



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

From Nature to Nurture

Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps, Kollel Scholar and Director of Special Projects

The Talmud (Taanis 9a) relates that, while travelling in the desert, the Jewish people received water in the merit of Miriam, protection from the elements through the clouds of glory in the merit of Aharon, and sustenance through the manna in the merit of Moshe. Upon Miriam's death, they continued to receive water, but in the merit of Aharon and Moshe. Upon Aharon's death, they continued to receive both water and protection from the clouds, but solely in Moshe's merit. Many commentators raise the obvious question: if Moshe's merit alone was enough to provide the people with water and protection as well as the manna, what does the Talmud mean that they had previously been receiving them in the merit of Miriam and Aharon?

The Shir Maon explains that each of the three siblings, Moshe, Aharon and Miriam, had a unique contribution to make to the education and development of the Jewish people. Moshe's role was to convey the teachings of the Torah to the people, Aharon's was to guide them in interpersonal matters, and Miriam's was to lead and be a role model for the women. After forty years of living under the guidance of these three great individuals, their lessons were ingrained in the people. The nation had learned to emulate Miriam's dedication and Aharon's pursuit of peace. After the deaths of Miriam and Aharon, all that was required from Moshe was to help the people maintain the level they had achieved. While Moshe would not have been able to plant these seeds and develop these character traits within the people on his own, he was capable of nurturing them and maintaining them despite his many other responsibilities.

The fact that the people were provided with water and protection wasn't due to Aharon and Miriam's personal achievements. Rather, water and protection were provided because of the influence these great individuals were able to have on the people. While Moshe would not have been able to impact the people in these specific ways at the beginning of their journey in the desert, and thereby merit the provision of water and protection from the clouds, by the time Aharon and Miriam passed away Moshe was able to perpetuate their teachings and influence – and in turn merit these provisions.

The importance of good teachers and positive role models when a person is in their developing years can never be underestimated. The lessons we learn and character traits we develop become our very nature. Once these positive traits are ingrained within us it is only a matter of upkeep – a much simpler task. May we all merit to emulate the ways of Moshe, Aharon, and Miriam.

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 between an army stealing land from its owner or a thief stealing an item from its owner? Why when a thief steals is it necessary that the owner lose hope of its recovery in order for the thief to become its new owner, while an army does not need that the owner lose hope for recovery in order for the army to become its new owner?

Parsha Riddle

How many Para Adumas have there been?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Why did Korach receive the punishment of being swallowed in the ground? What connection is there to his sin?

Answer:

Korach claimed that Moshe was haughty, while in truth, Moshe was as humble as the dirt of the ground. In order for Hashem to put Korach below Moshe, it was required that Hashem put him beneath the earth.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Parshas Chukas recounts the construction of the copper serpent to counteract the plague of fiery serpents with which Hashem had afflicted the Jewish people (Bamidbar 21:8-9). This serpent was still in the possession of the Jewish people centuries later, when it was finally destroyed by the righteous King Hezekiah, "for until those days the Children of Israel used to burn incense before it" (Melachim 2 18:4).

The Talmud (Pesachim 56a) includes the destruction of the serpent in a group of three (apparently bold and noteworthy) actions taken by Hezekiah that were endorsed by his peers; one of the others was his hiding of the "book of remedies". What was this book and why did he hide it?

The prevalent view is that it was a repository of medical knowledge – perhaps composed by the wisest of men, King Solomon – and Hezekiah hid it since people suffering from illness would rely on it for their treatment and would not turn to Hashem in prayer and submission (Rashi ibid. and Berachos 10b; R. Bahya b. Asher Shemos 15:25; Shut. Harashba end of 1:413).

Rambam, however, vehemently rejects this view, terming it foolish, erroneous, and harmful. He argues that engaging in the medical treatment of illness is analogous to eating when hungry: just as there is nothing wrong with relying on bread to assuage hunger, so, too, is the treatment of illness via the practice of medicine entirely legitimate. Just as we thank Hashem for providing the food that satisfies us, so do we thank Him for providing the means to cure our ailments (Commentary to Pesachim ibid.).

Rambam therefore offers two alternative explanations of the nature of the book and Hezekiah's motive in hiding it:

- It was a book of occult therapies, utilization of which is forbidden by the Torah. It had originally been written for purely academic purposes, but the people had degenerated and begun to practice the forbidden therapies.
- The book documented the preparation of various poisons, their effects, and their antidotes. It was originally used by physicians to diagnose and treat poisoning, but people had degenerated and begun to use it as a manual for murder by poison.

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I care for my child.
2. I am unemployed.
3. I am burnt.
4. I have one tone.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I am a medical sign.
2. The attacker healed.
3. My end was powder.
4. I made them look up.

Last Week's Answers

#1 The Mouth of the Earth (I am one of ten, Dusk origination, I am like a cannibal, I couldn't speak)

#2 Korach (I am not bald, I am not cold, Shmuel tricked me, I have singing sons.)

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

Win a
Great Wall
of China
Lego Set



Congratulations to Akiva Kotek for 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 16.

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

Greater Washington Community Kollel invites men and women to a

DC Lunch & Learn

with Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman

Monday, July 22, Noon – 12:45 pm at Morgan Lewis. Complimentary lunch served. RSVP required to info@gwckollel.org. Please see flyer at www.gwckollel.org for more info.

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