



# The Greater Washington Community Kollel SHABBOS DELIGHTS

## TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

**It is an honor to present this week's Torah Minute from our archives. The following was penned by our founder, Rabbi Kalman Winter ZT"L.**

This week's Torah portion, Korach, speaks of the division of responsibilities in the Temple Service between the Kohanim (the Priests) and the Levites. Chapter 18 verse 6 reads: "And I – behold! I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the Children of Israel; to you (the Kohanim) they are presented as a gift for G-d, to perform the service of the Temple." The great commentator Rashi explains that G-d's command that the Levites were a gift to the Kohanim was specifically in the capacity of assisting the Kohanim in their holy work at the Temple. Any misuse of the Levites to minister for the personal needs of the Kohanim was prohibited. Hence, the additional word in the verse "for G-d" is intended to teach that only for G-d's purpose were they provided to the Kohanim.

We can extrapolate an important lesson of life from this beautiful insight. The Torah saw fit to accentuate that those in authority must be ever so judicious with the use of their position and privilege. Paramount is the respect and dignity for the people who are subject to the authority of another. Great sensitivity and care have to be administered not to intimidate in any capacity or fashion those who are under the influence of others. This includes teachers and students, administrators and staff, rabbis and congregants, even spouses. Of special interest are the comments of the Rabbis regarding the cardinal principle of Judaism of the "honor that a child must give to a parent." At the same time, a parent is required to be sensitive, mindful, and respectful of one's children, not to incite or provoke them in any fashion.

Bringing this concept to an even greater degree of appreciation, the Ohr HaChayyim has the following comments to Genesis 39 verse 22. Joseph, falsely accused of improper behavior, languishes in prison in Egypt. G-d's grace shines upon him and he finds favor with all, and he becomes the administrator of all the prisoners. In Joseph's capacity, the Ohr HaChayyim explains that any and all of the tasks that Joseph delegated to others, he personally participated in with his fellow prisoners. This was done as a matter of respect for the dignity and honor of those who were placed under his authority. For this sensitivity Joseph received the admiration and love of all in his charge.

There will always be need for authority, for a civilized society to flourish and prosper. However, we must be ever mindful of the responsibilities and sensitivities that position requires, even demands.

**Wishing you a Good Shabbos!**

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## Point to Ponder

## TABLE TALK

## Parsha Riddle

**"Say to Elazar son of Aharon the Kohen, and let him pick up the fire-pans from amid the fire..." (17:2)**

Why did Hashem decide to involve Elazar? He was not part of the test with Korach. Hashem should have sent Aharon to pick up the fire-pans of Korach's men. As Aharon was the one who was involved in this, and he was "victorious," it would seem that he should collect the firepans of the dead people.

**Why did Hashem choose the *ketores* as the means with which to stop the plague?**

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

**Last week's riddle:**  
**Who went on two spy missions to Eretz Yisrael?**  
**Answer: Calev**

## HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

### HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Korach*, the Torah relates that after Hashem destroyed Korach, Dasan, Aviram, their households, and the two hundred and fifty men who were offering the incense, "The entire assembly of the Children of Israel complained on the morrow against Moshe and Aharon, saying, 'You have killed the people of Hashem!'" (17:5) The Ramban explains: Onkelos rendered it: "You have caused the death of the people of Hashem." Thus he interprets the verse [to mean that] the people accused Moshe and Aharon that because they advised Korach and his company to offer up strange incense to Hashem of their own accord, those who offered it up were burnt, since Hashem had not told Moshe to offer up this incense, nor did he tell Israel to do so in the name of Hashem; thus they of their own accord proposed this matter as a result of which the people died — when they could have [just as well] given another sign or miracle, through the rod, or [through] some other [harmless] test.

Hashem obviously did not endorse this argument, or at least the form of its expression, as is evident from His response to Moshe: "Remove yourselves from among this assembly and I shall destroy them in an instant!" (v. 10), but the basic principle that de-escalation of a conflict is preferable to its lethal resolution is indeed a *halachic* requirement in other contexts. The Talmud states: "If a person **pursues another to kill him, and the one being pursued can save himself by injuring one of the limbs of the pursuer, but he does not save himself in this manner and instead kills the pursuer, he is executed for killing him** even though he acted in self-defense." (*Sanhedrin* 57a-b, 74a)

Elsewhere, however, the Talmud implicitly acknowledges that in real-world scenarios, it will not always be clear whether the use of non-lethal as opposed to lethal force is practical. It relates that when Yoav was tried for his assassination of Avner, he justified himself on the grounds that he was the blood avenger of his brother Asahel, who had been killed by Avner. In response to the charge that Avner had acted in self-defense, since Asahel had been attempting to kill him, Yoav responded that Avner could have used non-lethal force to stop Asahel. The debate between Yoav and his accuser continues, but reaches no definitive resolution. (*ibid.* 49a)

PRESENTED BY  
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

## KIDS KORNER

### Who Am I?

#### #1 WHO AM I?

1. I was not bald.
2. Nor was I cold.
3. I ended up being very hot.
4. My descendant threw me off.

#### #2 WHO AM I?

1. We were swapped in.
2. We guarded.
3. We come from the "third staff."
4. We have priestly cousins.

#### Last Week's Answers

**#1 The yud in Yehoshua** (I was given by Moshe, I came from a woman, I took two dots from the son's segol, I changed a name into a prayer.)

**#2 Challah** (I name your bread, I could cause death, I am for the Kohen, I am not a bride.)

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