



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

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TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

The Thought that Counts

Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps, Director

"The House of Israel called it *Mon* (Manna)... and it tasted like a cake fried in honey." (16:31)

Upon their arrival at *Midbar Sin*, the Jewish people find themselves out of food and turn to Moshe and Aharon in distress. Hashem assures Moshe that He will provide "bread from the heavens," i.e. *mon*. Later, the *mon* is described as tasting like honey (16:31), and in *Sefer Bamidbar* (11:8) it is described as tasting like dough kneaded with oil.

The Gemara (*Yoma* 75b) raises these three descriptions as contradictory and explains that the taste of the *mon* depended on the age of the consumer: *For young people it was like bread, for the elderly, oil, and for children, honey*.

The Maharsha comments that this was the manifestation of another characteristic of the *mon* described by the Gemara (*Yoma* 75a) – that the *mon* could taste like whatever a person wanted it to taste like. Generally speaking, for children it was honey, for those a bit older, bread, and for even older, oil.

Rav Shimon Schwab offers a different suggestion to explain when it would taste like honey, bread, or oil. Indeed, the *mon* could taste like whatever a person desired. But what if a person ate the *mon* only for sustenance without any particular taste in mind? That is the scenario, suggests Rav Schwab, that by default it would taste like honey for children, bread for young lads, and oil for the elderly.

Rav Schwab recounts that one time, when staying with the Chofetz Chaim for a Shabbos, the Chofetz Chaim offered a different perspective on this last question. "What did the *mon* taste like if one was not thinking at all while eating it?" asked the Chofetz Chaim. When nobody responded, he said, "I will tell you. Without any thought going into it, the *mon* had no taste. Something spiritual (like the *mon*) receives its taste according to the amount of thought one puts into it." As an example, he mentioned Torah study. If one invests themselves and focuses their thoughts to understand what they are learning, then they will taste the sweetness of Torah. If one, however, simply utters the words without thinking or trying to understand, they won't find any taste in it.

Every day, we engage in numerous spiritual pursuits such as davening, learning, and making brachos. Often, however, we mouth words without really thinking about them. These endeavors can, therefore, feel dry and tasteless. How can we apply our thoughts and elevate the way we daven and make brachos – infusing them with sweetness, connection, and meaning?

We are excited to introduce the **4-Week Brachos Challenge**. Each day, beginning this Monday, Tu Bi'Shevat, we will send out a short dvar chizuk/inspirational message presented by a Rabbi in the community coupled with a daily challenge that will foster step-by-step growth to elevate our brachos and introduce deeper meaning and pleasurable taste to our experience. Please take advantage of this opportunity for a transformational experience. Information for how to register can be found on page 2.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

And Moshe took with him the bones of Yosef, who had exacted an oath from the children of Israel, saying, "G-d will surely remember you: then you shall carry up my bones from here with you." (13:19)

Come and see how beloved mitzvos are to Moshe our teacher. As, at the time of the Exodus, all the Jewish people were involved in taking the spoils from Egypt, and he was involved in the performance of mitzvos, as it is stated: "The wise in heart will take mitzvot" (Proverbs 10:8). (Sotah 13a)

Tell the people to borrow, each man from his neighbor and each woman from hers, objects of silver and gold." (11:2)

If Hashem commanded Bnei Yisrael to take gold and silver from the Egyptians, why does the Gemara say that only Moshe was doing Mitzvos while everyone else was focused on material wealth? They were also fulfilling the commandment of Hashem to take the Egyptians' items!

Parsha Riddle

Which 6 tzaddikim in our history are recorded as having split bodies of water?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

What is written in Hashem's Tefillin?

Answer: Mi K'amcho Yisroel... (Brachos 6a) (This should not be understood literally.)

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In parshas Beshalach (17:1-7), the Torah relates that when the Children of Israel demanded water to drink, Moshe responded: "Why do you test (*t'nasun*) Hashem?" After Hashem, through Moshe, provided water for the people, Moshe "called the place Massah U'Meribah ... because of their test of Hashem, saying, "Is Hashem among us or not?"

Although the term "testing" is used elsewhere in description of other incidents in which the Children of Israel challenged Hashem and sinned against Him in the course of their sojourn in the desert (see *Bamidbar* 14:22; *Avos* 5:4; *Arachin* 15a-b; and *Tehillim* 78:18), the episode at Massah is clearly the quintessential example of a "test" of Hashem, as is evident from the language of Hashem's admonition to the Jewish people forty years later (*Devarim* 6:15): "You shall not test Hashem, your G-d, as you tested Him at Massah." The precise meaning of this admonition, however, is not entirely clear; our tradition contains a number of different interpretations thereof:

* Do not perform mitzvos with the expectation of, and on condition of, observable reward (Ramban, R. Bachya, and Bechor Shor *Devarim ibid.*; *Sefer Yerei'im* 361; *Sha'arei Teshuvah* 3:30; *Chinuch* 424).

* Do not test Hashem's ability (to perform signs and miracles – *Emunos v'Deios* 7:1, cited in Radak *Shoftim* 6:39).

* Once a prophet's authenticity has been established, do not subject him to excessive testing (*Sefer ha-Mitzvos lo sa'aseh* 64, *Yesodei ha-Torah* 10:5).

* Do not rely upon miracles – i.e., one should take necessary precautions to avoid undesirable outcomes and not rely upon Divine intervention (*Rabbeinu Yonah Avos* 5:5; *Chovos ha-Levavos Sha'ar ha-Bitachon* 4; *Kuzari* 5:20).

The Talmud (*Taanis* 9a), which apparently understands the admonition in the first of the above senses, carves out one exception: It is permitted to give tithes (*ma'aser*) with the expectation of being rewarded with wealth. There is debate over whether this is limited to the Biblical tithes of agricultural produce; extends to the general tithing of one's income (*ma'aser k'safim*), or extends even to charity in general (see *Tur*, *Beis Yosef*, and *Rema* *YD* 247:4; *Shelah Megillah* *Ner Mitzvah*; Commentary of Maharshal to *Semag lo sa'aseh* 4). The Meiri, however, understands that the Talmud does not mean to allow the deliberate "testing" of Hashem even in the context of tithes, and is merely asserting that the reward of wealth for tithing is absolutely guaranteed.

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I ?

1. I was "Nesiyas Kapayim."
2. I was not for Kohanim.
3. I was a hold up.
4. I directed attention.

#2 WHO AM I ?

1. Like lead.
2. Like stone.
3. Like straw.
4. We ended up on the shore.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Chatzos/Midnight (I am for Rabbinic fence, I was determined by the harp, I was for the tenth, I am in the middle.)

#2 Bechor/First Born (I am for your sons, I am for kosher animals, I am for donkeys, Holy.)

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Every bracha is an opportunity for gratitude and connection to Hashem. Join a community-wide initiative to bring INTENTIONALITY and MEANING to the brachos that we make each day!

- Daily CHIZUK and INSPIRATION from local Rabbanim.
- Daily CHALLENGES to inspire step-by-step growth.
- A LIFE-CHANGING experience.
- SIGN UP NOW and receive each day's content via WhatsApp.

<https://thegreaterwashingtoncommunitykollel.com/connection>

