



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

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TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

Standing Together

Presented by Rabbi Elihu Abbe, Senior Torah Educator

"You are standing today, all of you, before Hashem, your G-d..." (29:9)

What can we do to prepare for Rosh Hashanah?

That is the question that preoccupies all of us as Rosh Hashanah approaches. We want to merit a good year. We want to merit a life of closeness to Hashem. And yet, there are so many areas that we can work on. How can we determine what to prioritize?

In the opening verse of our parsha, "You are standing today, all of you, before Hashem, your G-d..." the Slonimer Rebbe finds the answer to our query. He quotes the Zohar who teaches that "today" is referring to Rosh Hashanah. The verse is teaching us that if we want to "stand" and succeed on Rosh Hashanah, we can do so by ensuring that we are comprised of "all of you" - a united people.

But our mission is much more than just being united. Rav Yisrael Salanter teaches that each individual should try his or her best to be someone who benefits the rest of the community. To live a life for the betterment of others. Whatever our pursuits, be they professional, communal, or familial, they can become more significant and meaningful when they are performed with the intent to help others. By recognizing the significance of our daily actions, we can transform our lives into a beautiful stream of kindness, serving Hashem by continuously helping His children.

Rav Shlomo Wolbe writes that when a person develops the recognition that he or she lives not only for their own sake, but that through them G-dliness can be increased in the world, they have attained the exalted level of serving Hashem *lishma* (for G-d's sake alone). Such a person, says Rav Wolbe, attains the greatest pleasure available to mankind, a spiritual and emotional sense of joy that can't be matched by any other worldly pleasure.

Our mission in life is to help G-d's children, to make the world a better place for all of humanity, and to bring G-dliness into the world. Through connecting to this mission, may we merit a *kesiva v'chasima tova* and a happy and sweet new year.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

Point to Ponder

TABLE TALK

Parsha Riddle

It (the Torah) is not in heaven, for you to say, "Who can ascend to heaven for us and take it for us, so that we can listen to it and perform it" (30:12).

This is generally interpreted to mean that it is man's responsibility and right, and not that of Heavenly bodies (e.g., angels), to interpret the Torah and determine the law. See Talmud Bava Metzia 59b. Yet, the Talmud, on Eiruvin 6b, relates a story wherein a Heavenly voice emanated stating that the halacha (law) follows the opinion of Bais Hillel, and the Sages followed that ruling. If the Torah is no longer in Heaven, however, why did the sages listen to the Heavenly voice and rule like Bais Hillel?

What is the greatest number of days (not including Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur) that Ashkenazim recite selichos in Elul and Tishrei in any year?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Where is there a reference to the mitzvah of Tefillin in this week's parsha?

Answer: Ki shem Hashem nikra olecha - they will see that the name of Hashem is upon you (28:10).

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In parashas Vayeilech (31:1-2), the Torah relates: "Moshe went and spoke these words to all of Israel. He said to them, 'I am a hundred and twenty years old today; I can no longer go out and come in, for Hashem has said to me, "You shall not cross this Jordan."'"

At the end of parashas Vezos HaBerachah (34:7), the Torah relates: "Moshe was one hundred and twenty years old when he died; his eye had not dimmed, and his vigor had not diminished."

At the end of parashas Bereishis (6:3), the Torah relates: "And Hashem said, 'My spirit shall not contend evermore with Man since he is but flesh; his days shall be a hundred and twenty years.'" While some understand this to be a warning of the annihilation of humanity via the Deluge in one hundred and twenty years (if it did not repent – Targumim; Rashi; Ibn Ezra), others understand Hashem to be saying that henceforth, the human lifespan would be reduced from the multiple centuries for which previous generations had lived to a mere one hundred and twenty years (Rosh [Hadar Zekeinim]; Abarbanel; Malbim).

The Talmud (Chullin 139b) connects these two instances of the figure of one hundred and twenty years. It relates that the residents of Pappunya asked R. Masnah: "Where in the Torah is there an allusion to Moshe?" and he replied with the phrase "since he is but flesh (כִּשְׂרָה הוּא בְּשָׂרָה)". Rashi explains that the word בְּשָׂרָה has the same numerical value (gematriya) as מֵשֶׁנָּה, and so the phrase "his days shall be a hundred and twenty years" alludes to the future birth of Moshe who would live for one hundred and twenty years.

There is a common custom to bless people to live "until one hundred and twenty years." This is apparently a relatively recent formulation not found in traditional sources, and some rabbinic thinkers reportedly opposed it, since there is no authoritative source for the idea that one cannot live longer than a hundred and twenty years and the expression thus constitutes a needless and arbitrary limitation of the subject's life. To the extent that the custom has a basis, it would seem to be rooted in either the verse in Bereishis according to the latter interpretation above, or in the fact that Moshe, the greatest of men, lived to one hundred and twenty.

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I am called a song.
2. I am called a testimony.
3. I mean teaching.
4. I am married.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I am for Elul and the Ten.
2. I contain the thirteen.
3. For some I am a month.
4. Mincha and I have something in common.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Bikkurim (You tie me, You bring me, You wave me, You save me.)

#2 Har Grizim & Har Eival (I divided the people, The bad for Evil, I had blessings, I had curses.)

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Rabbis of our community about
Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, and Sukkos

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SUNDAY, SEPT 6 at 8:15pm on ZOOM



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