



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

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TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

Viduy: Recognizing Our Potential

Presented by Rabbi Yitzchak Kaminetsky, Kollel Scholar

Parshas Ki Savo opens with the *mitzvah* of *Viduy Ma'aser* —the declaration one makes after properly giving all required tithes. The Torah describes how the individual proclaims at the end of his *viduy*: "I have listened to the voice of Hashem my G-d. I have done all that He has commanded me." (26:14)

Strikingly, we refer to this declaration as a "*viduy* – confession." When we think of *viduy*, however, we think about the admission of guilt on Yom Kippur. Why do we call this declaration, where the individual is affirming that he fulfilled the *mitzvos* properly, a "*viduy*"?

Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik explains that *viduy* is not limited to admitting wrongdoing. Rather, it is a deeper statement about a person's capabilities. On Yom Kippur, when we recite: "*Ashamnu, Bagadnu, Gazalnu* - We have sinned, we have betrayed, we have stolen..." we are not merely listing our failures. We are acknowledging that we have fallen short — precisely because we could have done better.

This, says Rav Soloveitchik, is the true meaning of *viduy*. If a person truly was incapable of accomplishing and excelling in his or her service of Hashem, there would be nothing to confess. The very act of confessing acknowledges that we demand more from ourselves, and we know Hashem does as well. The pain of sin is not only that we did something wrong, but also because we know we were capable of more.

Our declaration that: "I have done all that He has commanded me," is not boasting, but a recognition of our capabilities. Similarly, when we confess that "we have sinned," we are acknowledging that we could have done better.

This message is especially important during Elul and the Yamim Noraim (Days of Awe). In this season of introspection, it is easy to focus only on our shortcomings, but the true power of *viduy* and *teshuva* (repentance) lies in recognizing what those failures say about our potential. We confess not simply that we did wrong—but that we could have done right. As we prepare for Rosh Hashana and reflect on the past year, we should not only think about where we went wrong, but we should imagine the better decisions we know we can make in the future. When we confess to Hashem that we know what we can accomplish, we can then pray that Hashem give us a year of blessing and success to help us prove how great we can truly be.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

And you should write on the stones all the words of this Torah clearly. (27, 8)

Clearly – in the seventy languages of the world. (Rashi)

Chazal (Sotah 35b) explain that the purpose of this translation was to avail the Torah to the nations of the world.

One is obligated to fast on the tenth day of Teves because on that day the Torah was translated into Greek and the world was dark for three days. (Orach Chaim 580, 2)

Moshe commanded Bnai Yisroel to translate the Torah which implies that translating the Torah is beneficial. If so, why when the Torah was translated into Greek was there darkness for three days and a fast day was decreed?

Parsha Riddle

How can one fulfill the mitzvah of Bikkurim nowadays?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

The term used for a divorce paper is a Get. How does the word Get imply a bill of divorce?

Answer: There is no word in Tanach that has the letter gimel and tes next to each other. Therefore, a Get that divides is named with the letters that do not appear next to each other. (Vilna Gaon)

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Ki-Savo*, the Torah directs the Levites to pronounce a number of curses at Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal, one of which is: "Cursed be he who strikes his fellow in secret (*ba-saser*). (27:24) The simple interpretation (*pshat*) of 'strikes' is physical assault, i.e., striking and injuring or killing one's fellow man, and the point of the qualifier 'secretly' is that a curse is not necessary for public assaults, since the court can punish (and thus deter) such acts, and it is only for assaults committed secretly, which the court cannot punish due to lack of evidence, that a curse is needed (see Ibn Ezra; Rashbam; R. Meyuchas; Malbim; and Meshech Chochmah). Various midrashim and commentators, however, interpret this verse as referring to *lashon ha-ra* (slander – *Targum Yonasan*; *Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer* 53; *Yalkut Shimoni Tehillim* 771; Rashi; *Ba'al ha-Turim*; *Ha-Kesav ve-ha-Kabalah*). While these latter midrashim and commentators were not writing in *halachic* contexts, the Chofetz Chaim nevertheless accepts this interpretation of the verse as *halachically* normative and rules that one who speaks *lashon ha-ra* violates this curse (along with, in various circumstances, up to three of the other curses in our *parashah* – *Chofetz Chaim, Pesichah, Arurin*).

The Chofetz Chaim apparently understands that the qualifier 'secretly' indicates that this curse is violated only if one speaks *lashon ha-ra* secretly "and is particular about this that (his slander) should not be discovered by (its subject)" (*ibid.*, *Hilchos Lashon Hara* 3:1), apparently because his intention in doing so is so that his victim will be unable to defend himself from him and he will thus be able to cause him harm (*Shemiras ha-Lashon, Sha'ar he-Zechirah*).

Ha-Kesav ve-ha-Kabalah, however, offers several alternate interpretations of the word 'secretly':

* The curse applies even to one who speaks *lashon ha-ra* secretly, and it goes without saying that it applies to one who does so in the presence of his victim, since he thus commits the additional grave sin of humiliating his fellow man.

* 'Secretly' refers to *lashon ha-ra* that is ambiguous (*avak lashon ha-ra*), where the speaker can plausibly deny malicious intent despite actually meaning to denigrate his victim and hurt his feelings.

* '*Ba-saser*' refers to Hashem (the Hidden One): By speaking *lashon ha-ra* about a human being, one denigrates and disrespects the One Who made him.

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I am almost a hundred.
2. I am quiet.
3. I result from not listening.
4. I am not wanted.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I could be sorry.
2. I wake you early.
3. Fall on your face.
4. I need a four day introduction

Last Week's Answers

#1 Tzitzis (For some I am only small, For some I am also big, I'm not in "time-out" but I am put in the corner, I may be shatnez.)

#2 Parshas Zachor (You heard me 6 months ago, Once d'oraissa, Tzeirei or segol, Remember.)

THIS TUESDAY!!

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Themes of Tishrei

featuring words of insight and inspiration from
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Tuesday, Sept. 16 at 8:15pm on Zoom. Zoom info at gwckollel.org