



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

One Embrace Away

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

And all the congregation saw that Aharon had died, and all the house of Israel wept for Aharon for thirty days. (20:29)

Upon the passing of Aharon, the Kohen Gadol (High Priest), the Torah specifies that "all the house of Israel" wept for him. Rashi cites the Midrash that explains that this outpouring of grief was due to Aharon's great qualities of loving and chasing after peace, and how he would make peace between contending parties and between couples. The Midrash describes how Aharon would go about doing this. He would sit with one party and say, "Your friend/spouse is so broken over your argument. He/she is so embarrassed to have gotten angry at you." He would remain there with this person until all anger was removed from his/her heart. Then Aharon would sit with the other party and tell him/her the same thing. When the two would meet up, they would embrace in happiness that each one wanted to make up with the other.

Rav Boruch Mordechai Ezechai questions what the message is of this Midrash. Was Aharon simply manipulating the parties for the sake of peace? Is the Midrash trying to teach us strategies for marriage therapy? Wouldn't this strategy stop working after a couple of attempts once word got out that this was how Aharon operated?

Rav Ezechai offers a beautiful explanation. The Midrash is teaching us what lies deep in the heart of every individual and how it takes a seeker of peace like Aharon to recognize it and bring it out. As someone who loved and sought peace, Aharon could see that deep down in the heart of every person, even someone in the thick of a dispute, was a desire for reconciliation and unity. But oftentimes it can be difficult for an individual to recognize that in oneself. When Aharon would describe the feelings of one contending party to the other, he was not making it up. Instead, he was articulating the feelings he recognized in the heart of each individual. When each party would hear how the other party felt, they would recognize those feelings within themselves, cleansing them of any desire to hold onto their grievances.

Every person at some point or another finds themselves in a dispute. If both parties recognize that a desire for peace lies in each of their hearts, then reconciliation can be just an embrace away.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Miriam died there and was buried there. There was no water for the assembly... (20, 1 - 2)

There is a custom to spill out water which is in the vicinity of a person's passing. (Yoreh Deah 339, 5)

The reason for the custom is as follows. The Angel of Death washes off his sword of death in water found in the vicinity of what he had done. Since drinking that water would pose a health threat, it is spilled out. (Taz)

The juxtaposition of the lack of water to Miriam's passing is a source for this custom. The people had no water because the water in the vicinity when Miriam died had been spilled out. (Avudraham)

Miriam died through a kiss from Hashem. (Bamidbar Rabba)

If the Angel of Death was not involved in Miriam's passing, why would the water found in the vicinity of her death have been poured out?

Parsha Riddle

What was the most popular name at Aharon HaKohen's funeral?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

What is the connection between Moshe's burial spot and the mouth of the earth that swallowed Korach and his followers?

Answer: They were both created during bein hashmoshos (during twilight) of the first Friday night of creation.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

The first section of *parashas Chukas* describes the ritual of the *parah adumah* (red cow) and the laws of ritual impurity that pertain to contact with human remains. Although many of the Torah's laws and commandments are mysterious to us, we have a tradition that the law of *parah adumah*, or some aspect of it, constitutes the ultimate mystery, revealed only to Moshe but not even to King Shlomo, the wisest of men (*Yoma* 14a; *Pesikta Rabbasi* 14; *Pesikta de-Rav Kahana* 4:7). This law can thus serve as a lesson that human reason is not sufficient to comprehend all things, and that we need to accept the fact that some things will inevitably remain unknown and uncertain.

There is a fascinating epistemological debate among *halachic* authorities over whether matters of theology, dogma, and belief are subject to resolution using the same principles that are used to resolve *halachic* debates. The *Chasam Sofer* (*YD* 356) takes for granted that questions of dogma, such as the proposition that the Jewish people will eventually be redeemed by the Messiah, can indeed become settled by the same principles that apply to *halachic* disputes, such as the rule that we follow the opinion of the majority of sages on the question. R. Avraham Weinfeld (*Shut. Lev Avraham* 129-30), however, insists upon a fundamental difference between *halachah* and other areas of religious thought. With regard to *halachic* matters, the need to arrive at a definite conclusion in order to determine the practical course of action to adopt necessitates a system of rules for resolving disputes and uncertainties, but with respect to non-*halachic* matters, we can simply live with uncertainty.

As appealing as R. Weinfeld's dichotomy may be, it is actually not that simple in practice to sharply distinguish between *halachic* and non-*halachic* questions, since the latter may often have *halachic* ramifications. A commonly discussed example is the question of heresy: classification of an individual as a heretic has various significant *halachic* implications, so if the status of the belief in question as heresy is actually a matter of dispute, should we apply *halachic* rules to resolve the question, or should we adopt the posture of epistemological humility championed so eloquently by R. Weinfeld? This is a difficult question to answer definitively.

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I ?

1. I got buck teeth.
2. I am not the king of Embarrassment
3. I was a refugee.
4. I got stuck in the mountain.

#2 WHO AM I ?

1. I was unblemished.
2. I can fix and defile.
3. I clean up after my child.
4. I am not a yoking matter.

Last Week's Answers

#1 On ben Peles (My wife saved me, I am not off, rather... I am from the first, Neighborly effect.)

#2 The Mouth of the Earth (I am still steaming, I am from twilight, I can't speak, Toothless.)

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