



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

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TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

Lofty Laws

Presented by Rabbi Moshe Sadwin, Kollel Adjunct

"And these are the laws that you shall place before them." (21:1)

This week's Parsha presents many of the Torah's monetary laws. Included are the laws of custodianship, paying for damages and maintaining honesty in court. The Parsha begins with the verse, "**And** these are the laws that you shall place before them." Rashi comments that the verse begins with the word "And" to show that it is a continuation of the topic that precedes it – notably, the Ten Commandments, which were enumerated at the end of last's week's Parsha. This comes to teach us, says Rashi, that just as the Ten Commandments were given at Har Sinai, so too were the laws in our Parsha.

At first glance, this seems unnecessary. All the laws of the Torah were given at Sinai – why single out monetary laws for special emphasis? What might lead someone to think that these laws are any different?

The Biala Rebbe explains that one might mistakenly assume that monetary laws lack the sanctity of other *mitzvos*. After all, every society has systems governing commerce, damages, and civil order. It would be easy to view the Torah's financial laws as practical social regulations rather than expressions of holiness.

Rashi therefore emphasizes the word "And" to make a deeper point. He is not simply reminding us that these laws were given at Sinai – this is self-evident. Rather, he is teaching that observing the laws of honest business carries the same spiritual potential as standing at Sinai itself. Through ethical conduct in our financial dealings, a Jew can reach lofty spiritual heights and encounter the Divine presence within the most ordinary aspects of life.

The laws found in our Parsha are not merely social conventions intended to create a stable functioning society. They are a means of reaching great spiritual heights by guiding all our material endeavors according to the wisdom of the Torah. When one learns and observes these *mitzvos*, one aligns their outlook and conduct with the will of Hashem, thereby drawing nearer to Him.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

Point to Ponder

TABLE TALK

Parsha Riddle

An eye for an eye, a tooth for tooth, a hand for hand, a foot for foot. (Shemos 21:24)

One might have thought that if one blinded the eye of another, the court blinds his eye as punishment; or if one breaks the hand of another, the court breaks his hand; or if one broke the leg of another, the court breaks his leg. Therefore, the Pasuk states: "One who strikes a person...And one who strikes an animal," to teach that just as one who strikes an animal is liable to pay monetary compensation, so too, one who strikes a person is liable to pay monetary compensation. (Baba Kama 83b)

If "an eye for an eye," actually means monetary compensation, why didn't the Torah simply write, "One who damages an eye must pay money?"

Who is not obligated to run to an ir miklat (city of refuge) even if he kills accidentally?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

"You shall not kill..." (20, 13) How does this mitzva allude to the day of the creation of man?

Answer: This is the sixth of the Aseres Hadibros, hinting to man who was created on the sixth day. Additionally, there are six letters contained in the words lo tirtzach. (Baal Haturim)

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In parashas Mishpatim (23:7), Hashem commands: "Distance yourself from a false matter, and do not kill an innocent or righteous person (v'naki v'tzaddik al taharog), for I will not vindicate a wicked person." The Talmud explains the admonition not to kill an innocent or righteous person as follows:

The Sages taught: From where is it derived that with regard to one who is leaving the court having been found liable, and someone said: I have the ability to teach a reason to acquit him, from where is it derived that the court brings the accused back to be judged again? The verse states: Do not kill an innocent person, and the accused may in fact be innocent. And from where is it derived that with regard to one who is leaving the court, having been acquitted, and someone says: I have the ability to teach a reason to find him liable, from where is it derived that the court does not bring the accused back to be judged again? The verse states: Do not kill ... a righteous person, and the accused was found righteous in his trial. (Sanhedrin 33b)

Our Sages and later commentaries offer a variety of other interpretations of this admonition as well:

* A defendant may be convicted only on the basis of the testimony of eyewitnesses to the offense, and not on the basis of even strong and compelling circumstantial evidence. (Mehilta; Rambam Sefer HaMitzvos lo sa'aseh 290 and Sanhedrin 20:1)

* A defendant may not be convicted based on the testimony of witnesses who contradict each other in the details of their testimony, even if they both agree on the basic fact of the defendant having committed a particular offense. (ibid.)

* A judge may not execute a defendant who is innocent of the crime for which he is currently being judged, even if he has been proven to have acted wickedly in other matters. (Ibn Ezra)

* "Distance yourself from a false matter," i.e., a judge must not be lax in the cross-examination of witnesses who testify against a defendant, since this will result in the execution of one who is "innocent" and "righteous" (Akeidas Yitzchok)

* Even where a defendant has been convicted of a crime based on eyewitness testimony, if a judge has the impression that he is actually "innocent" and "righteous," he is prohibited from voting for his execution. (R. David Zvi Hoffmann)

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. Heavenly secret.
2. Out of order?
3. First act.
4. Acceptance.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. No trespassing.
2. I am a source of hate.
3. I am not a health center.
4. I am humble.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Yisro (I added, I loved the Torah, My conversion got me a letter, I was an advisor.)

#2 Shabbos (I am for the seventh, I was the fourth, One breath, Sanctify and enjoy me.)

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