



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

Sponsored by the Cypess Family Foundation

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

Judges At Our Own Gateways

Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps, Director

"Judges and officers shall you appoint in all your gates (cities)..." (16:18)

Parshas Shoftim opens with the *mitzvah* to establish judges in each city in Israel, as well as officers who would enforce the rulings of the court. It is puzzling, therefore, that the word "*you – lecha*" is in the singular. Shouldn't this command, which is incumbent upon the people as a group, be spoken to the collective?

The Chida cites in the name of Rav Chaim Vital that in addition to the simple reading of the verse relating to appointing judges for each city, the Torah is also alluding to an instruction for each individual to appoint judges and officers at each of their own personal gateways. Every person has numerous gateways through which they experience and interact with the world. We have gates of seeing, gates of hearing, gates of smelling, gates of speaking, and gates of touching. It is through these gates that all matters of the world come to us both for good and for bad. It is our job, explains the Chida, to become the judges and officers for what enters and what leaves through these gates – to always ensure that we only see, hear, smell, taste, and touch the things that elevate us and enhance our relationship with Hashem. As well, we must remain on guard for what we allow to leave our mouths.

As we enter the month of Elul and we begin to contemplate what areas we would like to improve in, we can ask ourselves: Have we fulfilled our duty as judges for what we have allowed in and out of our gates?

One of the most powerful gateways through which we see, hear, speak, and interact with the world around us is our phones. They are with us all the time, and at times it feels like we can't be away from them for even a moment. So much of our phone use is habitual and automatic. We have surrendered control of our gateways when it comes to our phones. The Kollel is proud to once again be running the Elul Connection Challenge. This program is intended to help us regain control of our personal gateways and bring greater sanctity and intentionality to our smartphone and social media use. More information can be found on the back of the Shabbos Delights.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

Point to Ponder

TABLE TALK

Parsha Riddle

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 verse says "without seeing" and a blind person never sees (Makkos 9a).

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

If Rebbi Yehuda holds 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 inference to teach that?

What is the significance of the numerical value of the word 'bechor', firstborn son?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle: *When is one permitted to eat the cheilev / fats of a cow?*

Answer: *If a cow was shechted and there was a baby inside, the fats of the baby may be eaten.*

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In parashas Shoftim (19:4-6), in the course of discussing the institution of the cities of refuge, the Torah states:

This is the matter of the killer who shall flee there and live: One who will strike his fellow without knowledge ... lest the redeemer of the blood (go'el ha-dam) will chase after the killer, for his heart will be hot ... and he shall strike him mortally ...

The Sifrei comments: "**Lest the redeemer of the blood will chase** – it is a mitzvah for the blood redeemer to chase." The Talmud (Sanhedrin 45b) as well (in the context of a different Biblical discussion of the blood redeemer) states: "**The avenger of the blood (goel hadam) shall put the killer to death when he encounters him** (Bamidbar 35:21) - it is a mitzvah for the blood redeemer." The Mishnah (Makkos 2:7), however, records a dispute over whether it is indeed a mitzvah for the blood redeemer to kill the murderer: *In a case where a murderer emerged beyond the Shabbos boundary of the city of refuge and the blood redeemer found him there, Rabbi Yosei HaGelili says: It is a mitzvah for the blood redeemer to kill him, and it is optional for every other person to do so. Rabbi Akiva says: It is optional for the blood redeemer, and every other person is liable for killing him.*

The Rambam (Rotzeach 1:2 and 5:10) seemingly understands that the Sifrei (and thus apparently the verse in our parashah) and the Talmud are referring to the case of a murderer who killed deliberately, where it is undisputedly a mitzvah for the blood redeemer to kill him, whereas the Mishnah is referring to the case of a murderer who killed inadvertently, where it is a matter of Tannaic dispute whether it is a mitzvah for the blood redeemer to kill him, and the halachah follows the view of R. Akiva that it is not.

Others maintain that the Talmudic passage (and perhaps the Sifrei as well) is referring to an inadvertent murderer and is in accordance with the view of R. Yosei HaGelili, and thus non-normative (see Sefer Ha-Mitzvos Esin of Ramban 13; Megillas Esther ibid.; Ma'aseh Rokeach and Mishneh l'Melech Rotzeach 1:2). Later authorities, however, follow the view that it is indeed a mitzvah upon a blood redeemer to kill a deliberate murderer (Tzemach Tzedek 111; Divrei Malkiel 5:60).

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. Some things I cannot forgive.
2. You shouldn't, even though it's a mitzvah.
3. I am not a scribe, yet I need a scroll.
4. I was oiled.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. For some, I was a must.
2. Mistake is my ticket.
3. Death lets you leave me.
4. My border protects.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Avoda Zara (Idolatry) (I must be destroyed, I cause impurity, I can cause the destruction of entire cities, I am strange.)

#2 Blood/Dam (I am the soul, Use salt, I am red, I am not unintelligent.)

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ELUL CONNECTION CHALLENGE
Begins Rosh Chodesh Elul (Aug. 14)
BACK FOR A SECOND YEAR WITH ALL-NEW DAILY INSPIRATION!

This Elul, jumpstart your growth by bringing greater MINDFULNESS, SANCTITY, and INTENTIONALITY to your smartphone and social media use.

- Daily CHIZUK and INSPIRATION from local Rabbanim.
 - Daily CHALLENGES that will put YOU in control of your smartphone.
 - A LIFE-CHANGING experience for you and your family.
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