



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

# SHABBOS DELIGHTS

## TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

**Presented by Rabbi Menachem Winter, Rosh Kollel**

From our archives

**"Judges and enforcement officers you shall appoint for yourself in all your cities which Hashem your God gives you..." (16:18)**

The Torah enjoins the nation to establish a court system for each city and tribe, in addition to the Sanhedrin - the national high court. This would ensure easy access for the people to clarify the commandments, resolve disputes, and adjudicate litigation. As well, the Torah calls for enforcement officers to ensure the decisions of the judges are implemented and uphold the standards and morals of the society.

Here, in recognition of the potential for man to be influenced by the basest aspects of his nature and to dominate and exploit his fellow, the Torah is calling for a system of law and a mechanism for enforcement to secure honesty and uprightness.

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein notes that a careful reading of the Torah's text yields an additional message. The seemingly superfluous words "for yourself" in the directive above are conveying to us a timeless and essential lesson. Indeed, we must erect courts and procedures to ensure that society does not deteriorate into chaos and anarchy. However, while these institutions assist us in checking ourselves, we cannot suffice ourselves with these external safeguards.

We must, in addition, become "officers" over ourselves - each person cultivating his inherent moral compass and nourishing his intellect with the ideals of the Torah. With his vitalized intellect and fortified will-power, he will gain a mastery over his drives and succeed in sublimating his base urges. It is then that society will truly live together in peace and harmony.

**Wishing you a Good Shabbos!**

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## TABLE TALK

### Point to Ponder

**By the testimony of two witnesses or three shall the condemned person be put to death (17:6).**

The verse should be understood as, "By the testimony of two witnesses or the acceptance of their testimony by three judges." (Rav Sa'adia Gaon)

This verse is referring to capital cases. Capital cases need to be judged by a Bais Din of twenty-three, not three (Sanhedrin 2a). How could Rav Sa'adya Gaon write that the testimony of the witnesses could be accepted by three judges?

### Parsha Riddle

**For a man is the tree of the field (20:19).  
How is a person compared to a tree?**

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

"Hashem took you out from Egypt at night." (16:1) In Parshas Bo, the Torah says that B'nei Yisrael left during the day. (Shemos 12:41) Why does our verse say they left at night?

Answer: The redemption began at night.

## HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

### HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Shoftim*, after forbidding various occult practices, the Torah commands: "You shall be wholehearted with Hashem, your G-d (*tamim te-hiyeh im Hashem Elokecha*)" (18:13). While the commentaries offer a variety of interpretations of the verse, various classic sources explain it as an admonition against attempting to discern the future through problematic means: "From where is it derived that one may not consult astrologers (*Kaldi'im*)? As it is stated: 'You shall be wholehearted with Hashem, your G-d.'" (*Pesachim* 113b) Last year, we discussed the application of this admonition to the casting of lots and bibliomancy; this year, we discuss its application to genetic screening.

R. Moshe Feinstein writes: "Even though only a small minority of children are born with this condition (of Tay-Sachs), and it is possible to apply to this the verse of *tamim te-hiyeh im Hashem Elokecha*... nevertheless, since now it has become easy to check, we may consider whether one who does not check himself is like closing one's eyes to (avoid) seeing what is possible to see, and since if *chas ve-shalom* something like this happens, it will engender extremely great pain to the parents of the child, it is appropriate for one who needs to marry a woman to check himself." (*Igros Moshe EH* 4:10)

Most scholars have understood R. Moshe to be endorsing Tay-Sachs screening. His son R. Reuven, however, based upon considerations that are beyond the scope of our discussion, insists that his father actually opposed such screening as a violation of *tamim te-hiyeh* (since the testing "is not, in fact, so easy to do"), and R. Reuven accordingly "advises [his students], and all who ask, not to test" (*Nahar Shalom Devarim* pp. 252-54).

In any event, virtually all other authorities who discuss the matter, unequivocally endorse genetic screening for Tay-Sachs (see <https://doryeshorim.org/rabbinical-endorsements/>). One exception is the generally reactionary R. Menashe Klein (*Mishneh Halachos* 12:265), who suggests that such screening may indeed violate the admonition of *tamim te-hiyeh*, but his colleague R. Moshe Stern is scathingly dismissive of any theological objections to such screening: "One who says that this testing procedure entails an element of lack of *bitachon*, *chas ve-shalom*, is utterly misguided, and does not know what he is saying: on the contrary, we are obligated to ascertain anything that can be ascertained in order to avoid all misfortune, with the help of Hashem, may He be blessed."

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

## KIDS KORNER

### Who Am I?

#### #1 WHO AM I?

1. My beginning and end are the same.
2. I disqualify.
3. I am permanent.
4. I am not your mother.

#### #2 WHO AM I?

1. I am not a net gain.
2. I have messages.
3. Kill the fake.
4. Listen to me.

#### Last Week's Answers

#1 **Elul** (Relationship is my hint, Closeness defines me, I have a blast each day, I am the sixth.)

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

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