



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

*It is an honor to present this week's Torah Minute from our archives.
The following was penned by our founder, Rabbi Kalman Winter ZT"L, in 2011.*

This week's parsha, Matos-Masei, concludes the Book of Numbers (Bamidbar). The first verse (chapter 33, verse 1) begins with an overview of all the forty-two encampments the Jews experienced during their forty year journey in the desert. The Midrash explains, the purpose for this review is to highlight G-d's kindness and providence to His people Israel. As a father who journeys with his ill son for medical treatment in a distant land, upon their return, healed in body and soul, the father reviews all the places at which they lodged. "Here, my son, remember we rested, you had a fever. Here you were chilled." Looking back in time, the father notes the challenges they endured and the ultimate salvation they merited. So too, G-d enumerates all the wanderings, challenges, and difficulties the Jews encountered during their forty year journey, and now He has brought them to the foot of the Promised Land, healed in body and soul.

The Midrash is difficult to understand. The parable compares the wanderings of the Jews to the boy who is ill. The child, through no fault of his own, was inflicted. However, the wanderings of forty years and their challenges were truly self-inflicted: the incident with the spies, complaints against the manna, the rebellion of Korach etc. The answer is that even when we rebelled, it was not done with malicious intent to negate and destroy our relationship with G-d. Rather it was an aberration in time. The Rabbis succinctly define sin in the following manner: "A person doesn't transgress unless a spirit of frivolity enters within."

As such, we can equate the malady of the child and our own history. Those periods of transgressions and rebellion were as an external force, a sickness of sorts. However, internally we were sound and committed in our love of G-d and His law. Thirty three hundred years later we remain the same. "The Jew, though he sins, remains a Jew." The essential self remains intact. We must endeavor in life to identify our true self, pierce the veil, and retrieve the dynamic and luminous soul and heritage embedded in the hearts and minds of each and every Jew.

Have a wonderful Shabbos!

Rabbi Menachem Winter

TABLE TALK

POINTS TO PONDER

Yerushalayim will be inhabited, without walls surrounding it (Zecharya 2:8).

Father of Compassion, do good with Zion according to Your will, rebuild the walls of Yerushalayim (Tefilla during removal of Sefer Torah from the Aron).

When Moshiach comes, will Yerushalayim be inhabited with a wall surrounding it or not?

PARSHA RIDDLE

How could someone be forced to go to the City of Refuge without having accidentally killed someone?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

My covenant of peace (25:12).

A pledge that Pinchas would not be harmed by supporters of Zimri (Ibn Ezra). Who else did Hashem assist so that they would not be killed for killing?

Answer: Kayin. Hashem placed a sign (a letter of Hashem's name) on him to stop those who met him from killing him, during his sojourn in exile after killing his brother (Bereishis 4:15).

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Parshas Matos recounts the victory of the Children of Israel in their battle against Midian, and provides a detailed inventory of the spoils of war seized by the victors, which were divided equally, by Divine command, between the combat soldiers and the general public (*Bamidbar* Chapter 31).

Centuries later, we have a Biblical record of an enduring policy established by King David, of equal sharing of spoils of war between soldiers engaging in combat and those remaining with the baggage (*Shmuel* I 30:20-25). The Medrash explains that King David's policy had its roots in the conduct of his forefather Abraham. After Abraham's victory over the Four Kings, he granted a portion of the plunder he had seized to Aner, Eshkol and Mamrei, despite their having remained behind with the baggage, unlike Abraham's servants who had actually engaged in battle alongside him (see Rashi to *Bereishis* 14:24).

R. Yechezkel Landau points out that it is clear that historically, the civilian populace generally received no share of the spoils of war, as we are told that in King David's time there had even been opposition to the men of the baggage train receiving a share, until he emphatically repudiated this ungenerous attitude and established his aforementioned policy. The granting of half the Midianite plunder to the general public in our *parshah* must therefore have been a special arrangement for this particular case (*Shut. Noda Be'Yehudah tinyana yoreh de'ah* #201).

Implicit in all the foregoing is the legitimacy of plundering the enemy; Rambam (*Yad Ha'Chazakah hilchos avadim* 9:4, *Shut. Pe'er Ha'Dor* #131) even extends this to private raiders operating under government sanction (similar to the famous Western European and American privateers authorized by letters of marque).

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

WHO AM I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I was born and died in the 16th century.
2. From less than two years came my fame.
3. The Lion
4. My mechtan (inlaws) set the table.
5. I knew a lot, but never reached understanding.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I am obligatory even before your Bar Mitzvah.
2. I begin the Yom Kippur service.
3. I am for Erev Rosh Hashanah.
4. Watch your words.

Last Issue's Answers:

#1 Rashi * (Rabban Shel Yisroel; I started with my father; I died with "Pure"; I am the inside; there is a vineyard named for me.)

#2 Yehoshua (I was one of twelve; I was protected by the blessing; I was given a letter; I am referred to as the moon.)

* *Rashi, which is the acronym for his name, Rav Shlomo Yitzchaki, is also the acronym of Rabban Shel Yisroel. Rashi's opening commentary on Chumash begins with a teaching of Rav Yitzchok, Rashi's father. Rashi's last word before he died was the word tahor / pure in his commentary to Makos 19a. His commentary on Gemara is always found on the inside of the page.*

All children
13 and under
who answer a
"Who Am I?"
correctly will
be entered
into a raffle to

Win a
pair of
Spy Specs
Video
Glasses!



The next
raffle will be
August 4th.

Mazel Tov to Shaya Scher, winner from last week!

Visit www.gwckollel.org to submit your answers. Answer as many as you can because each correct answer will entitle you to another raffle ticket and increase your chances of winning.

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

The Kollel Intersession begins this Friday!
All programming and classes will resume on Sunday, August 16th.
Have a great summer!

For information on the Kollel Intersession Learning program, or for the intersession LAST program for High School boys, contact Rabbi Zakem at yzakem@gwckollel.org.