



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

As the Jewish nation journeys forth to the Land of Israel, Moshe invites his father-in-law Yisro to accompany them. Moshe reassures Yisro, who had earlier joined the Jewish nation, that he will be treated well. Yisro demurs, however, telling Moshe that he plans to return to his native land of Midian. Moshe pleads with Yisro not to abandon the nation on its travels “for you have been as eyes to us.” Rashi understands this to mean “you will illuminate our eyes” (10:31).

Rabbi Eliyahu Meir Bloch ponders the necessity for Yisro to enlighten the Jewish nation. After all, they were being led by Moshe, the greatest of all prophets, Aharon the High-Priest, and the Seventy Elders. Additionally, the people were surrounded by G-d’s Presence in the Ark and the Cloud of Glory. What could possibly be missing from this assemblage of greatness and spirituality?

Rabbi Bloch answers as follows: The Jewish leaders had been born into great and noble families. As such, they were educated in Torah ideals from their earliest days and charged with carrying on the mission of their forebears. Yisro, in contrast, had been living in Midian as an idolatrous priest. He came to recognize G-d and His Torah of his own accord. In his struggle and search for truth, Yisro discerned the fallacy of his religion and committed himself to living as a Jew. Consequently, Yisro was a unique role model who carried a special message for all of mankind. He displayed the inherent potential for greatness which is embedded in every person. Irrespective of upbringing and background, with will and desire, anyone could reach the loftiest of heights. It was for this reason that Moshe begged Yisro to remain with the nation, so that he might be a living testimony to man’s innate capacity for greatness and his ability to completely transform himself.

We are fortunate today to be surrounded by many people who have unlocked that hidden potential within themselves – men and women who have bravely embarked on a journey to reclaim a heritage long forgotten. By their shining example, the rest of us can marvel at and consider the greatness imbedded within each one of us.

Have a wonderful Shabbos!

Rabbi Menachem Winter

TABLE TALK

POINT TO PONDER

Speak to Aaron and say to him, "When you ascend to kindle the Menora..." (8:2)

Ascend, this teaches that there were steps that the Kohen would ascend in order to kindle the Menora (Rashi).

You shall not ascend My Altar on steps, so that your nakedness will not be uncovered upon it (Yisro 20:23).

Why are steps acceptable for the Menora? The Altar was outside of the Mishkan and yet the Kohen could not ascend via steps. It would seem that regarding the Menora which is inside the Mishkan, steps should also be forbidden.

PARSHA RIDDLE

What connection is there between our Parsha and Shlomo Hamelech's throne?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle: Where are Noach and his descendants referenced in this Parsha?

Answer: "One silver basin" (7:19)

The gematria of this word is 520, referring to Noach who began having children at this age (Rashi).

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Parshas Be'Ha'alosecha concludes with the episode of Aharon and Miriam "speaking against" their brother Moshe, and Miriam's consequent affliction with *tzara'as* [commonly translated as leprosy] (*Bamidbar* 12:1-16). Elsewhere, the Torah admonishes us to remember that which "Hashem did unto Miriam" here (*Devarim* 24:9). Our tradition explains that we are to contemplate the fact that Miriam was punished for speaking against Moshe, despite her having once endangered herself to save him from the sea and not really intending to slander him here, and despite his taking no offense from her comments, among other mitigating factors, and infer from it *a fortiori* the terrible fate in store for "villains and fools" who flagrantly commit the sin of *lashon ha'ra* [evil speech] (*Sifri Devarim ibid.* #275; *Yad Ha'Chazakah Tumas Tzara'as* 16:10).

Some authorities understand the Torah's injunction as a formal commandment, counted among the 613 commandments, requiring "constant" verbal remembrance of Miriam's fate (*Toras Kohanim* at the beginning of *Parshas Be'Chukosai*, Ramban in #7 of his list of positive commandments that Rambam "forgot" to list, and in his commentary to *Devarim ibid.*, and cf. *Zohar Ha'Rakia os 26, Magen Avraham siman 60 s.k. 2*). Additionally, some explain that this injunction is actually the source of the prohibition against speaking *lashon ha'ra* (Ramban on *Devarim*), and rule that one who speaks *lashon ha'ra* necessarily violates this commandment, as he has either temporarily forgotten Miriam's punishment, or – much more heinously – ignored it! (*Sefer Chofetz Chaim*, Introduction – Positive Commandments #1 and *Be'er Mayim Chaim*). The *Chofetz Chaim* actually published an entire pamphlet titled "*Zachor Le'Miriam*", devoted to explaining Hashem's stratagem for avoiding the prohibition of *lashon ha'ra*.

PRESENTED BY RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURA

KIDS KORNER

WHO AM I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I was for people not food.
2. My Rabbeim were the "Old Ones".
3. I gave you Torah & Mussar knowledge
4. I lived during the First World War.
5. I was the Mashgiach in Mir.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I waited.
2. Therefore Bnai Yisroel waited.
3. I was a Prophetess.
4. I caused my parents to marry.

Please see next week's issue for the answers

Last Issue's Answers:

#1 Rav Chaim Volozhiner * (I am the Father of the Mother; I gave you a soul and a spirit of life; my Rebbi was a Gaon; my father was Yitzchok and my mother was Rivka.)

#2 Nazir (I am a crown; no wine; keep pure; Sotah reaction.)

* *Rav Chaim Volozhiner* who was the founder of the Mother (forerunner) of all Yeshivos (The Yeshiva in Volozhin). He wrote *Nefesh HaChaim* and a pirush on *Pirkei Avos* called "*Ruach Chaim*". His Rebbi was the Vilna Gaon.

Visit www.gwckollel.org to submit your answers.

Answer as many as you can because each correct answer will entitle you to another raffle ticket and increase your chances of winning.

All children 13 and under who answer a "Who Am I?" correctly will be entered into a raffle to

win a super prize

Congratulations to Shaya Scher, winner of the Stomp Rocket! Stay tuned for the next prize announcement!

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

Now is an excellent opportunity to join Rabbi Shaps' Jewish Mysticism class as they begin Shaar Gimmel, the third section of Nefesh HaChaim.

Thursday evenings, 8:15 - 9:00 pm, at the Kollel.

And don't forget to grab some cholent!