



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

# SHABBOS DELIGHTS

## TORAH MINUTE

### IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

In Parshas Nasso, G-d commands Moshe, saying: "Speak to Aharon and his sons and tell them: So shall you bless the Nation of Israel, saying: 'May G-d bless you and safeguard you. May G-d cause His countenance to shine to you and favor you. May G-d raise His countenance toward you and grant you peace' "(7:23-26).

G-d instructs the priests to bless the nation with this threefold blessing, which was to be administered daily and exclusively by the priests.

Why was the task of blessing the nation the sole responsibility and privilege of the priests? In addition, why does the Torah employ the singular form of the word "you" in the national blessing, rather than the seemingly more appropriate plural usage?

The Sages teach us that the only proper "receptacle" for a blessing is peace. Blessing, with its attendant abundance, only takes hold and flourishes where peace is found (Mishna Uksin 3:12). With this insight, we may answer our previous questions.

The Mishna in Avos [Ethics of the Fathers] recounts the hallmark of Aharon the High Priest and, by extension, of his family: "Hillel said: 'Be of the disciples of Aharon, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving people and drawing them near to Torah' " (Avos 1:12). The priests truly embodied the great characteristic of *shalom*. They were engaged in promoting concord between people and fostering harmony in society. It is therefore fitting that they should be the conduit for G-d to bless His nation.

The singular form of the word "you" employed in the blessings is symbolic of the Jewish nation, unified as one people and as one family. It is only when the people join together in peace and harmony that they merit blessing and prosperity. It is therefore natural that the blessing should reflect the singular format.

It is not always easy to put aside our differences and live together in peace and comity. The promised bounty of blessing and prosperity make the effort well worthwhile.

*Have a wonderful Shabbos!*

*Rabbi Menachem Winter*

## POINT TO PONDER

**Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying: So shall you bless Bnai Yisroel... (6:23)**

...that you sanctified us with the holiness of Aaron and you commanded us to bless His people with love. (Brocho recited by kohanim before Birkas Kohanim)

Master of the world, we have done what You have decreed upon us... (Rebono Shel Olam, recited by Kohanim after Birkas Kohanim)

When an act is performed with love, it is not usually viewed as having fulfilled a decree. Why do the kohanim use these seemingly contradictory terms?

## PARSHA RIDDLE

**Where are Noach and his descendants referenced in this parsha?**

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

**Last week's riddle:** What does "Baruch Shem" and this week's parsha have in common?

**Answer:** Baruch Shem was recited at Yakov's deathbed, and was recited by the Angels when Moshe was receiving the Torah. In addition, the way Bnai Yisroel camped around the Mishkan replicates the procession of Yakov's burial and is a duplication of the way the Angels are stationed around Hashem's Kisei HaKovod.

## HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

Halacha Insights from the Parsha

In *Parshas Nasso*, a Nazarite is commanded to bring a sin-offering (*Bamidbar* 6:11). The Talmud cites an explanation that this is to atone for the sin of having (unnecessarily) deprived himself of the enjoyment of wine, and concludes a *fortior* that more general self-deprivation (such as fasting – Rashi) is sinful, and adduces this as a source for the prohibition against self-harm (*Bava Kama* 91b).

In the modern period, the primary locus in which this prohibition is invoked and its parameters explored is cosmetic (plastic) surgery. While it is unanimous that therapeutic surgery is permitted, the permissibility of non-therapeutic surgery is less clear; many *halachic* authorities are lenient, arguing that the prohibition of self-harm does not apply to conduct motivated by a legitimate, constructive goal, such as improving one's self-image or finding a spouse (*Shut. Igros Moshe* CM 2:66, *Shut. Minchas Shlomo tinyana* 66:3, *Shut. Minchas Yitzchak* 6:105:2, *Shut. Shevet Ha'Levi* 10:292, *Shut. Chelkas Yaakov CM siman* 31, *Shut. Beis Avi* 2:152), but a notable holdout is R. Eliezer Yehudah Waldenberg, who argues that the Torah's license to heal only applies to the treatment of actual disease, and not to the mere improvement of Hashem's handiwork (*Shut. Tzitz Eliezer* at the end of 11:48).

Furthermore, many authorities raise additional potential problems with non-essential and cosmetic surgery, such as the assumption of lethal risk from the surgery itself as well as its concomitant anesthesia (*Minchas Yitzchak, Shut. Shevet Ha'Levi* 6:198 [but see also 10:292]. *Chelkas Yaakov* and *Beis Avi* reject this concern), and the prohibition (for men) of engaging in feminine modes of appearance enhancement (*Minchas Shlomo*).

Presented by Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman, Rosh Chabura

## KIDS KORNER

### WHO AM I?

#### #1 WHO AM I?

1. I am the Father of the Mother
2. I gave you a soul and a spirit of life
3. My Rebbi was a Gaon
4. My father was Yitzchok and my mother was Rivka
5. I am known for my city

#### #2 WHO AM I?

1. I am a crown
2. No wine
3. Keep pure
4. Sotah reaction

Please see next week's issue for the answers

#### Last Issue's Answers:

**#1 Dovid HaMelech** (I received my years from the first, Royalty, I was similar to Esav, I died on Shabbos, I was referred to as the "Dead Lion".)

**#2 The Banners that Bnai Yisroel used for their camping in the desert** (I indicated your campsite, Don't confuse me with a miracle, I was for the group, I am not a ban.)

All children 13 and under who answer a "Who Am I?" correctly will be entered into a raffle to

Win a  
Stomp  
Rocket  
Ultra!



### Next Raffle Drawing

**June 2nd!**

Visit <http://www.gwckollel.org> to submit your answers. Answer as many as you can because each correct answer will entitle you to another raffle ticket and increase your chances of winning.

## KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

### Monday Nights at the Kollel!

There are three exciting classes at the Kollel every Monday night!

At 8:15 pm, join "The A to Z of Jewish Living" with Rabbi Gayer for Jewish philosophy and life lessons from the Peleh Yoetz, or take advantage of Yesodei HaTorah, the skills-building class for fostering independent study skills, with Rabbi Shaps. Rabbi Schwartz explores the depth of the stories and lessons from the book of Genesis in "The Book of Genesis: Foundations of Eternity," beginning at 9:00 pm. Or bring your chavrusa and take advantage of the lively Beis Medrash!