



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 2011.***

In this week's Torah portion of Yisro, the Torah shares the thinking of Yisro (father-in-law of Moshe) that inspired him to become a religious convert. Yisro lived as the religious head of Midian, a man of great wealth and honor, who left all his fame and fortune to join the Jewish nation in a barren wilderness. The Torah in chapter 18 verse 11, addressing Yisro's mind-set and motivation, writes: "Now I know that Hashem is the greatest of all gods, for in the very matter in which [the Egyptians] had conspired against them..." The key phrase to understand is the following: "which [the Egyptians] had conspired against them..." Yisro understood, from the events at the Red Sea, the magnitude of the magnificence of the G-d of Israel. The *Shira* - the Song of the Sea - that the Jews sang in tribute to their salvation, records the three similes (in chapter 15 verses 5, 7, and 10) used to describe the demise of the Egyptians as stones, straw, and lead. Rashi says that the cruelest of the Egyptian taskmasters perished at sea as straw, cast about in a slow, agonizing death. Those not as cruel went down as a rock - a less tormenting death. The best of them sunk into the depths as lead, dying immediately.

Yisro observed the intimacy of G-d's involvement in the affairs of man that even the wicked and cruel people of Egypt were given "designer" deaths calibrated precisely to the measure of their cruelty. Yisro understood this was the G-d that he was always seeking. A G-d who does not reside above alone, rather One who is involved in the daily affairs of each of His creations in a very personal fashion. Yisro leaves all, for he beheld a G-d who did not atomize the Egyptians as one, but rather exacted judgment to the measure which the "Egyptians conspired against the Jews."

After a lifelong search to find the true G-d, Yisro comes home. How much more so we, born into the aristocracy of the Jewish nation, should feel the privilege, honor and responsibility bestowed upon us as a "kingdom of ministers and a holy nation."

*Have a wonderful Shabbos,
Rabbi Menachem Winter*

TABLE TALK

POINTS TO PONDER

V'samta alei'hem (you shall appoint over them) leaders of thousands... (18:21)

Va'yeeten osom (he [Moshe] placed them) leaders of thousands... (18:25)

Why is the word 'sima' (appoint) used when Yisro was giving the advice to Moshe, and the word 'noton' (placed) used when relating what Moshe had done?

PARSHA RIDDLE

Please save us three hours... (Hoshana Rabba davening)

What does "three hours" refer to?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Which two pesukim in the Torah contain all the letters of the "Aleph Bais"?

Answer: Beshalach 16, 16 and Devarim 4, 34

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *Parshas Yisro*, Yisro advises Moshe to establish a system of judges comprising "rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens" (*Shemos* 18:21). The *Sforno* explains that this was a hierarchal appellate system: a case would originally be heard by a first-level judge; an appeal would go to the next level, then to the third, then to the fourth, and only a minority of cases would ultimately reach Moshe himself.

The traditional laws of Rabbinical courts (*batei din*) do not describe any sort of appellate system. On the contrary, the Talmud declares that "*beis din* does not review [the verdict of another] *beis din*" (*Bava Basra* 138b), and while some authorities limit this principle to earlier generations (e.g., Radvaz in *Shut. Avkas Rocheil siman* 21), most maintain that the rule is still in force (e.g., R. Yosef Karo *ibid*). There are several medieval responsa that strongly reject the possibility of reconsideration of a case on which a *beis din* has already ruled (e.g. *Shut. Ha'Rosh* 85:5-6).

The above notwithstanding, many modern authorities have endorsed the establishment of an appellate system on various grounds, in particular the societal right, in the area of Jewish civil law, to promulgate any regulations deemed necessary and desirable, even such as deviate from the *halachah*, and the fact that all the participants (litigants as well as judges) in such an arrangement do so with complete understanding of, and concomitant tacit (or even overt) acquiescence to, the system. The most significant example of such a system is the *beis din* hierarchy of the official Israeli rabbinat. While it has been noted that its initial establishment was not without controversy, and that its inspiration may have derived from secular society, the current Rabbinic consensus accepts the institution (*Shut. Mishpetei Uziel choshen mishpat* #1, *Shut. Yabia Omer* Vol. 2 *choshen mishpat* #2, *Shut. Tzitz Eliezer* 16:67).

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

WHO AM I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. The plagues and I have something in common.
2. Split into two
3. Stand for me.
4. Readable from both sides.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I was from the binding.
2. I will be for Moshiach.
3. I am a blast.
4. I cause trembling.

Last Week's Answers:

#1 Az Yashir (A wall without a structure; bricks without mortar; one of ten; I am now and later.)

#2 Amalek (Remember me; forget me; I was for Purim; I am for doubt.)

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

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Casio Mini
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The next
raffle is
February 16th.

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

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