



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

Thursday, the eighth of Cheshvan, marked the ninth Yahrzeit of our illustrious founder, Rabbi Kalman Winter, ZT"L. It is our honor to present from our archives a Torah Minute authored by Rabbi Winter in October 2009.

In this week's Torah portion, Chapter 12, Verse 5, the Torah records that the family of Abraham "left to go to the land of Canaan, and they came to the land of Canaan."

The question begs itself - for what purpose did the Torah record that they went forth to the land of Canaan? It would have been sufficient to say that they arrived at the land of Canaan.

The great Torah scholar, Rabbi Leib Chasman, of blessed memory, commented that from here we learn that the primary rule in all growth, both spiritual and otherwise, is never to lose focus of one's goals. Even a short lapse can cause one to fall short of his objectives and at times even fall behind his starting point. We often accept upon ourselves obligations to perform good deeds and undertake lofty endeavors. They are all worthwhile causes within our grasp only if we are able to abide by our agenda. We begin our quest steadily moving forward heading towards our goal. However, as so often occurs, we become distracted. Our enthusiasm wanes, and our desire dissipates. In order to achieve success, we must maintain the same drive and enthusiasm as expressed and displayed when we began our objective.

It is for this reason that the Torah records "and they left to go to the land of Canaan" as an introductory remark to explain how they achieved their objective of arriving in Canaan. For their impetus and drive during the entire journey was inspired and motivated by that original commitment and objective. Their passion and focus did not wane and their objectives were achieved. As we begin the new year and the new cycle of the reading of the Torah, let us be ever mindful not to lose focus of our commitments and goals to maintain them with fervor and passion.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Hashem said to Avram, "Go, for yourself..." (12, 1)

Avram was concerned, "If I leave my father now in his old age, people will frown on my actions, which will cause a desecration of Hashem's Name." Hashem told him, "Do not be afraid. I will exempt you from the obligation to honor your father, but I will not extend that exemption to anyone else. Furthermore, I will make sure your father dies before you leave for Eretz Yisroel. (Bereishis Rabba 39)

The Jews received ten commandments at Mara – the seven Noahide laws plus... and honoring one's parents. (Sanhedrin 56b)

Did Avraham have the status of a Jew or a non-Jew? (Parshas Derachim 17)

If Hashem had to exempt Avram from his obligation to honor his father, it would imply that Avraham had the status of a Jew. Had his status been a non-Jew, he would not have been obligated to honor his father, as per Chazal in Sanhedrin.

Isn't this Midrash a clear proof to the Parshas Derachim's question as to what the status of Avram was?

Parsha Riddle

Why do we say "Adon Olam" at the beginning of Shacharis?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

The fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth and every bird of the heavens (9:2). What halachic implication does this verse have?

Answer: An animal that has gored another animal is not assumed to be an animal that will also gore a person because it has an inherent fear of people.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In parshas Lech-Lecha (13:13), the people of Sodom are described as "wicked and sinful toward Hashem, exceedingly." In the book of Yechezkel (16:49), the sinfulness of Sodom is specified to be its egregious selfishness:

She [Sodom] and her daughters had pride, surfeit of bread and peaceful serenity, but she did not strengthen the hand of the poor and the needy.

As we have previously discussed, our sages use the pejorative phrase *midas Sedom* ("the manner of Sodom") to describe such selfishness, where someone refuses to share his property with, or insists on enforcing his legal rights against, someone else, despite the fact that he is able to provide benefit to the other at no real cost to himself. But although the sages disapproved of such conduct, whether the court will actually enjoin one from doing so is a matter of considerable dispute among both early and more recent authorities.

Prof. Nahum Rakover relates:

There was a case in Netanya where someone bought a very large refrigerator. The problem was that it was too big to fit into the entrance and stairwell of the building, so the only way to get it into the man's apartment was to bring it inside the building through his neighbor's porch. 'Fine', said the neighbor, 'but you're going to have to pay me.' They went to a *beis din*, which ruled that you're not allowed to charge for a favor like that. (*Ami Magazine*, #218 pp. 102-03)

Similarly, in the case of someone who wishes to install an air conditioning unit in his home that will extend over his neighbor's airspace, the contemporary scholar R. Meir Orlan rules that the neighbor may only object if he has a valid reason for doing so:

If the air conditioner does not interfere in any way, the neighbor cannot object. However, if he has reason to object, even that of disturbing noise, he can prevent protrusions above his property. (*Business Weekly* #546)

The Maharsham (2:153), however, rules that one cannot even compel his neighbor to allow the (temporary) placement of a ladder on his property in order to enable him to perform some maintenance on his own building, due to the fact that the dispute over whether people can be compelled to refrain from *midas Sedom* remains unresolved (and cf. *Shut. le-Horos Nassan* 2:100).

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I ?

1. I could be a banner.
2. I could even be a miracle.
3. I am unwanted.
4. I raise you.

#2 WHO AM I ?

1. I am for the eighth.
2. I am a Korban Pesach requirement.
3. I am a sign.
4. I am a seal.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Noah (I was a tzaddik, I was a man of the earth, I made work easier, Gentiles are called my children.)

#2 Bavel (Babylonia) (I had a tower with my name, I have a Talmud with my name, I was the source for confusion, I am the drain of the world.)

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