



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

Bitter or Sweet

Presented by Rabbi Moshe Sadwin, Kollel Scholar

As they circled around the Moabite lands in the wilderness, the Jewish people grew weary and bemoaned the hardships of the route. They complained that Hashem had taken them to the desert where they lacked food and water. Hashem punished them by sending an outbreak of poisonous snakes, causing many to die. After the Jews begged Hashem's forgiveness for their disparaging words, He sent salvation in the form of yet another snake. Hashem instructed Moshe to fashion a copper snake and raise it up for all to see; anyone who had been bitten by the deadly snakes should gaze at *this* snake and would be healed.

The Talmud (Rosh Hashanah 29a) explains that the copper snake was not the actual source of the antidote; the healing came, in fact, from Hashem. The copper snake was merely a conduit for the Jewish people's prayers to Him, resulting in healing.

Why did Hashem choose a snake to channel the Jews' prayers to Him for salvation?

Perhaps Hashem's message was that neither the snakes of punishment nor the snake of salvation were the true cause of death or recovery. Both the deadly snakes and the copper snake were merely Hashem's messengers, carrying out His Will. When the Jewish people sinned, Hashem afflicted them to help them see the error of their ways; when they repented, He healed them from the effects of the punishment. Hashem therefore mandated that a snake be the symbol of the deliverance, lest one mistakenly believe that the outbreak of noxious snakes was merely a natural event and that Hashem had saved them from this "random" occurrence. The fact that both the outbreak and the salvation arrived via the same instrument clarified that both occurrences were precipitated by Hashem to help the people reach their ultimate potential.

All that transpires in our lives — even the pain and sorrow — comes from Hashem, sent our way for a Divine purpose. May we merit to live with recognition of Hashem's constant Providence and to trust that all that occurs to us, whether sweet or bitter at the time, is for our ultimate good.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

For Cheshbon – it was the city of Sichon, king of Amori; he had warred against the king of Moav and took all his land from his control, until Arnon. (21, 26)

From here we learn that anything an army acquires during war belongs to the conquerors. (Gittin 38a)

One who acquires a stolen item from a thief does not own it unless the original owners gave up hope. (Bava Kama 114a)

What is the difference if an army is stealing land from its owners or a thief is stealing an item from its owner? Why does a thief require the loss of hope of recovery of the owner in order to become its new owner, while an army does not?

Parsha Riddle

How many Para Adumas have there been?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Who was Korach actually jealous of?

Answer: Elitzafan ben Uziel (Rashi 16:1)

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Parashas Chukas begins with the laws of the Red Cow, which it introduces with the phrase "Zos chukas ha'Torah" - "This is the decree of the Torah". Rashi explains that Hashem is telling us that even though "the Satan and the nations of the world" mock this mitzvah and challenge us to explain the reason behind it, "you have no permission to contemplate it [doubtfully]".

Rambam writes similarly (regarding the general case of a mitzvah whose rationale is unknown): "[I]t should not be light in one's eyes ... and his thoughts regarding it should not be like his thoughts regarding other mundane matters. ... For it says in the Torah: 'You shall observe all My decrees [chukosai] and all My ordinances [mishpatai] and perform them', and the Sages said that this is to apply [the imperatives of] observance and performance equally to decrees as to ordinances. [The meaning of] performance is known, and it is that one should perform the decrees, and [the meaning of] observance is that one should be careful of them and not imagine that they are less than the ordinances. The ordinances are the mitzvos whose reasons are revealed ... and the decrees are the mitzvos whose reasons are unknown. The Sages said: '[Hashem says:] I have decreed decrees upon you and you have no permission to contemplate them' ..." (Hilchos Meilah 8:8).

On the other hand, Rambam also acknowledges the inverse problem: sometimes it is knowing the reason for a mitzvah that can induce laxity: "For if [people] knew the reasons for all the mitzvos they would find ways to abrogate them ... the masses, with their weak intellects, would wind up disparaging them, saying: 'He only prohibited this thing and He only commanded regarding this thing due to such and such a reason – we will be careful of the matter due to which this mitzvah was given and we will not be particular about the mitzvah itself', and so they would arrive at a loss of religion. Therefore Hashem, may He be elevated, hid their reasons." (Sefer Hamitzvos, lo sa'aseh #365)

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I care for my child.
2. Unemployed.
3. Burnt
4. One tone.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I confuse you.
2. I do opposites at once.
3. I fooled the wisest.
4. I am not read but...

Last Week's Answers

#1 Korach (I was not bald, Nor was I cold, I ended up being very hot, My descendant threw me off.)

#2 The Levi'im (We were swapped in, We guarded, We come from the "third staff," We have priestly cousins.)

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

*Win a
Ripstik!*



Congratulations to Ranaan Berman and others on answering last week's questions correctly!

Visit gwckollel.org to submit your answers.

Answer as many as you can.
Each correct answer will entitle you to another raffle ticket and increase your chances of winning!

THE NEXT
RAFFLE WILL
BE July 31st.

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

Exciting
Learning!

Beginning this week: GWCK Teen/Junior Summer Kollel!!

Raffles!

June 25 – July 12

Prizes!

Mon-Thurs 7:30pm-8:15pm: Grades 5-6 Boys

Mon-Thurs 8:15pm-9:00pm: Grades 7-9 Boys

Refreshments!