



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.**

As we begin Parshas Behar (25:1), we are introduced to the law of shmittah. The word shmittah literally means 'to refrain.' The Torah requires all Jewish landowners in the Land of Israel to refrain from harvesting their produce every seventh year. Furthermore, there is no cultivating or planting during this seventh year for the following year.

In this first verse, the Torah introduces shmittah by saying that this law was given at Sinai. The commentaries question: Were not all of the 613 commandments of the Torah given by G-d and Sinaitic? In what manner does this commandment of shmittah differentiate itself to be singularly designated as 'given at Sinai?'

The great commentator Chasam Sofer (1762-1839) remarks that, in verses 20 and 21 of this chapter, the Torah records that one might ask, "From where shall we eat during this time?" The produce of the seventh year is to be available to all. One is not permitted to exercise ownership over his produce. The following year's produce will not materialize, for he is enjoined to leave his land fallow in the seventh year, without cultivation. In response to the individual's concern, the Torah assures him, "I will command My blessing on the sixth year that it will produce sufficient bounty for three consecutive years": the sixth year, the seventh year, and the following (eighth) year. Such explicit guarantees for an entire nation to reap a harvest for three years can only emanate from Above. Only One Who is All-Powerful can commit, by His word and trust, to such miraculous assurances. Only G-d, the Author of Torah, could say such a thing. Hence, we understand why specifically this commandment of shmittah is associated with Sinai, for this G-d given commandment can only have been given by the Almighty. So, too, all the commandments of the Torah were given at Sinai.

Our faith is that the Torah is G-d given and irrevocable. Our attitudes, compliance and adherence to all the laws and details of the Torah are undoubtedly predicated on this understanding and commitment. The Torah is not limited by time, space, culture, or geography. It is not subject to revision or amendments. Our Holy Torah is not akin to shifting sands in the desert, moving with every turbulence. It is only in the knowledge and security of a timeless Torah, G-d given for the ages, that we can hope to find the true meaning of life's purpose, with confidence that our path is true and our way is just.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

When you make a sale to your fellow... a man shall not aggrieve his fellow (25:14).

This refers to financial dishonesty (Rashi).

Since the verse used the word "ish," a man, this excludes a minor. If a minor would aggrieve his fellow, he would not transgress this command (Moshev Zekanim L'Baalei HaTosfos).

A minor is excluded from all commands of the Torah. His actions are not considered to be a transgression of the command of the Torah. Furthermore, we are discussing financially cheating someone while making a sale. A minor cannot sell anything (according to Torah Law). How could one entertain the thought that he should be bound by this rule?

Parsha Riddle

Which mitzvos in Parshas Emor and Parshas Behar are very similar?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

What do Shavuot and the day after Sukkos have in common?

Answer: They are both called "Atzeres."

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parshas Behar*, the Torah commands: When you make a sale to your fellow or make a purchase from the hand of your fellow, do not aggrieve (*al tonu*) one another. ... Each of you shall not aggrieve (*ve-lo sonu*) his fellow, and you shall fear your G-d; for I am Hashem, your G-d. (25:14,17)

The Talmud (*Bava Metzia* 58b) explains that these two verses constitute two distinct prohibitions: the former refers to aggrievement (*ona'ah*) in buying and selling, i.e., overcharging or underpaying for merchandise, and the latter refers to verbal aggrievement: **Just as there is a prohibition against *ona'ah* in buying and selling, so is there *ona'ah* in statements, i.e., verbal mistreatment. One may not say to a seller: For how much are you selling this item, if he does not wish to purchase it. He thereby upsets the seller when the deal fails to materialize. If one is a penitent, another may not say to him: Remember your earlier deeds. If one is the child of converts, another may not say to him: Remember the deeds of your ancestors, as it is stated: "And a convert shall you neither mistreat, nor shall you oppress him" (*Shemos* 22:20).**

In addition to overcharging or underpaying for merchandise, other forms of deception are forbidden as well. Rambam rules: It is forbidden to deceive people with regard to a business deal or to beguile them (*lignov es da'atam*). This prohibition applies equally to Jews and to gentiles. If a seller knows that the article he is selling has a blemish, he must notify the purchaser about it. It is even forbidden to beguile a person with false flattery. (*Mechirah* 18:1)

Sema (*siman* 228 s.k. 7) explains that neglecting to disclose a blemish is forbidden even if the buyer is not being overcharged for the blemished item, since this is similar to "beguilement" (*geneivas da'as*).

Rambam proceeds to enumerate various deceptive practices that are forbidden: One may not improve the appearance of a man being sold as a servant, nor of an animal, nor of old utensils, by making them appear to be new. ... All practices similar to the above are also forbidden. (18:2-3)

There is some debate as to whether the prohibition against "improving the appearance of a man" extends to a candidate for employment taking measures to make himself appear younger, such as dyeing his hair (*Levush Mordechai* 24, *Seridei Eish* 2:81; *Avnei Zikaron* 3:39; *Teshuvos ha-Maor* p. 104).

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I bring blessing.
2. I am compared to water.
3. I am to guide.
4. I am for night and I am for day.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. Don't confuse me with Shavuot.
2. Rest.
3. I create holiness.
4. I am for your money and fields.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Omer (I am not to say, I was for the Mon, Tenth of an eifa, For the new from the new.)

#2 Mum/Blemish (I disqualify an animal, I disqualify a Kohen, I am the same backward and forward, If my middle loses its leg, I'd become water.)

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