



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

Hear It Like It Is

Presented by Rabbi Zacharia Schwartz, Kollel Adjunct

In Parshas Matos the Torah recounts how the tribes of Gad and Reuven approached Moshe asking that they be given the territories east of the Jordan River, rather than a portion in the Land of Israel itself, on account of the Transjordan region's suitability for their large herds of livestock. Moshe initially understands their request to be rooted in a fear of the conquest of the Land of Israel and sharply criticizes the people of Gad and Reuven.

Rabbi Yissocher Frand once posed the following question. Moshe takes no less than nine verses to rebuke the people of Gad and Reuven. The people of Gad and Reuven knew full well that their intentions were pure, and they didn't "deserve to be yelled at," as it were. Why did they not interrupt Moshe and explain themselves?

Rabbi Frand suggested that the people of Gad and Reuven understood something that we would all do well to internalize. They understood that hearing rebuke, especially from a great person, is something to cherish, not avoid. Sure, they could have avoided the discomfort of being criticized, but they would have also lost out on an opportunity for growth.

No one likes to hear that they did something wrong, especially when one feels that they are in the right and the criticism is unfair. But no one is perfect. We all have areas to improve in and yet we all have difficulty recognizing our own flaws. The ability to hear and absorb *mussar* (corrective instruction) when it comes our way is an essential component of our personal growth. Perhaps with this understanding, we can begin to shift our perspective regarding criticism or correction that we receive from others – from one of resentment and ill-will to one of appreciation and growth.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Moshe commanded Bnei Yisrael saying, "This is the Land that you shall divide...which Hashem has commanded to give to the nine and a half tribes" (34:13).

Two and a half tribes took their portion on the other side of the Jordan. The remaining nine and a half would divide Eretz Yisrael proper. This implies that the tribe of Shimon must also have taken a portion in Eretz Yisrael.

Shimon did not receive a portion in Eretz Yisrael, as Yaakov said regarding Shimon (Vayechi 49:7) "I will disperse them in Israel." (Rashi, Divrei HaYamim I, 4:27).

Did Shimon receive a portion of land in Eretz Yisrael or not?

Parsha Riddle

When does a person need atonement, even though they did not perform a sin?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

In this week's parsha there is a hint that one should wake up a bit later on Shabbos morning than one wakes up during the week. Which verse alludes to this matter?

Answer: Regarding the daily Tamid offering, it says, "In the morning". In regard to the Tamid offering brought on Shabbos, it does not say, "In the morning." This is a hint that one should wait until after the morning. (Rema Orach Chaim 281: 1)

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Masei*, the Torah declares at least six times that a murderer is to be put to death (35:16-31). Although the Torah prescribes the death penalty for a number of sins, murder is unique in that even when certain technical procedural requirements for the imposition of the death penalty have not been met, the perpetrator is nevertheless killed (indirectly, via the procedure of "*machnisin oso le-kipah*") as long as his guilt has been conclusively established (*Sanhedrin* 81b and Rambam *Rotzeach* 4:8-9). The Rambam explains the reason for this as follows:

"This measure is not taken with regard to other crimes punishable by execution by the court. If a defendant is liable for execution, he should be executed. If he is not liable for execution, he should be released. Although there are other sins that are more serious than murder, they do not present as serious a danger to society as murder does. Even idol worship - and needless to say, incest or the violation of the Sabbath - are not considered as severe as murder. For these sins involve man's relationship with G-d, while murder also involves man's relationship with his fellow man."

The crucial importance of executing murderers arises in the course of a fascinating discussion recorded in the Mishnah (*Makkos* 1:10): "**Rabbi Tarfon and Rabbi Akiva say: If we had been members of the Sanhedrin, we would have conducted trials in a manner whereby no person would have ever been executed. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: In adopting that approach, they too would increase the number of murderers among the Jewish people.**" The death penalty would lose its deterrent value, as all potential murderers would know that no one is ever executed.

R. Moshe Feinstein, in a letter addressed to an unnamed prominent government official, asserts that the Torah's prescriptions of the death penalty were not intended as practical deterrents, but rather to teach people the severity of the associated sins, so that they will not commit them (*Igros Moshe CM* 2:68). The aforementioned statement of R. Shimon b. Gamliel, however, clearly indicates that practical deterrence was an important aspect of the death penalty, and R. Yechezkel Landau explicitly states that "the Holy One, blessed be He, desired to prescribe the death penalty for some sins so that man will fear transgressing [them]" (*Noda be-Yehudah* 1 OC 35 s.v. *Elah she-omer ani*, and cf. *Chinuch* end of #47).

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I am binding even before Bar Mitzvah.
2. I begin the Yom Kippur service.
3. I am for Erev Rosh Hashanah.
4. Watch your words.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. My death is prayed for.
2. I must remain holy.
3. I was anointed.
4. I have more clothes.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Shalosh Regalim (Sometimes I mean three times, From me you know 'only if you can walk', On me you see to be seen, I was in last week and this week.)

#2 Yehoshua's Appointment (I was a hands-on job, I was because of staying in the tent, I was a moonlike event, I was in the front of everyone.)

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Most Kollel classes and programs will be on break beginning Rosh Chodesh Av/Monday, August 5. Classes will resume in Elul. For more information, contact info@gwckollel.org.