



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"ל

The Inextinguishable Spark

Presented by Rabbi Zacharia Schwartz, Kollel Adjunct

In *Parshas Re'eh*, the Torah tells us that when we enter the Land of Israel we must destroy all of the places of idol worship. The Torah further commands "*Do not do the same to Hashem your G-D*," which is understood to mean that we should not destroy Hashem's place of worship, the Beis Hamikdash. Chazal are astonished by this verse; would a Jew ever think to destroy the Beis Hamikdash? Chazal therefore explain that the verse is really warning us not to sin in a manner that would cause the Beis Hamikdash to be destroyed.

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein asks the following question. Our tradition tells us that the first Beis Hamikdash was destroyed because the nation violated the three cardinal sins – murder, idolatry, and adultery. Apparently, when the Torah commanded us not to commit sins that would cause the Beis Hamikdash to be destroyed, it was telling us not to commit these terrible sins. If that is the correct interpretation of the verse, why did Chazal find it unthinkable that the Torah would have to command Jews not to destroy the Beis Hamikdash, yet they did not find it unthinkable that the Torah would need to warn the Jewish people about committing the very worst of sins?

Rabbi Feinstein explains that the nature of the battle against the *Yetzer Harah* (evil inclination) is such that it is indeed possible that a person could commit even the most heinous of sins. Nevertheless, no matter how far one falls, the inner spark of the Jewish soul is always present. Therefore, *Chazal* felt that it was unfathomable that a Jew, no matter how low he or she has fallen, would be able to bring him or herself to actually destroy the house of Hashem.

Falling short of the expectations we have for ourselves is an unavoidable feature of human existence. Let us always remember, however, that no matter what mistakes we or those around us have made, we still have the inextinguishable spark of the Jewish soul inside of us that can help us to rise up once again.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

The blessing: that you hearken to the commandments of Hashem, your G-d, that I command you today. And the curse: if you do not hearken to the commandments of Hashem, your G-d... (11, 27-28)

Why when the Torah warns Bnei Yisrael about transgressing the commandments, resulting in curses, it says "if you..." However, when the Torah states that listening to the commandments will result in blessings, it says "that you...?"

Parsha Riddle

What connection is there between Purim and Elul?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

One should place all ten fingers on the Challah when making the bracha. (Orach Chaim 167) The placing of the ten fingers corresponds to what?

Answer: They correspond to the ten mitzvahs one must fulfill when making bread.

1) Not to plow with two different types of animals 2) Not to plant two different seeds together 3) Not to collect the stalks one forgot to collect 4) Not to harvest the stalks one forgot 5) To leave a corner of the field uncut for poor people 6) To bring the first of one's produce to the Bais Hamikdash / not to muzzle an animal while it threshes 7) To separate Terumah 8) To separate tithes 9) To separate the tithes which must be eaten in Yerushalayim 10) To separate a piece of dough for the Kohen. (Tur ibid; Baal Haturim 8, 8)

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In parashas Re'eh (12:2-4), the Torah commands us to destroy the idols, altars, sacred trees, and other objects and places associated with idolatry of the indigenous peoples of Canaan, and then admonishes: "You shall not do this to Hashem, your G-d." One interpretation of this latter commandment, accepted as normative in the halachic tradition, is that it is a prohibition against demolition (even partial) of the Temple, its altar, or its courtyards, or erasing Hashem's Name. (Sifrei; Makkos 22a)

Some maintain that the prohibition only applies to Hashem's Name written in Hebrew, but His Name in other languages (e.g. "G-d") may be erased (Shach YD siman 179 s.k. 11), while others disagree and prohibit erasing His Name written in any language. (Chochmas Adam klal 89 seif 9). Some forbid erasing transliterations of Hashem's Name into any language, but not translations, which may be erased in case of need (although not gratuitously). (Keses Ha'Sofer 11:2 and Lishkas Ha'Sofer #5)

Some authorities strongly criticize the practice of writing Hashem's Name in correspondence, even in a language other than Hebrew, e.g. "adi-eu" ("to

G-d"), since it will eventually be thrown away. (Urim siman 27 s.k. 2) Even according to the view that there is no prohibition against erasing Hashem's Name in other languages, as long as the Name exists it must be treated respectfully. (Shut. Achiezer 3:32) Others counter that today ad-ieu no longer retains its original theological meaning and is simply a farewell blessing. (Achicer) (My mother notes that were it not for this point, "goodbye" [ultimately derived from "G-d be with you"] should be equally problematic.)

In the same vein, R. Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky rules that ideally, Hashem's Name in any language should not be printed normally in newspapers, but should be hyphenated (as in this column), or a substitute term (e.g. "the Eternal Creator") used instead. If this is difficult, there is basis for leniency with regard to a prestigious newspaper (such as R. Dr. Meir (Marcus) Lehmann's Israelit) that includes Torah and Biblical verses in Hebrew, and so will anyway be treated respectfully. In such a case, it is appropriate to advertise in the paper that it should not be treated disrespectfully due to the Torah and Biblical verses it contains, and once this is done, it is permissible to print Hashem's Name in other languages even without a hyphen.

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RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

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**Answer as many as you can.
Each correct answer will entitle you
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The raffle has been postponed until after the shuls are reopened. We are still accepting entries to the raffle.

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**All regular GWCK classes are now on break for the summer
and will resume in Elul - exact date to be announced.**