



# Greater Washington Community Kollel SHABBOS DELIGHTS

## TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

### *Getting our Priorities in Order*

Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps

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In his rebuke of the Jewish people, Moshe recounts the episode of the twelve spies. He begins his description of that event with the words, "You approached me, *all of you*, and said, 'Let us send men...'" (1:22). Rashi notes that in Parshas Vaeschanan, when Moshe describes how the people approached him with a request related to receiving the Torah, he says, "You approached me, *all the heads of your tribes and elders*" (5:20). Why does Moshe phrase the approach of the Jews differently each time? Rashi explains that in reference to the earlier event Moshe was saying, "That approach (at the giving of the Torah) was proper. The young honored the elders and sent them ahead of themselves. And the elders honored the heads by allowing them to go ahead of themselves. But here, 'You approached me, all of you,' as a rabble, with the young pushing the elders, and the elders pushing the heads."

The Kli Yakar wonders why it was important for Moshe to mention how they comported themselves at the time of the giving the Torah. It should have been enough to rebuke them now for approaching him as a rabble. The Kli Yakar explains that Moshe was actually rebuking them at this moment for approaching him at the time of the giving of the Torah with too much decorum. If they were so enthusiastic about sending forth spies to investigate the physical properties of the land of Israel that they were almost running over each other to make that request, they certainly should have displayed that same level of passion when it came to something related to receiving the Torah. Moshe saw this difference in behavior as evidence of a deeper issue – they prioritized amassing wealth over the pursuit of Torah.

The Talmud (B.M. 85b) states that we lost the land of Israel because the Jewish people "did not recite the blessing on the Torah first." The Kotzker Rebbe interpreted this passage homiletically. When people gave blessings to others, they didn't bless them for success in understanding Torah first, but rather would first bless upon them affluence and physical success, and only afterwards bless them to achieve success in Torah.

As Tisha B'av approaches and we take the time to consider ways to correct what led to the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash and the exile from our land, perhaps an area that we can focus on is ensuring that we prioritize our spiritual endeavors over our material aspirations.

*Wishing you a Good Shabbos!*

\*In last week's Torah Minute, it was stated that there were 48 encampments in the desert. The number of encampments is a matter of discussion. Those interested in some of the relevant sources are referred to Seder Olam ch. 8, Rashi Bemidbar 33:1, Hagahos Maimonios Hil. Sefer Torah 7:8, and Tur Y.D. 275 with Perisha #13 and 14. - Ed.

## TABLE TALK

### POINT TO PONDER

*I instructed your judges at that time, saying, "Listen among your brethren and judge righteously..." (1:16).*

From here we derive that there is a mitzva for judges to judge (Rashi Kesubos 106a).

Why didn't Chazal institute that judges recite a beracha before they judge a case? Since a beracha is recited before performing a mitzva, why should the mitzva that judges have be different?

The Chasam Sofer (Orach Chaim 54) answers that since the litigants may not accept the verdict of the judges, the beracha of the judges may be in vain.

It is difficult to understand why the judges' obligation of their mitzva should be dependent on the compliance of the litigants. When a shochet slaughters an animal, he recites a beracha on the mitzva of slaughtering, even though the animal may have a blemish deeming it non-kosher. So why should the noncompliance of the plaintiff's impact on the obligation of the judges to adjudicate?

### PARSHA RIDDLE

**Chazal (Berachos 15b) say that if one reads Shema properly, the fires of Gehenom will be cooled for him. Where is there a reference to this in the words of Shema?**

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

### Last week's riddle:

When is a person allowed to harvest regularly during the Shemita year?

**Answer:** One is allowed to harvest wood in the normal manner during Shemita.

## HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

### HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Devarim* (1:16), Moshe relates: "And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him." *Chazal (Sanhedrin 7b)* explain that this is "an admonition to the court that he should not hear the words of one litigant before his fellow litigant arrives, and an admonition to the litigant that he should not try to make his words palatable to the judge before his fellow litigant arrives." Another opinion maintains that such ex parte communication violates the prohibition of "Thou shalt not raise a false report" (*Shemos* 23:1). Elsewhere (*Shevuos* 31a), *Chazal* declare that it violates the imperative of "Keep far from a false matter" (*Shemos* 23:7). Rashi explains that a litigant who presents his case in the absence of the other litigant is liable to prevaricate, since he has no fear of contradiction. Furthermore, once the judge hears and accepts the first litigant's side of the matter, it will be difficult for him to give the other litigant's side fair consideration. Similarly, the *Ralbag (Mishlei* 18:17) explains that it is human nature to believe whichever side of a controversy one hears first, which is why the Torah forbids ex parte communication.

Some authorities limit this prohibition to judges with jurisdiction over the case in question, and permit the issuance of advisory, provisional opinions by others, even if they have only heard one party to the controversy (see *Shut. Maharil* #195; *Shut. Rashbash* #230). Others, however, oppose this on various grounds, including the concern that providing a litigant with detailed information about the legal considerations that will determine the outcome of his case may induce him to lie in order to secure the desired outcome (*Shut. Rivash* #179, and see *Shut. Ha'Rashba* 3:98). There is considerable debate among the later authorities over how strict one ought to be in this area (see *Pischei Teshuvah CM siman* 17 os 11).

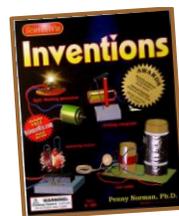
PRESENTED BY  
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

## KIDS KORNER

### WHO AM I?

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

Win a



Science  
Inventions  
Kit!

Congratulations to *Yoseph Graham*  
and others for answering last week's questions correctly!

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

Visit [gwckollel.org](http://gwckollel.org) to submit your answers.

### #1 WHO AM I?

1. I didn't get what I asked for.
2. I am a half.
3. I am on the other side.
4. I am an add on.

### #2 WHO AM I?

1. I am the last.
2. Almost one day
3. Words
4. After last week's

### Last Week's Answers:

**#1 Parshas Matos Masei** (I am a traveling stick; inheritance and my promises are my law;; I am double; I end with strength.)

**#2 The Other Side of the Yardain** (A half was added to me; to get me you need to lead the fight; I had more pasture; I am the other side.)

THE NEXT  
RAFFLE WILL BE  
AUGUST 22<sup>nd</sup>.

## KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

The Kollel Elul Semester begins August 27<sup>th</sup>.

In the meantime, check out our  
audio page at [audio.gwckollel.org](http://audio.gwckollel.org)  
for hundreds of recorded shiurim!