



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

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

Following Akeidas Yitzchak (the Binding of Isaac) and Sarah's death, Avraham seeks a place to bury Sarah. After a lengthy negotiation with the Chittites and Ephron, Avraham secures the purchase of a burial plot in the Cave of Machpeila. The Talmud (Bava Basra 15b) relates that the Satan lauded this episode as an example of Avraham's great faith: "Master of the world, I glided over the whole world and I did not find anyone as trustworthy as your servant Avraham, to whom You said, 'Get up and travel the length and width of the land for I will give it to you' (Bereishis 13:17) and when it came time to bury Sarah, he could not find a place to bury her, and yet he did not question Your attributes."

While Avraham's demonstration of unquestioning faith at this time is certainly worthy of praise, it seems strange that this would be held up as the prime example. Avraham had just passed the great test of Akeidas Yitzchak, where he had been willing to accept G-d's command to sacrifice his son without questioning Him. That certainly seems to have been a greater demonstration of faith than Avraham's handling of Sarah burial. Perhaps even more perplexing, though, is that Rabbeinu Yonah, when enumerating the Ten Tests of Avraham, names Akeidas Yitzchak as number nine, and the episode of Sarah's burial as number ten. Was it really necessary to further test Avraham's faith after Akeidas Yitzchak? Was there anything left to prove?

Rav Mattisyahu Solomon explains with an analogy similar to the following. If, G-d forbid, the government would issue a decree against Torah study, there certainly would be fasting and Tehillim for the decree to be rescinded. People would also begin to study Torah earnestly in secret at great risk, in defiance of the government. Those same people, however, despite their great appreciation for Torah study, will often struggle to make time to learn when conditions are normal, allowing other distractions to get in the way. The difference, explains Rav Mattisyahu, is that when a person knows they are being tested, they rise to the occasion and strengthen themselves to persevere. In contrast, that same person may not have the same drive and fortitude to overcome the more typical challenges one encounters.

When Avraham was told to sacrifice his son, he knew he was being tested to see how far his passion and faith could take him and he proved his tremendous devotion to G-d when put to the test. The test of burying Sarah was for him to prove his faith in the day-to-day challenges. While still mourning over his loss, he is forced to negotiate and extend himself to acquire the land that was promised him. Instead of throwing up his hands and crying out, "What do you want from me?", he accepts the circumstances given to him and even bows in appreciation to G-d.

Life is full of challenges and obstacles. At times we recognize them and make a decision to overcome them. Sometimes, though, it is the small bumps that hold us back from accomplishing more. If we take a moment to ponder what those might be, and set our minds to push through those as well, we can elevate our accomplishments to a whole new level.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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Yosef Yitzchak ben Natan, Ernesto Feigelstock

TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

She (Rivka) descended to the spring, filled her jug, and ascended (24:16).

It does not say that she drew the water, only that she descended to the spring. This is because the water rose up to her, and she did not need to bend down and draw it (Beraishis Rabba 60).

So she (Rivka) hurried ... and kept running to the well to draw water... (24:20)

Why did she need to draw water? It should have risen up to her as it did when she originally went to draw water!

Parsha Riddle

What connection is there between Sarah Imeinu and Queen Esther?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Why were there specifically eighteen blessings in Shemoneh Esrei (before the nineteenth was added)?

Answer: 1) The names of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov appear together in the Torah eighteen times. 2) There are eighteen vertebrae in the spine. The eighteen brachos remind us that one is supposed to daven with his whole body (Tehillim 35:10). (Tanchuma Vayeira) 3) There are eighteen mentions of Hashem's name in ch. 29 of Tehillim.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Parashas Chayei Sarah mentions no fewer than three times the golden nose ring that the servant of Avraham gave Rivka:

And it was, when the camels had finished drinking, the man took a golden nose ring (and gave it to Rivka) ... (24:22)

For upon seeing the nose ring ... (Lavan) approached (Avraham's servant) ... (24:30)

[Avraham's servant later related:] And I placed the ring on her nose ... (24:47)

While Ibn Ezra apparently considered it inconceivable that women would pierce their noses, and therefore explained that the nose rings mentioned here and elsewhere in Tanach were "attached by a string which is tied around the forehead," other commentaries explain that the rings were indeed inserted through piercings of the nose: "Just as we in our region hang earrings from the ear, so do they throughout the land of Ishmael (i.e., Arab lands) pierce the nose and hang nose rings from them." (R. Yosef Kara to *Yeshayah* 3:21, and cf. *Tzafnas Pa'aneach* (R. Yosef Tov Elem) to our verse)

Halachic authorities of the last century discuss the permissibility of piercing various parts of the body: including the ears, nose, and other body parts. One potential concern is the prohibition against self-harm, but the consensus is that piercing (at least of the ear) does not violate this prohibition, since the benefit of being able to wear earrings outweighs the pain of the piercing (*Likutei Sichos* 20 p. 568; *Yabia Omer* 8:CM:12:3; *Rivivos Efraim* 5:526).

R. Aharon Lichtenstein once related that his daughter wanted to pierce her ears, but he had objections to the idea, so they agreed to consult R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach and follow his decision. R. Shlomo Zalman could not understand R. Lichtenstein's hesitation: "What is your question? In our circles, we circumcise the boys, and we pierce the ears of the girls!" (see R. Shlomo Aviner, *Chukos ha-Goyim* [Shut.]

While the authorities cited above are all discussing piercing the ears, there is in principle no reason why piercing the nose should be any different, although some maintain that insofar as in our society the latter is less conventional and more provocative and transgressive than the former, it may be frowned upon or even prohibited under the prohibition against "walking in the ordinances" of the non-Jews and as a violation of Jewish modesty norms (R. Aviner *ibid.*; Ayal Moshe, *Nezem: She'al et ha-Rav - Kipah*).

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I spoke a lot.
2. I did a little.
3. Don't confuse me with a pencil.
4. I was the opposite of Avraham.

#2 WHO AM I?

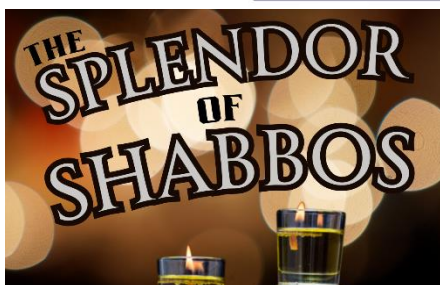
1. I was used as an alarm.
2. My breaks prove innocence.
3. My years are triple.
4. I am age-old information

Last Week's Answers

#1 Angels (We were three, It was not Purim, yet we did v'nahapoch hu, We were not comedians, yet we caused laughter, We ate, as is the custom.)

#2 Akeidas Yitzchak (I am the final exam, In the end I was rammed, I caused death, My reminder is not your chauffeur.)

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