



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

1 am (Half) Asleep, But My Heart is Awake

Presented by Rabbi Zacharia Schwartz, Kollel Adjunct

For many people, the centerpiece of the holiday of *Shavuos* is the widespread custom to stay up the entire night learning *Torah*. Yet, one may wonder whether it would not be more productive to get a good night's sleep and spend the following day engaged in *Torah* study instead. The reason we maintain the custom, despite its obvious drawback, is simple, yet instructive. *Chazal* tell us that when the day arrived for the Jewish people to receive the *Torah*, they went to sleep the night before and woke up late to meet *Hashem* and receive the *Torah*. Therefore, to correct this mistake, we stay up the entire night learning. In other words, it is not the quantity or even quality of *Torah* learning that makes *Shavuos* night special. Rather, it is the enthusiasm and love of *Torah* that we demonstrate that makes the holiday so special.

Shavuos night *Torah* learning has a certain charm that inspires us to learn with energy, excitement, and love. But learning *Torah* in this way is too precious to be relegated to one night a year. May we all use *Shavuos* to infuse ourselves with a love of *Torah* and carry that love with us throughout the entire year.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos and a Good Yomtov!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

These are the children of Aharon and Moshe on the day Hashem spoke with Moshe on Har Sinai. (3, 1)

The verse only enumerates the children of Aaron, yet they are also called the children of 'Moshe.' This teaches that whoever teaches Torah to the child of his friend, it is as if he has given birth to him. (Rashi)

This verse references the revelation at Har Sinai before the Torah was given. What type of Torah was being taught by Moshe which resulted in the children of Aharon being called the children of 'Moshe'?

Parsha Riddle

Which date of the calendar is set as the date for Shavuos?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Which halacha applies to a Shul with a stone floor and does not apply to a Shul with a tile floor?

Answer: One is not allowed to bow on the stone floor of a shul, whereas on a non-stone floor one may bow (although customs vary).

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Bamidbar*, Hashem commands Moshe to conduct a census of the Jewish people. In general, counting Jews is prohibited: as we recently learned in *Daf Yomi (Yoma 22b)* "it is prohibited to count Jews, even for the purposes of a *mitzvah*," and counting is only permitted when done indirectly, via the submissions of some sort of token, which are then counted. Rashi indeed understands that the census in our *parashah* was conducted via the contribution of *shekalim*, as described in *parashas Ki Sisa* (despite the fact that in his view [*Shemos* 30:16], the census in our *parashah* was distinct from the one discussed there and in *parashas Pekudei*).

The *Kli Yakar*, on the other hand, notes that "many commentators" disagree with Rashi and understand that this census did not utilize *shekalim*. He proposes that the problem of direct counting has to do with the evil eye, and thus only applies to a count where the result is unknown in advance and will be a surprise, as was the case with the first count, since a mere seventy Jews had descended to Egypt, where they had been subject to terrible oppression and genocide, and yet at the time of the count they numbered 600,000 excluding women and children, as opposed to later counts, where the general magnitude of the Jewish population was known in advance.

R. Ovadia Yosef (*Shut. Yabia Omer* 10 CM 2) invokes this idea in justification of the censuses conducted by the modern Israeli government, since there as well the approximate size of the population is known in advance, and the census is merely in order to obtain more precise figures. As another justification, he notes the suggestion of *Ralbag* that the census in our *parashah* avoided the problem of direct counting by being conducted via the submission of written lists of names, which were then counted. Although the *Chasam Sofer* maintains that even counting via writing is prohibited (see *Shut. Kesav Sofer* YD 106), R. Ovadia invokes *Ralbag's* position (also held by R. Yisrael of Shklov, the author of the *Pe'as ha-Shulchan*) as an additional basis for leniency with regard to modern censuses conducted via written submissions.

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. We came from the third.
2. We are not Native Americans.
3. We were flagged.
4. A baker's dozen.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I resembled a barrel.
2. I was humble.
3. I hint to hatred.
4. I was a place of healing.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Toil (in Torah) (For me only we get reward, Fortunate is the man who does me, For me, man is born, If you walk with my chukim.)

#2 Shemittah (I forgive, I am the seventh, I am for rest, Open for all!)

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