



The Greater Washington Community Kollel SHABBOS DELIGHTS

Sponsored by the Cypess Family Foundation

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

Ultimate "Goodness"

Presented by Rabbi Elihu Abbe, Senior Torah Educator

The Torah records the phrase, "And G-d saw that it was good," twice in the account of the second day of creation. On the surface, the first time it is referring to the separation of the waters and the second time it is referring to the creation of vegetation. The Levush suggests an additional fascinating allusion. The word that the Torah uses for vegetation is "*desheh* – דשׁה." The Levush teaches that these three letters are an acronym for the words *din* (justice and fairness), *shalom* (peace), and *emes* (truth). These are the three things that the Mishna in Pirkei Avos (1:18) teaches uphold the world. Because fairness, peace, and truth are the "goodness" that sustain the world, the Torah goes out of its way to emphasize that with regards to *desheh* in particular, "G-d saw that it was good."

At the beginning of Pirkei Avos (1:2) we are taught that the world stands on *Torah*, *avodah* (service of Hashem), and *gemillus chassadim* (acts of kindness). Why then does the Mishna later teach us that fairness, peace, and truth uphold the world?

One explanation is that the first Mishna is teaching us the purpose of creation: Torah, service of Hashem, and acts of kindness. The intent of the second Mishna is that without fairness, peace, and truth, society could not function properly. The Beis Yosef, however, suggests an alternate explanation. He says that after the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*, Torah, service of Hashem, and acts of kindness cannot be expressed to the same degree as they could originally. Nonetheless, the world continues to be sustained because we are able to maintain these three fundamentals – to some extent. This is accomplished through the other three pillars from the second Mishna. Justice can ensure that the Torah continues to be observed. Truth can ensure that people acknowledge G-d's role in the world – which leads one to *avodah*. Pursuit of peace can inspire people towards acts of kindness. The second Mishna is in effect giving us the blueprint for how we can attain *Torah*, *avodah*, and *gemillus chassadim* in our generation.

The message for us is that the "goodness" of the world depends on both what we do and how we do it. We must strive to build our lives around *Torah*, *avodah*, and *gemillus chassadim*, while pursuing *din*, *shalom*, and *emes* in our interactions with others. When we live with fairness, truth, and peace, we create an environment in which *Torah*, *avodah*, and *chesed* can flourish. In doing so, we help fulfill the purpose for which the world was created and bring it closer to the ultimate "*ki tov*" – the goodness that Hashem intended for His creation.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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Parsha Riddle

Answer: If it is built in front of the entrance to one's house and serves as an entranceway into the house.

For more information contact: The Greater Washington Community Kollel 10900 Lockwood Dr, Silver Spring, MD 20901 • 301.593.4260
www.gwckollel.org • Rosh Kollel Rabbi Menachem Winter - 301.213.6504 • info@gwckollel.org