that if he disregarded her opposition, this would cause "some" tension in the home. In the course of his analysis, R. Zilberstein mentions having heard in the name of "the holy one" (presumably R. Menachem Mendel) of Riminov an explanation of the above Talmudic passage similar to the one attributed by the *Toldos Yaakov Yosef* to the Ba'al Shem Tov: Even where *hachnasas orchim* entails dissension (*machlokes*), which is the opposite of "receiving the Divine Presence," for when there is peace in a home the Divine Presence rests therein, one should not be concerned about this, and he should ignore his wife's parsimony and increase his *hachnasas orchim*, since "*hachnasas orchim* is greater than receiving the Divine Presence." (This author recommends that Rabbinic guidance should be sought before attempting to follow these teachings, particularly the latter.)

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I am not a raffle.
2. I made washing second.
3. I was appointed judge.
4. I was a prisoner of war.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. We were triple.
2. We were each for one.
3. We looked like men.
4. We were served.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Lot (I am not a portion, I confused the generations, I chose wickedness, The nephew.)

#2 People who had their name changed. (Avraham, Yehoshua, Sarah, Yaakov.)

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

GWCK invites the entire Jewish community to participate in

Jewish Unity Learning

a one-on-one and small group learning experience uniting Jews of all backgrounds and affiliations.

YOU can be a part of it!

Partner with us by registering as a learning "mentor" or a learning participant.

Partner with us by inviting friends, co-workers, neighbors, and family members to experience the vibrancy and connection at JUL.

Tuesday evenings at KMS | 8-9pm | For info visit jul.gwckollel.org

