



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

**It is an honor to present this week's Torah Minute from our archives.
The following was penned by our founder, Rabbi Kalman Winter ZT"L**

Following the plague that killed 24,000 Jews, the Torah, in this week's portion of Pinchas, details the census of the remaining Jews. Chapter 26 verse 41 records the count of the tribe of Benjamin as 45,600. Just a few verses later, the Torah records the count of the tribe of Dan as 64,400.

It is startling that Dan, the son of Jacob, had only one child, whereas Benjamin had a total of ten children. Yet over the course of time, the tribe of Dan had 15,800 more offspring than Benjamin. The Rabbis draw a lesson in life from this historic anomaly. There is neither counsel nor wisdom, save for G-d's own determination. Whether in matters of financial security, life, or pleasure and joy from our children and grandchildren, there is no trajectory other than the mercy and will of the Creator above.

Though Dan had but one child, he was not to be denied. History and time shined their grace upon him, and his progeny developed into one of the most populous tribes. So too, we should not be dismayed nor deterred. Though our fortunes might appear bleak, there is a greater wisdom than ours that directs and guides our future. King David in Psalms chapter 27 best expressed our aspirations: "Place the hope in G-d, strengthen yourself and He will instill courage in your heart."

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Therefore say, "Behold I give him My covenant of peace." (25, 12)

Hashem said, "It is just that he should receive his reward." (Bamidbar Rabba 21, 1)

The reward for mitzvas is not in this world. (Kiddushin 39b)

How could Pinchas receive reward for his good deed in this world?

Parsha Riddle

How were Serach and Asher the son of Yaakov related?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Hashem opened the mouth of the donkey and it said to Bilaam, "What have I done to you that you struck me these three times?" (22, 28)

When did Hashem open the mouth of a different animal?

Answer: When Eliyahu HaNavi took the cow to give to the idolaters on Har HaCarmel, the cow told Eliyahu that it did not want to be used for avoda zora (idolatry).

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Pinchas* (27:8-11), the Torah sets forth the laws of inheritance: the deceased's primary heirs are his sons; if he has no sons, his daughters are his heirs; if he has no daughters, there is a sequence of blood relatives who are next in line as heirs; ultimately, "you shall give his property to the closest relative in his family, who shall then be his heir."

There is no explicit mention of spousal inheritance. The rabbinic tradition, however, is that a husband inherits his wife, although a wife does not inherit her husband (*Bava Basra* beginning of *Yesh Nochalin*). The inheritance right of a husband is unanimously accepted, although a variety of different hermeneutical derivations for it are advanced in the Talmud and midrash (*ibid.* 111b; *Sifrei Zuta* to v. 8). Furthermore, there is a dispute over whether it is actually a Biblical law at all or merely a rabbinic institution (*Kesubos* 83b-84a).

The Rashba (*Shut.* 6:254) was asked about a community in medieval Perpignan where the custom was to follow non-Jewish law that a husband did not inherit his wife. The father of a married woman who had died argued that this custom should be followed (and thus he, rather than his son-in-law, should inherit his daughter), since "anyone who marries a woman there, it is as though he so stipulated." Although the Rashba concedes the general principle that "in all monetary matters, [any] stipulation is valid," he nevertheless adamantly rejects the father's argument:

"But to conduct oneself so because it is the custom of the non-Jews, this truly seems to me to be prohibited, for he is imitating the non-Jews, and this is what the Torah has prohibited (by the words: "And these are the ordinances that you shall place) **before them**" – and not before non-Jews (*Gittin* 88b), even if they both desire this, and it is a civil matter, for the Torah has not left the nation that is an inheritance to Him to its own desires, to give honor to the ordinances of the non-Jews and their laws."

Some authorities infer from this passage that choice of law provisions in contracts that specify secular law as governing are generally prohibited; this issue is the subject of considerable debate and discussion.

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I ?

1. I have a special chair.
2. I have a special cup.
3. I'll answer the questions.
4. The birds were my waiters.

#2 WHO AM I ?

1. I was for Haman.
2. I am for Yom Kippur.
3. I was for the division.
4. I am not "poor."

Last Week's Answers

#1 Balak (Don't confuse my father and Gershom's mother, Ruled, Unscrambled, I am "to curse", I was a foreigner.)

#2 Cherev/Sword (I was Bilaam's end, Unscrambled, I am a "friend", I guard the garden, Zeroa Netuya/Outstretched arm.)

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