

A Taste of Torah Not a Drop to Drink

By Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher

No wine or grape juice. No grapes. Not even grape leaves (stuffed or otherwise). One who is a nazir is restricted from consuming any part of the grapevine. And what would prompt a person to declare himself a nazir? Our Sages tell us that the Torah chose to discuss the laws of a nazir immediately following the section of a sotah, a woman who is accused of adultery. Such a woman, under certain circumstances, is made to drink the bitter waters (as prescribed by the Torah). If she is guilty, she dies a most gruesome death. One who witnesses such a debacle, often brought on due to improprieties committed after consuming alcoholic beverages, will be moved to abstain from consuming wine, and, to that end, will declare himself a nazir.

There is a very basic problem with the above approach, however. If one witnesses the catastrophic results of inappropriate inebriation, he will avoid placing himself in such compromising circumstances without having to vow abstinence from wine. It is the individual who did not view firsthand the dire consequences who needs to swear off drinking, as he will lack the motivation and fortitude to stay away

from wine, not the one who witnessed it.

Rabbi Reuven Grozovsky (1886-1958) notes that we have a basic misunderstanding of the nature of evil. We assume that if we recognize something as evil, we will automatically avoid it.

Quite the opposite, he says. The nature of man is to be drawn after evil. And while one may intellectually recognize the depravity of an item or act, he will nonetheless be drawn after it. Thus, one who witnesses the punishment of a sotah, while fully recognizing the atrociousness of her sin, will inevitably be desensitized to the severity of the sin, as he will subconsciously be drawn after it. And it is for that reason that he must declare himself a nazir.

The world in which we live today has sunk to depths unknown to our ancestors for millennia. The lack of any moral sense in society presents us with a tremendous challenge. And, while we may have a clear recognition of just how bad things really are, we cannot rely on that to protect ourselves from destruction. Au contraire; the greater our recognition of the danger we face, the greater the need is to create fences with which to protect ourselves and our

Ask the Rabbi The \$2,000 Question

Chaim Bernfeld wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

A friend of mine asked me to post this question. He is in the construction business. A third person (a neighbor)

found out he was on his way to a certain warehouse to pick up something, so he asked him to pick up some tiles he purchased there and bring them home to him. He gave my friend \$8000 which was the agreed price for the tiles.

Continued on back

Stories For The Soul

'Father of the Century'

Rick Hoyt was born 44 years ago in Winchester, Mass. He was strangled by the umbilical cord during birth, leaving him brain-damaged and unable to control his limbs.

"He'll be a vegetable the rest of his life," doctors told his father, Dick, and his mother, Judy, when Rick was nine months. "Put him in an institution."

But the Hoyts weren't buying it. They noticed the way Rick's eyes followed them around the room. When Rick was 11 they took him to the engineering department at Tufts University and asked if there was anything to help the boy communicate.

"No, there's nothing going on in his brain," they told Dick.

"Tell him a joke," Dick countered. They did. Rick laughed.

Rigged up with a computer that allowed him to control the cursor by touching a switch with the side of his head, Rick was finally able to communicate.

And after a high school classmate was paralyzed in an accident and the school organized a charity run for him, Rick pecked out, "Dad, I want to do that."

How was Dick, who never ran more than a mile at a time, going to push his son five miles? Still, he tried. That day changed Rick's life.

"Dad," he typed, "when we were running, it felt like I wasn't disabled anymore!"

That sentence changed Dick's life. He became obsessed with giving Rick that feeling as often as he could.

Last year, at ages 65 and 43, Dick and Rick finished

Continued on back

Kollel Happenings

NEFESH HACHAIM, MONDAYS
@AISH W/RABBI SHACHNE
SOMMERS

Join Kollel Dean Rabbi Shachne Sommers in studying the timeless work of Rav Chaim Volozhiner, Nefesh Hacham. Tuesday mornings 9:15-9:50 at Aish. For information, please contact Rabbi Moshe Heyman at rmh@denverkollel.org or 303-820-2855.



HEART OF THE TORAH - AT AISH OR ANYWHERE

Join Rabbi Aron Yehuda Schwab and Rabbi Yechiel Erlanger to learn the Ten Commandments - the Heart of the Torah - in depth. This 14-part series will complete the study of the Ten Commandments just in time for the August 1st national and local Grand Siyum Hashas celebrations. Classes are held at Aish & broadcasted via gotomeeting.com. For information, email info@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855.



SHABBOS MALKISA, TUESDAY W/RABBI SHACHNE SOMMERS

Love Shabbos? Want to explore its depth and grandeur? Join Kollel dean Rabbi Shachne Sommers in this advanced, text-based class as he explores Rabbi Shimshon Pincus' sefer on Shabbos. Please call (303)257-1089 for time and location or email info@denverkollel.org

Interpersonal Issues

Acceptable Signs for Identifying Lost Objects

There is another exception to the validity of location as a means of identification. If an item was found in a place where there is traffic, pedestrian or otherwise, the location cannot be used. This is due to the fact that the item was likely moved from its original

location by the traffic, thus removing validity for the location.

Adapted with permission from "The Halachos of Other People's Money" by Rabbi Pinchas Bodner (Feldheim Publishers)

Ask the Rabbi

Continued from front

When my friend got there, he started bargaining and the seller agreed to give him the tiles for \$6000. According to halachah who gets the \$2000 difference?

Dear Chaim Bernfeld,

I asked Rabbi Zalman Nechemia Goldberg, shlita, who ruled that the two thousand dollars goes back to your friend's neighbor. The neighbor never relinquished ownership of this money; he merely entrusted it with your friend. Your friend didn't spend it on the tiles, so it goes back to his neighbor.

Now, if things had been slightly different, your friend would have profited: If, instead of a lower price, your friend had received more tiles, the extra tiles would have been split between

your friend and his neighbor.

The difference between these cases is as follows: In the first case, the point in question is the extra money. Since the neighbor is the original owner of the extra money, and he never lost his ownership, he gets it. In the second case the point in question is the extra tiles. Neither the neighbor nor your friend is the original owner.

So who gets the extra tiles in the second case? Although the intention of the tile-seller was probably to give them to your friend the Sages decreed that the bonus be split with his neighbor whose business transaction 'caused' the extra tiles.

Reprinted with permission of Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem, www.ohr.edu

Stories for the Soul

Continued from front

their 24th Boston Marathon.

"My dad is the Father of the Century," Rick types.

Dick got something extra out of this too. Three years ago he had a mild heart attack during a race. Doctors found that one of his arteries was 95% clogged.

"If you hadn't been in such great shape," one doctor told him, "you probably would've died fifteen years ago."

So, in a way, Dick and Rick saved each other's lives.

In this week's Parsha, a nazir takes a vow to abstain from physical distractions and focus on an intense program of spirituality. He may be motivated by a strong desire to achieve sublime holiness.

One thing we see clearly is that when one has the motivation, he can achieve even things thought to be impossible

Adapted with permission from ShulWeek by Rabbi Boruch Lederman.