



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

The Grass *Is* Greener On the Other Side

Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps, Kollel Scholar and Director of Special Projects

As the Jewish people approach the Land of Israel, the tribes of Reuven and Gad, who possessed large flocks of sheep, take note of the abundance of grazing lands in the Transjordan region. They approach Moshe and request that their portion of the land be allotted to them from Transjordan, rather than from the Land of Israel itself. After a series of negotiations, Moshe agrees to their request.

Rav Moshe Sternbuch explains that their request stemmed from a lack of faith in G-d. Had they waited to receive their destined portion in Israel proper, they would have discovered that they had been granted a section of land far greater than what they received in Transjordan. They, however, couldn't wait and as soon as they came to a land that seemed to best fit their physical needs, they opted to take it, not trusting that G-d would have something even greater in store.

We are currently in the period of "The Three Weeks," a time when we mourn the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash (Temple) and contemplate what steps we need to take to rebuild it. The first question we need to ask ourselves is: Do we yearn for the redemption? Do we truly yearn for Moshiach and the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash? We are fortunate to live in a society where we feel comfortable and secure. We seem to have everything we need, both materially and spiritually. At times it can be hard to imagine that there could be an even greater life for us just over the horizon. But we can't make the same mistake as the tribes of Reuven and Gad. While "this side of the Jordan" might seem to provide the best situation for us, we must have faith in G-d that what awaits us in the era of Moshiach, a world with a Beis Hamikdash, is far greater than what we are presently experiencing. Only when we begin to yearn for the redemption will we truly begin to take the steps to bring it about. May we all merit to see the redemption and the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash speedily in our days!

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Moshe sent them, a thousand from each tribe for the legion, them and Pinchas, son of Elazar, the Kohen, to the legion... (31, 6)

The tribe of Levi was separated from the ways of the world. They do not wage war, as the rest of B'nei Yisrael ... (Rambam Shemita V'Yovel 13, 12)

Since Kohanim are from the tribe of Levi, why was Pinchas sent to war?

Parsha Riddle

When is it possible for a healthy Jewish adult to be obligated to eat on Tisha B'Av?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

How were Serach and Asher the son of Yaakov related?

Answer: The simple reading implies that Serach was Asher's daughter, but the Ramban and others understand that she was actually his step-daughter.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Eikev* (30:3), the Torah commands: "If a man takes a vow (*neder*) to Hashem or swears an oath (*shevuah*) to establish a prohibition upon himself, he shall not desecrate his word; according to whatever comes from his mouth shall he do."

While violating one's vow or oath is clearly prohibited, the Torah is ambiguous about the morality of taking vows and oaths in the first place. As we have previously discussed (*Eikev* 5776), Rambam seemingly considers the Torah's exhortation (*Devarim* 10:20) that "in His Name shall you swear" to be a positive *mitzvah*, although later authorities debate what exactly he means by this.

The *midrash* on our *parashah* declares that taking even a true oath is not permitted except to the very pious: "The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Israel: Do not think that it is permitted to you to swear in My Name – you are not allowed to swear even the truth in My Name, unless you possess all these traits [mentioned in the aforementioned verse in *Devarim*].

'Hashem your G-d, shall you fear' – that you shall be like those who are called G-d fearing: Abraham, Job, and Joseph ... "Him shall you serve" – if you focus yourself on Torah and the practice of *mitzvos*, and you have no other work ... If you possess all these traits, you are permitted to swear, but if not, you are not permitted to swear." (*Bamidbar Rabbah* 22).

R. Eliyahu Kalatzkin explains that the *midrash's* admonition against swearing even a true oath is due to the fact that one who is accustomed to swear may end up swearing falsely, and only one who is extremely pious can be confident that he will never end up doing so (*Imrei Shefer* #49). R. Kalatzkin adduces this *midrash* as a source (among others) for the doctrine that it is generally wrong to take even a true oath. This doctrine was earlier discussed by the Chasam Sofer, whose correspondent noted the common assumption that swearing even a true oath is sinful and the practice of doing the utmost possible to settle claims against oneself in order to avoid swearing even a true oath. The Chasam Sofer endorses this attitude, and concludes: "the custom of Israel is Torah and should not be second-guessed" (*Shut. Chasam Sofer CM* #90).

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I am not a week.
2. I am binding.
3. I could cause destruction.
4. I could come up in court.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. For B'nei Yisrael, I was forty-two.
2. For the Sanhedrin I was ten.
3. I am not a load.
4. Moving.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Eliyahu Hanavi (I have a special chair, I'll answer the questions, I am the continuation of Pinchas, The birds were my waiters.)

#2 Goral (lottery) (I was for Haman, I was for Achan, I was for the division, I am not poor.)

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

GWCK wishes everyone a wonderful summer!

Kollel classes (unless otherwise noted) conclude for the season Thursday, July 28 and will resume be"tze Rosh Chodesh Elul, Sunday, August 28.