



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.

In living a Torah-inspired life, we endeavor to fill our days with sanctity and spirituality. Our quotidian routine, however, demands that we deal with the mundane. The pursuit of a career, the need to care for our physical self, and a myriad of other commonplace matters all occupy our thoughts and time. Moreover, the allure of the material world beckons and entices us, further confusing and complicating the clear spiritual journey that we have set out for ourselves. How do we balance our spiritual quest with the material demands of our daily lives? How do we preserve our noble goals while dealing with the physical temptations that confront us?

Let us look into our parsha for guidance. Having conquered the lands of Sichon and Og on the eastern banks of the Jordan, the Nation of Israel was poised to enter to Land of Israel proper. The Tribes of Reuven and Gad, who were prosperous and abundant with livestock, discerned the eastern bank to be especially fertile. Realizing the opportunities that the lush pastures would afford their livestock, they approached Moshe with a proposition. They would forgo their portion in Israel proper for exclusive rights to the eastern bank of the Jordan. In response to Moshe's concern that they would not cross the Jordan and participate in the conquest, the Tribes of Reuven and Gad reassured Moshe of their commitment. "They approached him [Moshe] and said 'pens for the flock we shall build here [the eastern bank] for our cattle, and cities for our children.'" (22:16) The two Tribes went on to communicate that they would cross the Jordan and lead the nation in battle. Only when the conquest was complete and the land apportioned would they return to the eastern bank to settle. Moshe accepted their proposal, but in summarizing their offer he rephrased their words. "Build for yourselves cities for your children and pens for your flocks." (22:24) Where the two Tribes gave precedence to their livestock, mentioning them before their children, Moshe inverted the order, mentioning the children first. The Sages in Midrash Tanchuma explain that, through his re-ordering of their words, Moshe was in fact rebuking Reuven and Gad. Moshe was teaching them that while wealth is a heavenly blessing to be preserved and cared for, one must not lose sense of his priorities. Our primary goals and objectives must always remain clear and be our main focus. Our physical and material needs, while necessary and important, cannot be given the prominence of our precious ideals.

True, in our spiritual quest, we cannot ignore the realities of everyday life. We need to support our families, build a home, and take care of our health. But when we subordinate the material aspects of our lives to our spiritual endeavors, seeing them as means to further our journey instead of as ends unto themselves, we will be successful in infusing all facets of our lives with the sanctity that we desire.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

The children of Reuven and the children of Gad had abundant livestock... (32:1)

The children of Gad and the children of Reuven came and said to Moshe... (32:2)

Why does the Torah switch the order of their names? In the first verse, the Torah lists the children of Reuven first, and in the second verse the children of Gad are listed first!

Parsha Riddle

Where in Tanach did a vow cause a woman to have a child?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

...my covenant of peace. (25:12)

A pledge that Pinchas would not be harmed by supporters of Zimri. (Ibn Ezra)

Who else did Hashem assist so that they would not be killed for killing? Answer: Kayin

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Matos* (32:20-22), Moshe tells the children of Gad and Reuven that if they abide by their commitments to participate in the invasion of the Land west of the Jordan, "then you shall be vindicated from Hashem and from Israel." In various places, the Sages interpret this phrase to mean that one must avoid not merely actual impropriety ("from Hashem") but even the appearance of impropriety ("from Israel"). For example:

The Sages taught in a *baraita*: The craftsmen of the House of Garmu were expert in the preparation of the shewbread, ... And for this matter they are mentioned favorably: Never was refined bread of fine flour found in the hands of their descendants, so that people would not say that they are sustained from that technique of preparing the shewbread. They ate only bread made of coarse flour mixed with bran, to fulfill that which is stated: "then you shall be vindicated from Hashem and from Israel."

The Sages taught in a *baraita*: The members of the House of Avtinas were expert in the technique of preparing the incense, ... And for this matter they are mentioned favorably: Never did a perfumed bride emerge from their homes. And when they marry a woman from a different place, they stipulate with her that she will not perfume herself, so that cynics would not say that it is with the work of the incense that they perfume themselves, to fulfill that which is stated: "then you shall be vindicated from Hashem and from Israel."

The Chasam Sofer (*Shut*. 6:59) apparently understands that the imperative of avoiding even the suspicion of impropriety derives from the concern for the desecration of Hashem's Name. As the Talmud explains:

What are the circumstances that cause desecration of Hashem's name? Rav said: For example, in the case of someone like me, since I am an important public figure, if I take meat from a butcher and do not give him money immediately, people are likely to think that I did not mean to pay at all. They would consider me a thief and learn from me to be lax about theft. (*Yoma* 86a and Rashi there)

The *Divrei Malkiel* (4:61), however, rules that the imperative to avoid suspicion applies only where one does something unusual that invites suspicion, but where one has behaved entirely normally and is nevertheless suspected unjustly and without basis, he is not obligated to make an effort to clear his name.

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. A half was added to me.
2. To get me you need to lead the fight.
3. I had more pasture.
4. I am the other side.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I am for Yaakov.
2. I was for Yaakov's livestock.
3. I was for the journeys.
4. I am a Yom-tov.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Tzelophchad (Sticks and then stones may have killed me, Boycotted, I did not join Korach, Did I teach Shabbos importance?)

#2 Eliyahu (I have a special chair, I did not die, I have my own Tish, I will escort Moshiach.)

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beginning Rosh Chodesh Av/Shabbos, July 26.**

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