



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.

This week's Torah portion, Ki Savo, speaks to the nation of Israel of the blessings they would enjoy for their observance of the commandments and the curses they would endure for their failure. Chapter 28, verse 13 relates the following blessing: "You shall be only above and you shall not be below." The Kotzker Rebbe, of blessed memory, interprets the verse as follows: G-d created a ladder from which the souls of the upper world would descend to the world below into the bodies of human beings. As soon as the souls descend, the ladder from above is removed. From Heaven the call goes forth to the souls: "Return, return!!" The souls, heeding the call, desire to return, but alas, there is no ladder.

Three groups of souls emerge. One group, observing there is no ladder, gives up immediately in its quest to return Above. The second group is more tenacious and jumps Heavenward repeatedly in an attempt to go back to its roots Above. However, with time, it too succumbs to its earthly abode below, acclimating itself to its new environment. The third group remains determined to soar Heavenward and return to its place of origin. With every failure, it regroups with new vigor and strength. What distinguishes this group is that it continuously hears the Heavenly voice from Above, "Return, return!!" unabated. Eventually, the Lord Himself turns to this third group and lifts it above. As the Rabbis say, "One who comes to purify himself is Divinely assisted." Heavenly assistance is commensurate with the measure of the desire and sincerity we exhibit in our effort to return to our spiritual roots. G-d lifts, "with both hands," those whose will it is to meet the challenge and go forth. With assistance from Above, there is no limit to our capacity for growth and ultimate success. Ours is but to do and G-d will do the rest.

This, then, is the meaning of the blessing "You shall be only above and you shall not be below." Our aspirations should always be Heavenward, never complacent and acclimated to those values which are below.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

You will build a house, but you will not dwell in it; you will plant a vineyard, but you will not redeem it... (28:30)

Then the officers shall speak to the people saying, "Who is the man that built a new house and has not inaugurated it? ... and another man will inaugurate it. And who is the man who planted a vineyard and not redeemed it? ... and another man will redeem it. (Shoftim 20:5-6)

When listing the curses, the Torah only mentions the fact that the builder of the home will not reside there. However, when allowing the soldier to return from the battle, the Torah describes his fear that someone else will reside there. Why?

Parsha Riddle

There are forty-nine curses in the Tochacha (Rebuke) in Parshas Bechukosai. How many are there in Parshas Ki Savo? Why the difference?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle: *For which part of this week's Torah reading is there a biblical commandment to hear it this year according to some opinions?*

Answer: *To fulfill the mitzvah to remember what Amalek did to B'nei Yisrael, we read about Amalek in public at Parshas Zachor once a year before Purim. However, when the year is a leap year, it will be more than a year (twelve months) before Parshas Zachor comes again. Therefore, in order not to let a year pass, some hold that one should have in mind to fulfill the obligation of remembering about Amalek when we read Parshas Ki Seitzei.*

HATORAH V' HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

From our archives

Parshas Ki-Savo contains the imprecations that were to be pronounced at Mount Gerizim and Mount Eival, one of which is: "Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way" (Devarim 27:18). This, together with the more commonly referenced cognate prohibition against "put[ting] a stumbling block before the blind" (Vayikra 19:14), is understood in Rabbinic literature in two, and possibly three, senses:

- The preponderance of invocations of the prohibition interprets it as forbidding the inducing of another ("who is blind and does not see the way of truth due to the desires of his heart" - Rambam Hilchos Rotzeach 12:14) to sin.
- An additional meaning of the verses (which Rambam (Sefer Ha'Mitzvos lo sa'aseh #299) understands to be its "simple reading" [peshat]) is an admonition against providing another with bad advice.
- There is some debate over whether the literal placing of a stumbling block before the blind is also included in the prohibition (Minchas Chinuch end of #232).

Arms sales to bandits are forbidden, under the rubric of "strengthening the hands of sinners" (Hilchos Rotzeach ibid. 12-14). In this particular case, however, it would seem that we ought to be concerned with the public menace caused by such sales in and of itself, beyond the concern for the moral wellbeing of the transgressor. Not only aiding and abetting sinners, but even cooperation with a sinner after the sin has already been committed is included in the prohibition. It is forbidden to purchase stolen property, as one thus "strengthens the hands of sinners, and causes him to commit further thefts, for if he will not find a purchaser he will not steal" (Rambam Hilchos Geneivah 5:1, and cf. Hilchos Gezeilah 5:1).

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I am now.
2. I am twenty-nine.
3. Your heart and your children's hearts.
4. I am for my beloved...

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I have seven parts.
2. I am said softly.
3. I was opened for Yosheyahu.
4. I am a "joyless" product.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Exclusion of Moavite and Amonite men from marrying Jews (I apply to men, I exist because of inhospitality, I am a result of Bilaam, I am forever.)

#2 Ben Sorer U'moreh (Wayward Son) (I am fiction, yet I am real, I am a big 'winer', I am needy and meaty, My end justifies my end.)

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