



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

It's a Matter of Perspective

Presented by Rabbi Zacharia Schwartz, Kollel Adjunct

"When a matter will be too difficult for you to decide...and you shall come to the Levite Cohanim or to the judge of that time...you shall act as they guide you...do not veer to the right nor to the left" (Devarim 17:8-11)

This verse tells us to obey the words of our Torah leaders. Rashi offers an interpretation that at first glance seems quite strange. He explains that when the verse says "do not veer to the right nor to the left," it means to say that even if our Sages tell us that "right is left and left is right," we should still heed their words. Does Rashi mean to say that we should follow the Rabbis even if they tell us something that is patently false?

I once heard a wonderful insight into this comment. Rashi does not tell us that the verse mandates that we listen to the Sages if they tell us that "north is south and south is north." The difference between "right and left" versus "north and south" is that the latter is objective, a matter of fact, while "right and left" are a matter of perspective. If you and I are facing each other, it is in fact true that I will call right what you will call left and I will call left what you will call right.

Sometimes our leaders and mentors give us direction and advice that is very difficult for us to understand. It may seem wholly counter-intuitive. This verse is teaching us that we should realize that our teachers are simply looking at the situation from a different perspective – a perspective that is based on their breadth and depth of knowledge of G-D's Torah. It is incumbent upon us to rise to the challenge and recognize that their view is informed by something greater than our personal opinions and biases. May we all be wise enough to heed the words of those who are wiser than we are.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Or who will come with his fellow into the forest... (19:5)

Rebbi Yehuda says, a blind person who kills someone accidentally does not go into exile. The reason is since the posuk says "without seeing" and a blind person never sees (Makos 9a).

Rebbi Yehuda says, a blind person is exempt from all the mitzvos of the Torah (Kiddushin 31a).

If a blind person is exempt from the mitzvos anyway, he would not be obligated to go into exile either. So why does Rebbi Yehuda need a special drasha to teach that?

Parsha Riddle

What is the connection between an unworthy judge and an Asheira tree?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Rav Papa was walking up his steps, and the step broke under him... Chiya bar Rav asked Rav Papa, "Did a poor man come to your house and you did not give him money?" (Bava Basra 10)

Where is there a source in the parsha that 'steps break for not supporting the poor'?

Answer: The (trup) cantillation under the words "open you shall open" is darga sevir, which translates to 'the step should break' (Vilna Gaon)

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In parashas Shoftim, the Torah commands the judge (16:19): "lo sakir panim [you shall not respect someone's presence]". Rashi explains that this is an extension of the requirement for impartiality from substance to process; not only must the ultimate verdict be rendered without favor or fear, but the judicial proceeding itself must be absolutely impartial. The judge must not be gentle toward one litigant and tough toward the other, nor may he allow one to sit and require the other to stand. A show of such partiality may cause the disfavored litigant to become unable to properly express his claims.

The Talmud derives this requirement for procedural impartiality from a different Biblical verse (Vayikra 19:15): "with righteousness shall you judge your fellow", and adds another form of prohibited partiality: one litigant allowed to speak for as long as necessary, and the other told to curtail his statement (Shevuos 30a, and cf. Rambam Sanhedrin 21:1; Shulchan Aruch CM 17:1). Later authorities explain that it is permitted to tell both litigants to be brief, as long as the instructions to the opposing parties are uniform (Bach, Shach s.k. 1, and Meoznayim Le'Mishpat s.k. 2 ibid.). It would seem that the same should apply to toughness versus gentleness – it should be permitted for a judge to adopt a tough attitude toward both litigants, as long as he does so impartially.

I have long wondered whether distinguishing between litigants is allowed when it is their differing conduct that warrants it. It is common for one litigant to be calm, obedient, and respectful, while the other is agitated, recalcitrant, and rude, and repeated polite exhortations to the latter to behave more appropriately are unsuccessful. May the judge proceed to excoriate the latter while remaining polite to the former, or is that a form of impermissible procedural partiality? I believe that many contemporary authorities allow this, since the judge's conduct derives in a consistent and impartial manner from neutral guiding principles, and it is solely the difference in the litigants' conduct that is engendering the difference in the judge's attitude toward them.

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I must be two.
2. We can't be related.
3. I must be questioned.
4. In Shema I am large.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I am for a new house.
2. I am for a new vineyard.
3. I am for a new wife.
4. I am for fear.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Maaser/Tithing (I'm a donation, I'm an investment, I'm a part of ten, Richness is my result)

#2 Blood (I am red, I am a liquid, Don't spill me, Don't drink me.)

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

Win a
Gravity
Maze



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!

THE NEXT
RAFFLE WILL BE
October 9th.

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

**Kollel Classes
Resume Sunday,
Aug 19!**

- Sunday Kollel Brunch and Learn @ YISE – 9:30am
- Parsha Explorations @ KMS – Sunday at 6:45pm
- Pearls of Prayer @ YISE – Sunday after Mincha/Maariv
- CLAS (Community Learning at Shomrai) Mon-Thurs 8:15pm
- Spring Semester @ GWCK – Mon-Thurs 8:15pm and 9:00pm