



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

The Path to Mashiach

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

Megillas Rus (The Book of Ruth), read on Shavuos, tells the story of Rus, a Moavite princess who converts to Judaism and ultimately becomes the great-grandmother of Dovid Hamelech (King David). After fleeing Israel because of famine, Avimelech, his wife, Naomi, and their two sons settle in the Land of Moav. After the untimely deaths of Avimelech and his sons, Naomi is left alone with just her two Moavite daughters-in-law, Rus and Orpah. Ready to return to Israel, Naomi is able to convince Orpah to remain behind, but Rus cleaves to Naomi and travels to Israel with her. Hungry and broke, Rus finds herself collecting charity in the field of Boaz, who takes notice and treats her with extra kindness. After overcoming a number of obstacles, Rus and Boaz marry and have a son, Oved. Oved will have a son named, Yishai, and Yishai will have Dovid, King of Israel.

The Nachlas Yosef asks a pointed question. Why did the Navi (prophet) feel the need to publicize that Dovid came from Rus? Additionally, the Torah considers the nation of Moav to have such low ethical standards that their males are not permitted to marry Jews even after conversion. By recording this story for posterity and reading it annually on Shavuos, we are simply reminding ourselves that there was nobody in Israel more fitting to produce the line of kingship in Israel than Rus the Moavite. Why is that necessary?

The Nachlas Yosef answers that the Navi is teaching us what is truly important. There is one thing upon which all hope for the world rests: Chessed – acts of kindness. With great sacrifice, Rus accompanies Naomi back to Israel and helps support her. With great sacrifice, Rus agrees to marry Boaz, an older man about which Boaz declares, “your latest act of kindness is greater than the first.” (3:10) Boaz, in turn, treats Rus and Naomi with tremendous generosity. His agreeing to marry a Moavite convert, despite the associated stigma, shows great humility and sacrifice, particularly considering his wealth and position as a Torah leader. Such a union, steeped in acts of kindness and generosity, can produce a king of Israel and eventually the Mashiach.

The lesson of Megillas Rus is that the path to Mashiach is through acts of chessed. Not necessarily massive deeds that turn the world upside-down, but small personal acts of chessed. When each individual acts kindly towards their fellow, putting the needs of others before their own, then the entire world can be transformed. This was the path to producing the dynasty of the House of Dovid and this same path can, with G-d's help, bring about the coming of Moshiach Ben Dovid speedily in our days.

Wishing you a Good Yom Tov and a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Four times a year the world is judged. 1) On Pesach - regarding grain 2) On Shavuot - regarding the fruit of the tree 3) On Rosh Hashana - Mankind is judged 4) On Sukkot - regarding the water. (Rosh Hashana 1:2)

Ezra set up the reading of the Torah to read the curses in Sefer Devarim before Rosh Hashana and the curses in Sefer Vayikra before Shavuot. Why? Abayei answered - so that the year and its curses should end. We understand how the curses in Sefer Devarim accomplish this because it is read before Rosh Hashana, the Day of Judgment. However, why is Shavuot considered to be a new year? Because on Shavuot we are judged regarding fruit of the tree. (Megilla 31b)

Pesach and Sukkot are also Days of Judgment. Since Pesach is also the beginning of a new year, Ezra could also have set up that the curses in the Torah should be read before Pesach. Why didn't he do that?

Parsha Riddle

Where is the boundlessness of the Torah hinted to in Akdomus (read on Shavuot morning)?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

How was it possible to have more than a year between one Shavuot and the next one - even without a leap year?

Answer: Before there was a set calendar, Shavuot could be on the 5th, 6th or 7th of Sivan (since Shavuot is on the 50th day of the Omer, not on a set date on the calendar). If one year Shavuot was on the 5th, the following year it could have been on the 7th, which is two days longer than a year since the preceding Shavuot.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In Megilas Rus (4:7), it is recorded that: "Formerly, this was done in cases of redemption and exchange transactions to validate any matter: One would draw off his shoe (na'alo), and give it to the other. This was the process of ratification in Israel." The above translation (by ArtScroll) of "na'alo" as "his shoe" follows the usual meaning of na'al, but some maintain that the word here means "his glove." (Targum here; Bechor Shor Shemos 3:5)

While many have understood this verse as referring to the chalitzah ceremony described in parashas Ki-Seitzei (Antiquities of the Jews; cf. Abarbanel Devarim 25:5), this interpretation has almost no adherents within the rabbinic tradition, which understands it as a form of kinyan (a formal action that halachically ratifies a transaction) called chalipin or kinyan sudar, and includes a debate over who gave his shoe to whom (unlike with chalitzah, where the Biblical text is explicit that it is the woman who removes the man's shoe):

The verse is interpreted: "Redemption"; that is a sale. ... "Substitution"; that is the transaction of exchange. ...

With regard to the phrase "To confirm all matters; a man drew off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbor," the baraita asks: Who gave the shoe to whom? Boaz gave his shoe to the redeemer, the closest relative of Elimelech, who had the right of first refusal to the land that Naomi, Elimelech's widow, was planning to sell. The redeemer was transferring that right to the land to Boaz, who was acquiring it by means of his shoe. Rabbi Yehuda says: The redeemer gave his shoe to Boaz. (Bava Metzia 47a).

The halachah follows the former view.

Since the chalipin ceremony is described only in Rus but not in the Pentateuch, there is considerable dispute over whether it is a Biblical law or a rabbinic institution (see S'dei Chemed volume 2 pp. 406-07).

One notable exception to the traditional rabbinic consensus that the ceremony described here has nothing to do with chalitzah is Chizkuni, who explains ("according to the plain meaning of the text") that the chalitzah ceremony itself is really a form of chalipin, having to do with the transfer of the inheritance of the dead brother (perhaps a ratification of its relinquishment by the brother who is declining to perform yibum, since he would otherwise become his brother's sole heir)!

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. We are "fence" days.
2. On us all may shave.
3. On us all purified themselves.
4. Get ready for the Torah.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I am weeks.
2. I am milky way.
3. You sleep less on me.
4. I am after seven sevens.

Last Week's Answers

- #1 The Tribe of Levi** (Landless, Countless, King's Legion, Eigelless.)
#2 Aharon's sons (Am I a student? Am I a child? Children of Moshe? We were four.)

All children 13 and under who answer a "Who Am I?" correctly will be entered into a raffle to **WIN a Claw Machine Arcade 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!**

The raffle has been postponed until after the shuls are reopened. We are still accepting entries to the raffle.

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יום טוב שני של גלויות

Understanding the Second Day of Yom-tov of the Diaspora

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