



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

Be the First to Blossom!

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

Following the demise of Korach and his followers, HaShem commands Moshe to collect the staffs of the leaders of all twelve tribes, inscribe each leader's name on his respective staff, and place them in the Tent of Meeting. One of the staffs, HaShem promised, would sprout flowers indicating which "man" Hashem had chosen. Although Moshe and Aharon's rightful roles as leaders had been secured following Korach's rebellion, the Ramban explains that the nation still desired greater representation in the Temple service. The Nation claimed that the firstborn of each family should assist the Kohanim in the service, as was the original arrangement, rather than the Levites. The purpose of the episode of the staffs was to prove the worthiness of the Levites to assist the Kohanim in the Temple service. Sure enough, it is the staff of Aharon, the representative of the tribe of Levi, that miraculously blossoms.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch elaborates that this message is actually symbolized in the miracle that occurs to Aharon's staff. The verse describes how the staff "brought forth blossom, sprouted twigs, and matured almonds." (17:23) Rav Hirsch explains that the almond tree is unique in that it puts forth its blossoms, from which its fruit eventually grow, before its leaves. As a result, the almond tree is in full blossom in early spring, well before most other trees. This bespeaks an eagerness and zeal to accomplish its goal. While other trees are still "making up their minds," the almond tree has already acted and put its goal – the production of almonds – at the forefront. Only after it has begun the process of achieving its objectives does it produce its leaves, which will help develop and sustain the fruit.

This is symbolic of the alacrity by which the Levites earned their right to provide support for the Temple service. Following the sin of the golden calf, when Moshe rallies the people with the cry "*Mi LaHaShem Elai* – Those who are with G-d, to me!", it is the Levites who answer the call without hesitation and do whatever is necessary to set things right. Because of this, they are rewarded to be able to participate in the Temple service.

The almond blossoms of Aharon's staff bear a lesson for us as well. At times we miss opportunities to perform mitzvos because we take our time or wait for the perfect circumstances to come together. The almond blossoms teach us to be like the Levites – to act quickly and seize the moment. If we do so, with HaShem's assistance the necessary conditions will fall into place.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

SPONSOR

To sponsor a Shabbos Delights, please contact info@gwckollel.org

TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

But if Hashem creates a phenomenon and the earth opens its mouth... (16, 30)

Ten things were created on Friday during twilight... the mouth of the earth (to swallow Korach and his people). (Avos 5, 6)

Why would Hashem need to create a new phenomenon if it was already created?

Parsha Riddle

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

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

It shall constitute tzitzis for you... I am Hashem your G-d Who has removed you from the Land of Egypt... (15:39-41) What connection is there between tzitzis and B'nei Yisrael's exodus from Egypt?

Answer: The four corners of the Tzitzis correspond to the four terms of redemption V'hotzeisee, V'heetzalti, V'goaliti, V'lokachtee.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In parashas Korach (17:4-5), the Torah relates:

Elazar the Kohen took the copper fire-pans that the consumed ones had offered and hammered them out as a covering for the Altar, as a reminder to the Children of Israel, so that no alien who is not of the offspring of Aharon shall draw near to bring up the smoke of incense before Hashem, **that he not be like Korach and his assembly**, as Hashem spoke about him through Moses.

The Talmud declares that the phrase "that he not be like Korach and his assembly" is a prohibition against "perpetuating a dispute." (*Sanhedrin* 110a). Although Rambam maintains that this Talmudic interpretation is mere *asmachta* (a textual allusion that does not have the weight of Biblical law) and that the verse does not actually constitute a **prohibition** at all, but rather a **description** of the fate in store for those who may dispute the priesthood in the future, that they will not suffer Korach's fate of being swallowed by the earth, but rather be afflicted by *tzara'as* (*Sefer ha-Mitzvos shoresh* 8), Ramban disagrees and consider this one of the 613 *mitzvos* (dissent to *ibid.*). And while Ramban limits the scope of the prohibition to those who "perpetuate a dispute" against the priesthood, and understands that the Talmudic extension thereof to the perpetuation of any dispute is but an extra-legal, ethical exhortation, other medieval authorities seem to accept the Talmudic interpretation of the verse as constituting its primary meaning and maintain that the Biblical prohibition includes the perpetuation of any dispute (*Semag lo sa'aseh* 156-7; *Sha'arei Teshuvah* 3:58; and cf. *Chafetz Chaim* Introduction *la'avin* 12).

The Talmud records an episode that teaches the important lesson that even a great Torah scholar can be guilty of disputatiousness:

Rav Huna and Rav Hisda were sitting, and Geneiva passed by them. One said to the other: Let us stand before him, as he is a son of the Torah. The other said to him: Shall we stand before a quarrelsome person? (Gittin 31b)

The Meiri derives practical guidance from this passage:

Insofar as a Torah scholar does not have outstanding character traits and modes of behavior, other scholars are not obligated to treat him with the respect due to Torah scholars.

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I ?

1. My wife saved me.
2. I am not off rather...
3. I am from the first.
4. Neighborly effect.

#2 WHO AM I ?

1. I am still steaming.
2. I am from twilight.
3. I can't speak.
4. Toothless.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Yehoshua (I was the server, Tentbound, The last of the mother became my first, My delay caused my death.)

#2 Tzitzis (I am wrapped, I wrap you, I'm a reminder, I protect from sin.)

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD



Learn Gemara with GWCK!

Join the movement and get

On the Same Page

Beginning the 2nd chapter of Kiddushin July 10!

NOW is a great time to join!

Learn an Amud (page) of Gemara each week with learning options that fit YOUR lifestyle:

* Attend weekly live classes in person or on Zoom

* Learn on your own schedule with uploaded audio/video lectures

For more info or to register visit:

gwckollel.org/onthesamepage

or contact Rabbi Shaps:

hshaps@gwckollel.org, 347.869.9361