



The Greater Washington Community Kollel SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

Our Primary Offspring

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

These are the offspring of Noach, Noach was a *tzaddik* (righteous person), *tamim* (perfect) in his generation; Noach walked with G-d. And Noach begot three sons: Shem, Cham, and Yaphes. (6:10)

The opening verses of Parshas Noach appear very disjointed. The first verse begins, "These are the offspring of Noach," but before introducing us to Noach's children, the Torah digresses to describe Noach as a *tzaddik* who walked with G-d. Why does the Torah interject with this description?

Rashi quotes a Midrash, which explains that the Torah is teaching us that "the primary offspring of a person are their good deeds." The Maharal elaborates that our good deeds are our "primary" offspring because insofar as we are given free will, we are completely responsible for those actions. They are ours. When producing children, on the other hand, we are just partners with G-d – and G-d is the main player. Our good deeds are, therefore, our "primary offspring."

The Kedushas Levi, in an alternate approach, understands that the Torah here is actually taking Noach to task for his inability to positively influence others. There is another form of offspring that we have the ability to produce: students or those who learn from us. The Torah is teaching us that Noach's offspring was limited to just his three sons because he was not able to influence his generation. Though he was a "*tzaddik*" and a "*tamim*," "Noach walked with G-d" i.e. alone with G-d and did not involve himself with the spiritual needs and education of others. Contrast this with Avraham Avinu, about whom the Torah never says, "These are the offspring of Avraham," because Avraham's "offspring" went well beyond his biological children.

Indeed, our primary offspring are our good deeds, but how much greater is it when those good deeds produce their own offspring. We may not all think of ourselves as teachers, but each and every one of us has something to offer. When an opportunity arises for us to make a positive impact on someone else's life, we should jump at the chance. To learn more about one such opportunity, please read the paragraph below.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

Greater Washington Community Kollel is excited to be reintroducing LINKS, an in-person one-on-one learning program that matches more experienced learners with people seeking to deepen their knowledge and connection to Judaism. This program relies on dedicated volunteer mentors willing to give up their time to share their knowledge with another and also on members of the community ready to share information about the program with their Jewish friends, family, and acquaintances around Greater Washington. Please join us in this important endeavor. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Rabbi Hillel Shaps: hshaps@linksgw.org.

TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

And Shem and Yefes took a garment, laid it upon both their shoulders ... and they covered their father (9:23).

"Rav Yochanan taught: Shem initiated the mitzvah, therefore his children merited the mitzvah of wearing tzitzis on their garments" (Bereishis Rabbah 36:6).

When Avraham refused the King of Sodom's offer of the spoils of war, he replied, **"If so much as a thread or shoe strap, or if I shall take anything from you" (Lech L'cha 14:23).**

"In the merit of Avraham mentioning thread, his descendants merited the mitzvah of wearing tzitzis on their garments" (Sotah 17a).

Did we merit the mitzvah because Shem covered Noach or because Avraham refused the thread?

Parsha Riddle

The fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth and every bird of the heavens (9:2). What halachic implication does this verse have?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

During which two times of the year is the "Shemonei Esrei" in Eretz Yisrael different from the one outside Eretz Yisrael (besides for the second day of yomtov)?

Answer: 1) During Chol Hamoed Succos and Pesach - in Eretz Yisrael they do not recite in musaf the korbanos for two days of Chol Hamoed, only for one day. 2) In Eretz Yisrael, they begin to recite 'Vsein tal umatar livracha' on 7 Cheshvan, while outside of Eretz Yisrael it is begun on December 4 or 5.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Noach* (9:25-27), Noach curses his son Cham's son Canaan and condemns him (three times!) to slavery. In the Jewish tradition (e.g., *Sanhedrin* 108b), Cham and his descendants are associated with dark skin, and so as far back as a millennium ago there were apparently those who invoked Noach's curse in explanation (or justification) of the enslavement of Africans ("Cushites," after Cham's son Cush). Ibn Ezra, however, rejects this idea:

They have forgotten that the first king to rule after the flood was a Cushite. Thus it is written (10:6-10), "[And Cush begot Nimrod ...] The beginning of his kingdom was Babel ..." [Thus the curse was put on the Canaanites and not on all of Cham's descendants.]

The institution of slavery is taken for granted by the Torah, to the extent that it declares (*Vayikra* 25:44-46):

Your slave or your maidservant whom you may own, from the gentiles who surround you, from among them you may purchase a slave or a maidservant. ... You shall hold them as a heritage for your children after you to inherit as a possession, **you shall work with them forever** ...

There is a dispute between the Sages of the Mishnah and the Talmud over the meaning of the emphasized phrase: R. Yishmael understands it to be optional - it is permitted to work with them forever, while R. Akiva understands it to be mandatory - it is actually generally prohibited to manumit a slave (*Gittin* 38b). The *halachah* follows the latter view (*Shulchan Aruch* YD 267:79). (It should be noted, however, that nowhere in the *halachah* of slavery is there any distinction between dark and light skinned people, but only between Jewish slaves and non-Jewish slaves.)

But despite the clear acceptance of slavery by the Torah, there are nevertheless some anti-slavery voices in our tradition. R. Meir Simcha of Dvinsk (*Bereishis* 47:21) notes that a close reading of the Biblical text indicates that when the desperate Egyptians offered themselves as slaves to Pharaoh in exchange for grain during the great famine in the time of Yosef, the latter apparently declined their offer and accepted only their land. R. Meir Simcha explains that:

Yosef greatly loathed the economic relationship of slavery, *for one man to rule over another to his detriment* (from *Koheles* 8:9)

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I was a box.
2. I was later used as a "hanger."
3. I was a life saver.
4. I later caused death.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I had a tower.
2. I had a Talmud.
3. I am the drain.
4. I am mixed together.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Sun (I ruled with another, Some confuse me with a male child, I referred to Yaakov, When I leave, Shabbos comes.)

#2 Chava (I was created from surgery, My title describes my source, My name defines my purpose, I caused pain.)

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD



Women's Classes with Mrs. Sara Malka Winter resume this week!

Monday:

Parsha Journeys

8:15pm - On Zoom

Zoom info at gwckollel.org

Tuesday:

Sefer Bereishis: An In-depth Study

8:15pm - at SEJC, 10900 Lockwood Dr.