



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

Everything and Everyone Has a Purpose

*Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps,
Kollel Scholar and Director of Special Projects for the Kollel*

“When you besiege a city for many days to wage war against it to seize it, do not destroy its trees by swinging an axe against them, for from it you will eat, and you shall not cut it down...” (20:19)

In this verse, the Torah prohibits one from unnecessarily cutting down a fruit tree and teaches us the general prohibition of *bal tashchis*, the prohibition against destroying anything for no purpose.

Amongst his comments about this mitzvah, the Sefer Hachinuch writes: “And this is the way of the pious and people of [proper] action - they love peace and are happy for the good of all creations and bring them close to Torah, and they do not destroy even a seed of mustard in the world.” We can certainly understand the relevance of a pious person’s care for even the smallest seed to the commandment being discussed. The traits of loving peace, being happy for the good of all creations, and bringing them close to Torah, however, seem unrelated to the commandment. Why does the Sefer Hachinuch mention these character traits in connection with the prohibition of *bal tashchis*?

The Talmud (Shabbos 77b) states: “Of all that G-d created in the world, not one thing was created with no purpose.” Based on this concept, Rav Mattisyahu Solomon explains the words of the Sefer Hachinuch in the following way. A person who understands the prohibition of *bal tashchis* realizes the great responsibility we have to protect all of creation in order to allow each part to fulfill its purpose. Through this recognition, a person will come to love peace and be happy for the good of others because he or she will appreciate that every person has a place and a purpose in bringing honor to G-d, thus fulfilling the ultimate purpose of creation. Furthermore, when a person sees someone who is distant from Torah, he or she will endeavor to bring that person closer to Torah and service of G-d, to enable that person to fulfill his or her purpose in bringing honor to G-d.

Through contemplation and observance of the prohibition of *bal tashchis*, we will hopefully be able to gain a greater appreciation of the sacredness and purpose of all of creation. This will in turn inspire us to become greater lovers of peace and seek to bring those around us closer to the Torah.

Have a wonderful Shabbos!

TABLE TALK

POINT TO PONDER

And it shall be that when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself two copies of this Torah in a scroll... (17:18)

Two copies of Torah scrolls; one to be placed in his treasury, and one that enters and goes with him (Rashi).

The scroll that goes out and enters with him was written like an amulet and hung on his arm (Sanhedrin 22a).

How can the Sefer Torah be hung from the arm of the King, when halacha dictates that a Sefer Torah must rest on something and cannot be hung (Berachos 24a)?

In addition, Chazal (Yerushalmi Yoma 7:1) say that people should approach a Sefer Torah, rather than it be brought to them, since this is an embarrassment for a Sefer Torah. If so, how can a king carry a Sefer Torah with him to the public?

PARSHA RIDDLE

What is the significance of the numerical value of the word 'bechor', firstborn son?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

How can one learn Torah and not fulfill his obligation to study Torah?

Answer: One who learns Mishnayos or Gemara without understanding it has not fulfilled the mitzvah of studying Torah.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Shoftim*, the Torah admonishes (16:19): "[Y]ou shall not accept a bribe, for the bribe will blind the eyes of the wise and make just words crooked." Although the context of this verse, as well as the preponderance of the *halachic* discourse on the topic, concerns judges and judicial proceedings, various *halachic* authorities extend the prohibition to anyone in a position of public trust and authority (*Pilpula Charifta Sanhedrin perek 3 siman 17, Aruch Ha'Shulchan CM 9:1*).

The *Chasam Sofer* was asked about an election for the position of communal rabbi in which electors were purportedly bribed to vote in the interest of one of the candidates. He ruled that if the bribery has been conclusively established, then the election results are void and the election must be repeated. If the bribery been conclusively established to have been at the behest of the candidate himself, he becomes ineligible for the position of rabbi until he repents (*Shut. Chasam Sofer CM #160*).

The *Teshuras Shai* discusses a seven member local governing council that unanimously passed an ordinance, but one of the council members had been bribed to vote in favor of the ordinance. He declares that "it is obvious" that the vote is not binding, since the corrupt vote is discarded and there are therefore only six voices on the question, while a full complement of seven is required. He adds that even if the custom or regulation is that the council may proceed in the absence of one member, such a rule was never intended to cover the case of a present but corrupt council member, particularly since the corruption of even a single member may have spread to the entire body, since the corrupt member may have persuaded all the others to vote with him (*Shut. Teshuras Shai 2:56*).

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

WHO AM I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I forgive, yet I am not forgiven.
2. You shouldn't, even though it is a mitzvah.
3. I am not a scribe, yet I need a scroll.
4. I was oiled.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I was for some, a must.
2. Mistake is my ticket.
3. Death lets you leave me.
4. My border protects.

Last Week's Answers:

#1 Elul (Relationship is my hint; closeness defines me. I am calling time; I usually start with the time.)

#2 Maaser/Tithes (I'm an investment; I am not a minyan yet I am ten; I have many types; richness is my result.)

Congratulations to Rabbi Biberfeld's 4th graders at TSGW and others for answering last week's questions correctly!

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

Win a super prize

Mazel Tov to Azriel Walter for winning a Popcorn Popper in the last raffle!

Stay tuned for the next raffle!

Visit gwckollel.org to submit your answers.

Answer as many as you can - each correct answer will entitle you to another raffle ticket and increase your chances of winning.

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