



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

# SHABBOS DELIGHTS

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## TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

### Perfectly Imperfect

Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps, Director

**"Walk before Me and be *tamim* (perfect)." (17:1)**

Right before Hashem entrusts Avraham with the commandment of *Bris Milah* (Circumcision), He tells him, "Walk before Me and be *tamim*." What does the Torah mean by "Walk before Me," and what does it mean to be *tamim*?

Rashi, citing a Midrash, explains that Hashem's instruction was to "Walk before Me with the *mitzvah* of *Milah* and then you will be *tamim* – perfect, for as long as you remain uncircumcised, you are blemished."

The Ksav Sofer suggests an alternate understanding. The Torah is not telling us *how* to become *tamim*, but rather instructing us to *remain tamim*. *Bris Milah* is a deeply cherished *mitzvah* because it represents a unique covenant between the Jewish people and Hashem. It is a statement and a symbol that we have been chosen to be Hashem's representatives in the world; yet this incredible honor could potentially fill us with arrogance. To this, Hashem says, "Walk before Me, but remain *tamim* – remain unblemished," as the Gemara (Megillah 29a) teaches that arrogance is a blemish on a person. To remain unblemished, one must remain humble.

It can be challenging to balance the awareness of being "special" and "chosen" by Hashem with genuine humility. The key is to bear in mind that we are "chosen" to bring honor to Hashem. There is no better way to do this than to walk before Him with humility and respect.

**Wishing you a Good Shabbos!**

## Point to Ponder

**Please say you are my sister that it may go well for me ... (12:13)**

*They will give me gifts. (Rashi)*

**But to the children of Avraham's concubines, Avraham gave gifts... (25:6)**

*That which was given to him with regard to Sarah...he gave all to them, for he did not want to benefit from them. (Rashi)*

If Avraham did not want to benefit from them, why did he desire them originally? Furthermore, Avraham refused the spoils from the king of Sodom even though he was entitled to them. If so, why did Avraham want to accept gifts from the king of Mitzrayim?

## TABLE TALK

## Parsha Riddle

**Why are the tallis and tefillin worn specifically at Shacharis?**

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

**Last week's riddle:**

**Which animal in this week's parsha kept Shabbos?**  
**Answer: The dove – when (in Bereishis 8:11) it only returned in the evening (after Shabbos) with the olive branch. (Pardes Yosef)**

## HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

### HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Lech-Lecha*, the Torah relates that at some point after Avraham had obeyed Hashem's command to travel to (what turned out to be) the Land of Canaan, "There was a famine in the land, and Avram descended to Egypt to sojourn there because the famine was severe in the land." (12:10)

The Ramban is quite critical of Avraham, on two grounds. First, *Know that Avraham our father unintentionally committed a great sin by bringing his righteous wife to a stumbling-block of sin on account of his fear for his life. He should have trusted that G-d would save him and his wife and all his belongings for G-d surely has the power to help and to save.*

And second, *His leaving the Land, concerning which he had been commanded from the beginning, on account of the famine, was also a sin he committed, for in famine G-d would redeem him from death. It was because of this deed that the exile in the land of Egypt at the hand of Pharaoh was decreed for his children. In the place of justice, there is wickedness and sin.*

The Abarbanel defends Avraham on both counts. Regarding his having endangered his righteous wife, he explains that Avraham was initially unfamiliar with Egypt and its inhabitants and thus did not realize what was likely to occur there to his wife. He then adds:

There is no doubt that an excellent person should choose death rather than (tolerate) the perpetration of an abomination (and thus Avraham should have given up his life in defense of Sarah), but if his death will not forestall the abomination, it is not appropriate for him to choose death ... and for this reason Aaron agreed to fashion the (Golden) Calf, since he thought that even if they kill him this would not prevent its being fashioned.

This principle is put forth by *halachic* authorities as well: Even in a context in which one would normally be obligated to give up his life rather than violate the Torah, this does not apply where an enemy has the power to force him to violate the Torah no matter what he does (*Ran Shabbos* p. 22b in Rif pagination; *Nimukei Yosef Sanhedrin* 17b in Rif pagination).

(The Abarbanel's defense of Avraham's leaving the Land of Canaan despite having been commanded by Hashem to go there is unfortunately beyond the scope of this article.)

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

## KIDS KORNER

### Who Am I?

#### #1 WHO AM I?

1. I am not a portion.
2. I confused the generations.
3. I chose wickedness.
4. The nephew.

#### #2 WHO AM I?

1. Avraham.
2. Yehoshua.
3. Sarah.
4. Yaakov.

#### Last Week's Answers

**#1 Har Ararat** (Don't confuse me with a rat, The Torah is not on me, I was the resting place, I was the Haman family climb.)

**#2 Noach** (I mean easy, I was a captain, I was a favorite, Was I righteous?)

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