



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

A Battle Worth Fighting

Presented by Rabbi Moshe Sadwin, Kollel Adjunct

Parshas Ki Seitzei begins with a discussion of laws pertaining to war. The commentaries note that a person's battles are not limited to physical warfare; they can be of a spiritual nature as well. One has to fight against the Yetzer Hara, the evil inclination, in every area of life. The Gemara states, "A person's Yetzer Hara rises against him every day trying to kill him." (Kiddushin 30b) The Chovos HaLevavos tells of a wise man who encounters soldiers returning victorious from the battlefield. The wise man tells them, "You may have come back from the small war rich with spoils, but have you prepared for the big war — the war against the Yetzer Hara?"

In the same vein, the Chofetz Chaim gleams a tremendous insight from our Parsha. The verse states: "When you go out to war against your enemy and Hashem will deliver him into your hand." (21:10) The implication is that, when we go to war, we can be confident of victory. The Chofetz Chaim explains: If one tries to battle the Yetzer Hara — 'going out to war' — one will succeed in the end. Although the struggle against our own inclinations and passions may be quite difficult, the Torah teaches that, if we persist, we will ultimately achieve our goal.

Hashem only expects us to do what we can. He gave each of us our unique inclinations as a means of challenging us to succeed. He knows the capabilities of each person and custom-made our Yetzer Hara to fit our strengths. Let us heed the message of our Parsha and take up the battle against the Yetzer Hara. If we really try, victory is assured.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

You shall surely send away the mother bird... so that it will prolong your days. (22, 7)

Rebbi Yaakov saw a man tell his son to climb onto a roof and take down the chicks. The son climbed to the top, sent away the mother bird and took the chicks. The son thereby fulfilled the mitzva of honoring his father and of sending away the mother bird. In regard to both of them, the Torah promises long life. As the son descended, he fell and died... What happened to the promise of long life? The verse means it will prolong your life in the world that is long - Olam Habo. (Kiddushin 39b)

It is understandable that a person needs a blessing for long life in this world because this world is temporal. Since Olam Habo is eternal, what is the meaning of long days and how is the blessing of long days relevant?

Parsha Riddle

Where is there a hint in this week's parsha to the minhag that a man begins wearing a tallis only after he gets married?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

For which mitzvas in this week's Parsha does the Torah give a reason? Answer: A king must write his own Sefer Torah; a king must not own too many horses; a king must not have too many wives; the prohibition of taking bribery.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Parshas Ki-Seitzei (25:5) contains the commandment of levirate marriage (yibum): "When brothers dwell together and one of them dies, and he has no child, the wife of the deceased shall not marry outside to a strange man; her brother-in-law shall come to her and take her to himself as a wife, and perform levirate marriage." If the brother does not wish to do so, the Torah prescribes the chalitzah (removal of the shoe) ceremony instead.

The mishnah explains that originally, when people performed yibum for the sake of the mitzvah, yibum was preferable to chalitzah, but in contemporary times, when people's intentions are not for the sake of the mitzvah, chalitzah is preferable (Bechoros 13a). The Talmud elaborates that this is the opinion of Abba Shaul, who maintains that yibum performed with base intentions verges on incest (since intimacy with a brother's wife is normally considered incest, and the prohibition against such intimacy is only lifted in the context of yibum). Other sages, however, disagree, maintaining that yibum is always a mitzvah, regardless of intent (Yevamos 39b). There is considerable dispute among post-Talmudic authorities over which view is normative. In general, the Sephardic tradition allows and encourages yibum, while the Ashkenazic tradition discourages and even forbids it, except in extraordinary and exigent circumstances (see, e.g., Shut. Shevus Yaakov 3:135; Shut. Maharsham 2:109).

In the year 5710 (1950), the Israeli Chief Rabbinate issued an edict, signed by the Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi R. Yitzhak Isaac Halevi Herzog and the Sephardic Chief Rabbi R. Ben-Zion Meir Hai Uziel, prohibiting yibum in Israel, in order to promote "national unity" and "the ways of peace". A year later, R. Ovadia Yosef - only thirty years old at the time - published an uncompromising rebuttal of the edict, arguing that since the Sephardic custom of encouraging yibum as a mitzvah had extensive support in the halachic tradition and was a long-standing, well established tradition, the Rabbinat had absolutely no authority to prohibit it (Shut. Yabia Omer 6:EH:14). In 5734 (1974), R. Ovadia reiterated his staunch rejection of the edict, and gave his imprimatur to a particular individual's proposal to perform yibum - which, he records, he subsequently did (ibid. 8:EH:26).

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. For some I am only small.
2. For some I am also big.
3. I'm not punished even though I'm in the corner.
4. I can be Shatnez.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. Your heard me six months ago.
2. The Torah requires me once.
3. Tzeirei or segol?
4. Remember.

Last Week's Answers

#1 A king (My forgiveness doesn't work, You shouldn't have even though I am a mitzvah, I am not a scribe yet I need a scroll, I was oiled.)

#2 Witnesses (I am 2 or 3 but also 100, I may be responsible for what I didn't do, I make you stand, Sometimes one is useful.)

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

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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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RAFFLE WILL BE
Sept 24.

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