



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

The Source of Success

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

The Torah prescribes a number of unique Mitzvos for a Jewish king. One such mitzvah is the requirement to write a Torah scroll and bring it with him whenever he travels. The reason provided is so that "he shall read from it all the days of his life in order to learn to fear Hashem his G-d – to guard all the words of this Torah and these statutes." (17:19)

Interestingly, just a few verses earlier the Torah stated that the king would be appointed by G-d. One would expect that a king elected by G-d would be righteous and G-d fearing. If so, why would the king, of all people, be tasked with carrying a Torah scroll in order to "learn to fear Hashem his G-d?"

Rabbi Shimon Schwab explains that while this person might have been righteous before being anointed king, as soon as he is granted the reins of power, wealth, and honor, he will need to learn anew to be G-d fearing. When a person achieves success in life, it is natural for him or her to take credit for those successes, rather than credit G-d, the true source of that success. The Torah, therefore, charges the king to constantly review the Torah to remind him who is truly directing world events.

The Talmud (Sota 5a) says: "Any person who is arrogant, about him G-d says: 'He and I cannot live in the (same) world.'" Perhaps the meaning of this statement relates to this idea. Arrogance stems from the belief that one's talents and successes are self-created. Only someone who has removed G-d from the picture can tout their own successes.

Each of us is blessed with varying degrees of talent and success. We, like the Jewish king, must constantly remind ourselves that G-d is the true source of all that we have. With that in mind, we will surely direct those skills and talents towards their proper purpose, which is carrying out G-d's will.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

There shall not be found among you... one who reads omens... (18, 10)

Rebbi Akiva said, "This refers to those who read by seasons and say, "Such and such a season is propitious to begin the following project." (Rashi quoting Sanhedrin 65b)

Rav Yehuda the son of Rav Shmuel bar Shilas said in the name of Rav. "Just as when the month of Av enters, we minimize our happiness, so too when the month of Adar arrives, we increase our happiness." Rav Papa said, "Therefore, if a Jew has a court case with a non-Jew, he shouldn't schedule it during the month of Av because a Jew's mazel is weak. He should try to have the case heard in Adar when a Jew's mazel is stronger." (Taanis 29a)

Why isn't the rule of Rav Papa to delay one's court case with a non-Jew until Adar prohibited because of the ban of reading omens?

Parsha Riddle

For which other Parshiyos can the Haftorah for Parshas Re'eh be read?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

For which other Parshiyos can the Haftorah for Parshas Re'eh be read? Answer: It is also part of the Haftorah of Noach. It also may be read for Ki Seitzei if Re'eh falls out on Shabbos Rosh Chodesh or Erev Rosh Chodesh (like this year).

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In parashas Shoftim, the Torah commands: "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 shall eat, and you shall not cut it down." Many commentaries explain that the prohibition is limited to pointless destruction, but does not include cutting down trees to deprive the enemy of their use or to deprive him of offensive or defensive cover, or to use them to build siege machinery (Rashbam, Ramban, Chizkuni). Rambam, on the other hand, prohibits the cutting down of trees "to oppress [the besieged city's] men and to pain their hearts" (Sefer Hamitzvos LS #57). He may disagree with the previous view (see Minchas Chinuch #529), although perhaps even he would allow the cutting down of trees for tangible tactical or strategic objectives, and only means to prohibit mere terrorism.

Similarly, Rambam himself allows the cutting down of fruit trees if they are harming other trees, or other people's fields, or if their wood is valuable: "The Torah only prohibits [cutting them down] in a destructive manner." (Hilchos Melachim 6:8) Rosh additionally allows cutting them down if there is a need for their location (Bava Kama ch. 8 #15). It should be noted, however, that many authorities circumscribe these leniencies in various ways, in part due to an incident recorded in the Talmud of a certain individual who died as a consequence of inappropriately cutting down a fig tree (see, e.g., Shut. Chavos Yair #195, and the discussion in Sdei Chemed vol. 1 pp. 453-54).

While the Biblical text refers specifically to the cutting down of fruit trees, the prohibition extends to the destruction of property in general (Rambam *ibid.*), although there is much debate over whether this extension is Biblical or rabbinic (see Sdei Chemed *ibid.* pp. 320, 448-52).

While the general consensus is that a reasonable constructive purpose suffices to avoid the prohibition (see, e.g., Shut. Shvus Yaakov 3:71; Shut. Chikrei Lev MB YD #11), some authorities reject this view (Shut. Beis Yaakov #42), and all agree that not every conceivable purpose is automatically sufficient (see Chullin 7b).

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. My forgiveness doesn't work.
2. You shouldn't have even though I am a mitzvah.
3. I am not a scribe, yet I need a scroll.
4. I was oiled.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I am 2 or 3 but also 100.
2. You may be responsible for what you never did.
3. I make you stand.
4. Sometimes one is useful.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Krias Hatorah for the last day/s of Yom

Tov (I am for the Shalosh Regalim, On Shabbos I am different, I start with tithes or firstborns, I have a holiday summary.)

#2 Har Grizim and Har Eival (I had one; my neighbor had the opposite, We are on the sun's path, Yehoshua led the people to us, We had blessings and curses.)

Visit gwckollel.org to submit your answers.

Answer as many as you can.

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