



Greater Washington Community Kollel
**SHABBOS
 DELIGHTS**

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

The True Provider

Presented by Rabbi Yonatan Zakem
Kollel Scholar and Director of Community Outreach

This week's parasha opens with a lengthy description of the laws of the Sabbatical year, *shemitta*. Every seventh year the land is allowed to rest, with the owner prohibited from planting or taking care of his field. All creation, from the owner to the wild animals, shall have equal access to the field's produce. Sustenance for that year, the Torah promises, will come from an abundant crop in the previous year. The Torah goes on to explain the laws of the fiftieth year, the Jubilee year, in which all property is returned to its ancestral owners and all those in bondage are freed.

In the middle of this description, the Torah details the prohibition of *ona'ah*, which forbids cheating a fellow Jew in business. What is the relevance of *ona'ah* to the laws of *shemitta* such that *ona'ah* is inserted right in the middle of the discussion of *shemitta*?

Rav Moshe Feinstein explains that the commandment of *shemitta* is meant to teach us an important lesson in faith. The land is not ours to work it unceasingly, nor do we own the land such that it is up to us to keep it or sell it. The land belongs to G-d, and it is upon Him that we rely for our sustenance and livelihood. G-d is the provider of our needs, and it is not through our own ability or skill that we subsist. Once we fully appreciate this point, we can more easily understand why it is pointless to cheat someone else. G-d will give me what I need, and He will provide my neighbor with what he needs. Neither of us will have an iota more, or less, than what Hashem decrees for us. If we instill in ourselves the message of G-d's careful maintenance of each of His children, we will be able to live without seeing others as our competitors, and will have no temptation to take advantage of another.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

TABLE TALK

POINT TO PONDER

I will remember My covenant with Yaakov and also My covenant with Yitzchok... (26:42)

This is one of five places in Tanach where Yaakov's name is spelled with the letter 'vav.' Conversely, Eliyahu Hanavi's name appears in Tanach five times without a 'vav.' Yaakov took the five 'vavs' from Eliyahu's name to guarantee that Eliyahu will herald the coming of Mashiach (Rashi).

What lesson does this teach us?

PARSHA RIDDLE

Which day of the Omer does everyone refer to as B'omer?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Why is the loss of a Kohen's mother (21:2) listed before the loss of his father?

Answer: Usually, the life span of women is shorter than that of men. Therefore, the Torah placed a Kohen's relatives in the order of whom a Kohen will probably need to contaminate himself to first (Ibn Ezra).

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Behar*, the Torah commands (25:14): "And when you make a sale to your fellow Jew or make a purchase from the hand of your fellow Jew, you shall not oppress [or 'aggrive'] one another." The Talmud (*Bava Metzia* 51a, 58b) explains that this refers to *onaas mamon*, i.e., the mispricing of goods in a sale: a seller may not overcharge a buyer, and a buyer may not underpay a seller.

Onaah applies where the price paid is above or below the merchandise's 'correct' price; it is not entirely clear, however, how to define this 'correct' price. The Talmud and early sources apparently take for granted that any particular merchandise has a well defined price, and it seems that there was typically little or no variation in price between vendors (but see *Aruch Ha'Shulchan CM* 227:7). In contemporary markets, however, merchandise is typically sold at a variety of different prices by different vendors; what, then, determines the maximum price at which it may be sold?

One possibility is that the maximum permissible price is simply the lowest one at which the merchandise is available. Since the buyer is able to purchase the merchandise for that price, any higher price is unfair to him and constitutes *onaah* (see *Erech Shai CM* beginning of #209). R. Chaim Kohn, however, rejects this as being both untenable (as according to this view, violations of *onaah* are ubiquitous) and illogical (why should the lowest price be the exclusively legitimate one?). He argues that any price established by the normal free market forces of supply and demand is legitimate, and *onaah* applies only to prices outside the range established by these forces (*Kol HaTorah* #49 [Tishrei 5761] pp. 286-87, and cf. *Pischei Choshen Onaah* Ch. 10 n. 1).

Others suggest that the 'correct' price is theoretically defined as the midpoint between the highest and lowest prices for which the merchandise is sold, but in practice, there are various reasons why the traditional laws of *onaah* will generally not apply to sales in the contemporary free market economy (*Darkei Horaah* pp. 121-24, and cf. *Alon Ha'Mishpat* #63 [Nisan 5774]).

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

WHO AM I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. Seven sevens define me.
2. For me you blow a Shofar.
3. "Forever" is until me.
4. I am referred to on the statue of liberty.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. Learn me day and night.
2. If you listen to me you'll be blessed.
3. To 'walk in me' means to be involved.
4. I was given in a week and a half.

Last Week's Answers:

#1 *Kohen* (On Pesach I am the top; I get called first; on Yom Tov I bless; Honor me.)

#2 *The Yomim Tovim* (Go up for three; fast on one; blow on one; have a good day.)

*Congratulations to
Rabbi Biberfeld's 6th Graders
and others for last week's correct answers!*

Answer as many as you can.

**Each correct answer will entitle you to another raffle ticket and increase your chances of winning!
Visit gwckollel.org to submit your answers.**

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

win
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