



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

Presented by Rabbi Menachem Winter, Rosh Kollel
From our archives

In our quest to infuse our lives with spirituality and meaning, we can become frustrated and disheartened by our need to attend to the quotidian tasks that impose themselves upon us. Even the few moments we are able to engage in something spiritual – be it lending a hand to another or the little time we can carve out for prayer or study -- don't feel meaningful and significant. How do we reenergize ourselves as we go through everyday life? How do we transform the mundane into the sublime?

As Avraham is convalescing from his circumcision, he sees what appear to be three weary travelers making their way towards him. The Torah records in rich detail every aspect of the narrative: how Avraham graciously and generously cared for his guests, how he ran to greet them and implored them to rest and recuperate from their journey, the lavish meal he prepared for them, etc. The verbosity employed by the Torah substantially deviates from its normally concise mode of expression. Why such detail?

Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz shares with us the following. The righteous understand the significance and importance of their actions. Rabbi Levovitz gives an analogy of someone that inherits a house - when referring to his new property, he doesn't say much except that he has a new home. However, when someone purchases land and builds his own home, he talks about every step of the process and conveys every feature of his house with the greatest detail. Here, he is invested. Here, he is impassioned. And here, every detail matters. Rabbi Levovitz continues that the righteous are aware that through their actions and deeds they are building a spiritual edifice. They are forging a bond with G-d by emulating Him with their conduct. Because of this, the Torah records Avraham's encounter with his guests in such detail, reflecting the significance Avraham himself attached to it.

The "small" things we do every day are in reality imbued with great importance. The "insignificant" smile we share to uplift a coworker's spirits, the "little" things we do to care and nurture our children and spouses, and the "few" minutes we are engaged in prayer and study, are invested with transcendental meaning. We only have to open up our hearts and minds to it.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

And the men rose from there, and they gazed toward Sodom... (18, 16)

Any gazing that is mentioned in the Torah is for the bad except for "gaze from Your holy abode" (Ki Savo 26, 15). (Rashi)

And he (Avraham) gazed down upon... (19, 28)

Avraham gazed upon Sodom to pray on their behalf. Why is that gazing considered for the bad?

Parsha Riddle

What three laws of Hachnosas Orchim are derived from one word in this parsha?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

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

Answer:

Nimrod

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Parashas Vayeira relates the destruction of Sodom, whose inhabitants were previously described as "wicked and sinful toward Hashem, exceedingly." (13:13). Our parashah relates the horrific behavior of its inhabitants toward Lot's guests, but the prophet Ezekiel describes "the sin of Sodom" as "She ... had pride, surfeit of bread and peaceful serenity, but she did not strengthen the hand of the poor and the needy." (Ezekiel 16:49) In this vein, rabbinic literature uses the phrase "midas sedom" (the way of Sodom) to denote the refusal to help another, despite the ability to do so easily, at no great cost.

While midas sedom is generally frowned upon, this does not mean that freeloading is acceptable. In certain scenarios, one who benefits from another's expenditure on his own behalf may be required to compensate him, despite the fact that his benefit did not increase the expenditure involved and therefore did not cost the other anything:

- *If a spring utilized for irrigation, or a sewer channel, is blocked and needs to be cleared, everyone who benefits from the clearing must contribute toward the work (Bava Metzia 108a). Some explain that this applies only when the issue of who shall bear the costs arises before the work is done, but if one party has already done the work at his own expense, he may not demand payment from the others, since their benefit did not cost him anything extra (Shut. Noda Be'Yehudah CM 2:24). Others disagree, maintaining that since the initial obligation fell upon everyone jointly, it is not affected by the fact that one of the parties made the expenditure on his own (Shut. Maharshag 2:124).*
- *One merchant rented a railroad car to ship his merchandise, but only had enough merchandise to fill half the car. Another merchant wished to utilize the remaining capacity of the car to ship his own merchandise. He is required to compensate the first merchant, since the shipping services were needed by both merchants, and the original merchant had always hoped to find a partner to help defray the costs (Maharshag, but Noda Be'Yehudah may disagree).*

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I am not a raffle.
2. I made washing second.
3. I was appointed judge.
4. I was a prisoner of war.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. We were triple.
2. We were each for one.
3. We looked like men.
4. We were served.

Last Week's Answers

#1 The "heh" in Sara (I was her last, I became his first, I was replaced by five less, My departure preceded the son.)

#2 Bris Milah (I am for the eighth, I allow Shabbos transgression, Don't take four skins, I make one complete.)

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

WIN a DIXIT Game



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!

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