



Greater Washington Community Kollel SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

The Power of Enthusiasm

Presented by Rabbi Moshe Sadwin, Kollel Scholar

"As he drew near the camp and saw the calf and the dances... he threw down the tablets from his hands and shattered them at the foot of the mountain." (Shemos 32:19)

This week's Torah portion details the unfortunate tragedy of the golden calf, culminating with the breaking of the *luchos*, the tablets. A mere forty days after Hashem revealed Himself to the entire Jewish nation at Mt. Sinai, the Jewish people fashioned a graven image, bowed to it and offered sacrifices to it. The Torah describes how Hashem actually informed Moshe while he was still in heaven (receiving the Torah from Hashem) of the situation down on earth, whereupon Moshe begged Hashem to have mercy on the Jewish people and not annihilate them. The Torah continues and illustrates how Moshe then descended the mountain with the *luchos* in hand and drew near the encampment of the Jews. When Moshe saw the golden calf and the people dancing around it, he threw down the *luchos* and smashed them at the foot of the mountain.

The narrative is somewhat puzzling. Moshe was already aware that the Jewish people had made the golden calf. Hashem had informed him of it while he was still in heaven. Why did Moshe wait until he saw the actual golden calf to break the *luchos*? He should have broken them immediately upon hearing about the sin!

Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetsky explains that the key to understanding this is in the words: "As he drew near the camp and saw the calf and the dances." Moshe saw that they didn't simply create the golden calf, but they rejoiced around it. Moshe felt that their actions alone would not have deemed them unworthy of the *luchos*; one can repent from a wrongdoing. When he saw, however, that they committed the transgression with joy and enthusiasm, he understood that a quick remorse would not disconnect them from their actions. The enthusiasm that they exhibited had fused them very profoundly to the wrongdoing they had committed. At this moment, he became fully aware that the Jewish people were no longer on the spiritual level worthy to receive the *luchos*.

A positive action permeated with joy and enthusiasm will also have a more profound effect on us than actions devoid of feeling and can affect us on a very deep level. A mitzvah performed with joy can actually inspire a person and elevate him or her to even greater heights. May Hashem help us on our spiritual journey and assist us to infuse our positive actions with enthusiasm and happiness!

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

TABLE TALK

POINT TO PONDER

His (Moshe's) servant, Yehoshua, son of Nun, would not depart from within the camp. (33, 11)

Rav Yehuda said in the name of Rav, "When Moshe was close to leaving this world, he said to Yehoshua, "Ask me all the questions that you may have". Yehoshua answered, "Rebbi, did I leave you for one moment and go to another place? Is it not written, "His (Moshe's) servant, Yehoshua, son of Nun, would not depart from within the camp?"

Moshe knew that Yehoshua had not left his side. Why would he think that Yehoshua needed questions answered? Furthermore, if it was common knowledge to Moshe and Yehoshua, why was it necessary for Yehoshua to prove it from a verse?

PARSHA RIDDLE

Why are the first two aliyos in Parshas Ki Sisa longer than any other parsha?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

**How many books of Tanach are named for women?
Answer: Esther and Rus.**

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In Parshas Ki Sisa (34:6-7), Hashem proclaims his Thirteen Attributes of Mercy: "Hashem passed before [Moses] and proclaimed: Hashem, Hashem, G-d, Compassionate and Gracious, Slow to Anger, and Abundant in Kindness and Truth; Preserver of Kindness for thousands of generations, Forgiver of Iniquity, Willful Sin, and Error, and Who Cleanses". These verses are the central component of the selichos (penitential prayers) recited on fast days and during the High Holiday season. There is even an entire individual selichah composed around them, beginning Ezkerah Elokim Ve'Ehemayah, which is recited (in the Ashkenazic liturgy) on the second Monday of the Bahab ("Monday-Thursday-Monday") sequence, on the fifth (generally) of the Ten Days of Repentance, and during the Neilah service on Yom Kipur.

One stanza of this selichah has engendered controversy:

*Oh attribute of Mercy, overflow upon us,
and cast our supplication before your Creator;
for the sake of Your people request mercy,
for every heart is pained and every head is ill.*

R. Nesanel Weil objects that this address to the "attribute of Mercy" appears to constitute prayer to an intermediary between us and Hashem, and thus violates Maimonides's Fifth Principle of Faith, that prayer and worship must be directed only to Hashem (Korban Nesanel at the end of the first chapter of Rosh Hashanah).

R. Menachem Mendel Schneersohn [the first] in one of his works agrees with R. Weil, and proposes emending the text to read simply: "Merciful Father, [cause to] overflow upon us [Your] attribute of Mercy" (Derech Mitzvosecha / Taamei Hamitzvos, Shoresht Mitzvas Tefilah, Ch. 7). Elsewhere, however, he defends the language of similar prayers, explaining that they do not actually violate Maimonides's Principle (Or Hatorah, Bereishis Vol. 5 p. 949). Similarly, R. Chaim Chizkiah Medini points out that R. Weil, despite noting his objection to the language, does not go so far as to call for the abolition of its recital (Sedei Chemed, Asifas Dinim, Maareches Rosh Hashanah, siman 1 os 2).

For a masterful survey of the voluminous literature of the controversy over this and numerous similar prayers, see the late R. Dr. Shlomo Shprecher's article, Ha'Pulmus Al Amiras Machnisei Rachamim, Yeshurun Vol. 3 pp. 706-729.

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

WHO AM I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. Now it was forced.
2. Earlier this week it was willingly.
3. My utterance caused crowning
4. I am celebrated at fifty

#2 WHO AM I?

1. A plate caused my form.
2. I caused death.
3. I am recalled in every punishment
4. The maftir cleans my mess

Last Week's Answers:

#1 Vashti (I was killed for a friend, I made a party, I oppressed the Jews, I refused to come)

#2 Wine I make you lose your mind, I am so you can't differentiate, Sometimes I am only four times, I was present for the request.)

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
MARCH 6th.

All children
13 and under
who answer a
"Who Am I?"
correctly will
be entered
into a raffle to
**Win a 3-D
Night Edition
Puzzle
of the
Empire State
Building**

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

NEW CLASS!

Start your week off right with the GWCK Brunch & Learn at YISE!

Sundays 9:30am – Men's Programming

New Class Beginning This Week: Sage Wisdom: Pirkei Avos elucidated with the classic commentary of Rabbeinu Yonah – Rabbi Moshe Sadwin

Or try one of our other classes: **Parsha Discourses** – Rabbi Y. Grossman, **Unraveling the Navi** – Rabbi H. Shaps, **Timeless Talmud** – Rabbi M. Winter