



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. 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 at Sinai? 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. How will the following year's produce materialize if 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

If you will say, What will we eat in the seventh year?... I will ordain My blessing for you in the sixth year and the crop will yield a crop for three years. (25, 21 – 22)

The sequence of the verses implies that Hashem will ordain his blessing only due to people's questions. Why won't people merit these blessings just for complying with the laws of Shemitta?

Furthermore, why does the verse say: "the crop will yield a crop for...". Shouldn't it say: "the ground will produce a crop for...?"

Parsha Riddle

If one loses count of when Shemitta is, how can one easily figure it out?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

For how many negative prohibitions does the Torah prescribe Malkus?

Answer: 207 (Rambam Hilchos Sanhedrin Chapter 19)

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Parashas Behar contains two similar prohibitions: "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 [v'lo sonu] his fellow, and you shall fear your G-d; for I am HASHEM, your G-d." (25:14, 17) The Talmud explains that the former refers to onaas mamon - overcharging or underpaying in a sale, and the latter refers to onaas devarim - various types of insulting or otherwise abusive speech (Bava Metzia 58b).

A related category of prohibited behavior, which may also fall under the rubric of onaah (see Prishah CM siman 228 #5), is geneivas daas: the deceptive manipulation of another for personal advantage, even in the absence of outright prevarication. Some categorize geneivas daas as a form of actual theft (Sefer Yereim #124; Ritva Chulin 94a), while others categorize it as a form of lying (Shaarei Teshuvah shaar 3 osios 175 and 184).

Numerous practices are prohibited by the Talmud and later authorities as geneivas daas; following are several modern examples:

- Cheating on an exam to fraudulently obtain a degree constitutes geneivas daas. Additionally, utilization of the fraudulent degree to obtain employment constitutes actual theft (Shut. Igros Moshe CM 2:30; Shut. Shevet Haleivi 10:163).
- Altering, or even omitting, "material" details of medical research in order to enhance its appeal to publishers, for the purpose of career advancement, constitutes geneivas daas even insofar as such alteration will not possibly lead to any sort of improper treatment or incorrect diagnosis (Shut. Tzitz Eliezer 15:12).
- Dyeing one's hair to appear younger, to enhance his appeal to potential employers or spouses is problematic. Some authorities allow this for the purpose of employment, insofar as the employee knows that he or she is actually capable of performing the job (Shut. Levush Mordechai end of #24; Teshuvos Ha'Maor #26 p. 104), while others forbid it unless the person explicitly reports his or her actual age (Sridei Eish end of 2:81), or in a case of premature grayness, where the dyeing is merely to avoid appearing older than one actually is (Shut. Avnei Zikaron 3:39 - note that the author stipulates that he is permitting this specifically in the context of significant financial hardship).

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

All children 13 and under who answer a "Who Am I?" correctly will be entered into a raffle to

Win a Great Wall of China Lego Set



#1 WHO AM I?

1. Seven sevens before me.
2. I have a shofar.
3. "Forever" is until me.
4. I return people.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I do not lag behind.
2. Mu number is my name.
3. Don't get burnt.
4. Glory within glory.

Last Week's Answers

#1 A mum (blemish) (I can be extra, I can be a lack, I can be for animals, I can be for people.)

#2 Kohen (I am not for ice cream, A patrilineal tradition, I may redeem you, You give me your bread.)

Visit gwckollel.org to submit your answers.

Answer as many as you can.
Each correct answer will entitle you to another raffle ticket and increase your chances of winning!

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RAFFLE WILL BE
July 16.

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