



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

Believing in Ourselves

Presented by Rabbi Yisrael Glassberg

Former Kollel Scholar and Director of Kollel Alumni

One of the most fundamental characteristics of our forefather Avraham was his ability to inspire the people of his generation to recognize and serve Hashem. Together with his dedicated partner, our matriarch Sarah, they tended to guests with limitless hospitality and generosity. Their kindness enabled them to infuse a love and appreciation for Hashem in all who benefited from their warmth and care.

In the beginning of this week's parsha, the Torah depicts, in great detail, the many actions that Avraham performed in serving the three angels that appeared to him in the guise of men. In fact, the Medrash records that Hashem rewarded the Jewish people throughout the course of history as a result of each of the specific actions that Avraham performed during this encounter. Avraham provided the guests with water, milk, butter, meat and shade. As a result, the Jewish people merited the well, the mana, the selav (fowl), and the clouds of glory as protection in the desert. However, there are subtle differences between these various rewards. Some were provided directly from Hashem, such as the mana, while others were indirectly given, such as the water from the well. Is there a message in these nuanced differences?

The Medrash explains that wherever Avraham was *personally* involved in serving the angels (butter and milk), Hashem responded in kind and *personally* provided for the Jewish people. Whenever Avraham had the items brought by his son Yishmael (water), however, Hashem repaid the Jewish people through a "messenger." R' Moshe Feinstein comments that we learn a great lesson from this Medrash in regards to leadership. While Avraham was certainly involved in the great lessons of chinuch by directing and guiding his son to help serve the guests, the highest form of teaching is leading by example. Witnessing the joy and delight of his father would have provided Yishmael with an even greater awareness and appreciation for the mitzvah of welcoming and entertaining guests. This is the message imparted to us by the subtle difference in rewards that are recounted in the Medrash.

In today's day and age we must strive to embody the true qualities of leadership as defined by the Torah. The Jewish people are charged with the mission of setting the highest standards of spiritual morality and ethical conduct. When we take personal responsibility for exemplifying the attributes that define Jewish leadership, we sanctify Hashem's great name and are truly a light unto the nations.

Have a wonderful Shabbos!

TABLE TALK

POINT TO PONDER

"Let some water be brought..." (18:4)

"...by means of a messenger. And so Hashem sent Bnei Yisrael water in the desert through a messenger, which resulted in a tragedy" (Rashi).

Avraham sent Yishmael to prepare the calf for the guests to teach him the mitzva of hachnosas orchim (Rashi 18:7). It is reasonable to assume that he sent Yishmael to fetch water for the same reason. If so, why did Hashem punish Bnei Yisrael?

PARSHA RIDDLE

Why are there specifically eighteen berachos in Shemoneh Esrei?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Who was the father of Eliezer, the servant of Avrohom?

Answer: Nimrod

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Parashas Vayera contains the account of Lot's daughters, who, believing themselves along with their father to be the sole survivors of the human race, took the desperate step of procreating with him. Although such an act would ordinarily be inappropriate, and possibly even a violation of the Noachide Laws (see *Sanhedrin* 58b), the Torah expresses no criticism of the girls, and the Talmud even seems to approve of their conduct, due to the purity of their intent, applying to them the verse "for the ways of Hashem are right, and the righteous shall walk in them" (*Hoshea* 14:10 - *Nazir* 23a).

Elsewhere, the Talmud declares that "great is *aveirah lishmah*" (sin for a pure motive), but the scope of this dispensation is unclear. *Acharonim* debate the case of a group of Jews who were accosted by a band of cutthroats and faced imminent death. One of the Jews, a married woman, seduced the murderer(s) and thereby saved the Jews' lives. The *Shevus Yaakov* (2:117) approves of her conduct, citing (*inter alia*) Esther's decision to willingly consort with Achashverosh as part of her plan to avert Haman's genocide (see *Megilah* 15a). The *Noda Be'Yehudah* (2:YD:161) disagrees, arguing that Esther was a special case since she acted to save "all of Israel, from India even unto Ethiopia" and we cannot infer from this a dispensation for the saving of mere individuals. Additionally, she acted at the direction of Mordechai and his *Beis Din*, and perhaps according to *ruach ha'kodesh* ("the holy spirit", a form of Divine communication).

R. Chaim of Volozhin (*Keser Rosh* #121) insists that *aveirah lishmah* is no longer permitted, at least for Jews, subsequent to the giving of the Torah. In the same vein, he strongly rejects the idea of disregarding the proper times for the recital of the Shema and prayer for the sake of performing these rituals with greater concentration (*Nefesh Ha'Chaim*, "Chapters" #4). The Seer of Lublin, on the other hand, approves of doing precisely this, "for in truth, Hashem desires the heart, and great is *aveirah lishmah*, and this is what is meant by 'all your actions shall be for the sake of Heaven'" (*Zichron Zos, Pinchas*, p. 124).

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

WHO AM I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. We are three.
2. It was not Purim, yet we did *v'nahapoch hu*
3. We were not comedians, yet we caused laughter.
4. We ate, as is the custom.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I am the final exam.
2. In the end I was rammed.
3. I caused death.
4. My reminder is not your chauffeur.

Last Week's Answers:

#1 Sorah (I was a sister; I caused suffering; beauty was my fame; I was one seventh of profit.)

#2 The 10 Trials of Avrohom (We tested; we begin with fire; we end in a bind; ten for ten.)

Congratulations to Eitan Lichtash and others for answering last week's questions correctly!

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

Win a super prize

Congratulations to Aron Shemtov who won a MICKEY MINI RAFFLE MAKER in the most recent raffle!

THE NEXT RAFFLE WILL BE JANUARY 25TH!

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.

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

Join the GWCK for CLAS!

Chavrusa learning, nightly classes on a variety of topics, and refreshments!

Mondays - Thursdays, 8:00-9:00 pm, at Young Israel Shomrai Emunah.

For more info, contact Rabbi Zakem at yzakem@gwckollel.org