



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 2010.***

This week, we start reading Shemos/Exodus, the second of the five books of the Torah. As the narrative begins, the Jewish people proliferate in number and strength in the land of Egypt. Pharaoh, fearing their emergence and development, enslaves his Jewish citizenry. The many years of servitude do not diminish their national aspirations to live as a free nation, the children of one living G-d. The period of redemption arrives and Moshe beckons Pharaoh to let his people go. Pharaoh responds and punishes the Jews ever more severely. In Chapter 5 Verses 4-8, Pharaoh commands that all straw and raw material necessary for making the bricks be denied to the Jews. He decrees that they should scour the countryside to secure their own materials and their required number of bricks to be prepared should not be decreased.

Overwhelmed by the severe workload, the Jews were weary. Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato, the author of the Mesilas Yescharim, comments that Pharaoh was quite calculating. His intention was not to break the Jews, but rather to occupy their hearts and minds to such an extent that there should remain no time, breath, or opportunity to think and plan for freedom. This, he writes, is the tool and design of the yetzer hara, the counterforce to good in each of us.

We go through life externally free, but internally enslaved. We are preoccupied with work, household chores, social engagements, material pursuits, Blackberries and cellphones. Precious little time is left for thought and contemplation. What is life's ultimate purpose? What does G-d want and seek from each of us? Scant consideration is given and devoted to the most important questions and issues. Many years ago, there was an ad for funding education. It was titled, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste." Likewise, we say, "A mind is a terrible thing to preoccupy."

*Have a wonderful Shabbos,
Rabbi Menachem Winter*

TABLE TALK

POINTS TO PONDER

During those many days, it happened that the king of Mitzrayim died, and Bnei Yisrael groaned because of the work and they cried out (2:23).

He died means that he became afflicted with leprosy, and he would slaughter Jewish children and bathe in their blood to alleviate his pain (Rashi).

If the new hardship was the murder of the children to supply Pharaoh with blood for his baths, why were Bnei Yisrael crying out because of the work? They should have been crying out for the murder of their children!

PARSHA RIDDLE

"An Egyptian man..." (2:19)

How did this statement affect Moshe's burial?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

How did the embalment of Yaakov cause the salvation of Ninveh?

Answer: *Since Pharaoh sent the doctors to embalm Yaakov, he merited that Yona be sent to tell Pharaoh, who was the king of Ninveh, that the city would be destroyed, if the people do not do teshuva.*

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

When Moshe Rabbeinu approaches the burning bush, Hashem instructs him to remove his shoes from his feet, "for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (*Shemos* 3:5). R. Yosef Bechor Shor explains that since shoes occasionally come into contact with dirty surfaces, it is inappropriate to bring them into holy places.

The Talmud forbids entry to the Temple Mount while shod, and the surrounding discussion implies that this prohibition can be derived from Hashem's injunction to Moshe to remove his shoes (*Berachos* 62b-63a). This concern notwithstanding, the Talmud does permit entry to the synagogue while shod, explaining that the synagogue is analogous to one's home: just as one does not mind the wearing of shoes in his home, so, too, is this permitted in the synagogue.

R. Shlomo b. Shimon Duran (the Rashbash), however, writing in fifteenth century Algeria, argues that although in Christian lands, since it is acceptable to appear even in the presence of kings while shod, this is permitted in the synagogue, in "these lands" (i.e., Muslim regions), since it is disgraceful to appear in the presence of even the nobility while shod, this is prohibited in the synagogue.

Similarly, the Rashbash's German contemporary R. Moshe (Maharam) Mintz notes that "revolting" substances sometimes adhere to shoes, and since it is not customary to appear before even a mortal king in such fashion, it is certainly inappropriate to appear so before the King of Kings, "and it is for this reason that there are some lands where they only pray barefoot, without shoes." He proceeds, however, to note that "in our countries" this is not the custom. Since it is disrespectful and rude to go barefoot, shoes are not removed. (*Shut. Maharam Mintz* #38. Cf. *Aruch HaShulchan Orach Chaim* 151:9)

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

WHO AM I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. On me the laws of nature were broken.
2. Matan Torah and I have something in common.
3. I was a thorny situation.
4. Don't confuse me with a president or two.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I was for the burning bush.
2. I am for the Bais HaMikdash.
3. I am for chalitza.
4. In Rus I am for acquisition.

Last Week's Answers:

#1 HaMalach Hagoel (I have a fishy resemblance; I am in 'on the bed'; I am for 'all the youths'; I bless you with multiplication.)

#2 The closed separation between Parshas Vayigash and Vayechi (I am for hard work; I am for the time of Moshiach; I give you no break; I am closed.)

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

Win a Casio Mini Keyboard!



The next raffle is February 16th.

Congratulations to Eli Herman and others for answering last week's questions correctly!

Visit gwckollel.org to submit your answers.

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

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

Join Rabbi Shaps for pre-shacharis inspiration!

"A Taste of Tefillah" meets weekday mornings, 5 minutes before the 6:25 shacharis minyan at SEHC.

Get inspired for davening with a short thought about prayer and the words of our tefillos!

Monday - Friday, 6:20 AM