



Greater Washington Community Kollel SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

Was I Really Redeemed from Egypt?

Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps

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The Mishna in Pesachim (116b) relates that in every generation a person is obligated to view himself as if he left Egypt, as it is stated, "And you should tell your son on that day, 'Because of this, G-d did this to *me* when *I* left Egypt'" (13:8). The Mishna is apparently interpreting this verse to be speaking not only to the generation that left Egypt, but to every generation. If that is the case, how can one honestly say to his or her child that he or she left Egypt? It seems to be blatantly false! In fact, in the Pesach Haggada we take this even further when we say, "Not only did he redeem our fathers but he also redeemed us." How can we make such a statement?

Rav Shimon Schwab explains that the statement "*I* left Egypt" is actually entirely true, and can be understood through the following metaphor. It is well known that the cells of the human body are constantly regenerating to the point that every seven to ten years the human body almost completely renews itself. Despite this, it is perfectly normal for a forty-five-year-old to point to his arm and say, "I broke this arm when I was twelve years old." In truth, it was a completely different arm that he broke, but because it continues to function as the arm of the same living body, it is viewed as the same arm.

The Jewish nation throughout the generations is also one being, unified by our mission to act as a moral compass for those around us and bring honor to G-d in this world. True, this body has replaced and regenerated itself over and over with the passing of one generation and the birth of the next, but ultimately it is the same nation and the same being that was redeemed from Egypt. It is vital for us to appreciate that we are all important components of this great body of a nation, a nation entrusted with a sacred mission. If we make ourselves a part of this greater being, then we can truthfully say, "He also redeemed *us!*"

Have a wonderful Shabbos!

TABLE TALK

POINT TO PONDER

It was midnight and Hashem smote every first born in Mitzrayim ... Paroh arose at night, he and all his servants and all of Mitzrayim, and there was a great outcry in Mitzrayim because there was not a house where there was no corpse. Paroh called to Moshe and Aaron at night and said, "Rise up, go out from among my people..." (12:29 - 31)

From the sequence of the pesukim it seems that Bnai Yisrael left after the plague of the firstborn.

The order of events mentioned in *Ezras Avoseinu* in Shacharis is the opposite. It says, "From Mitzrayim we were redeemed and from the house of slavery we were emancipated; all their firstborn You killed and Your firstborn You saved." However, in Maariv the order of events is like it is in the posuk. In *Ve'emuna* it says, "He smote all the firstborn of Mitzrayim and took out Bnai Yisrael for eternal freedom." Why in Maariv are the events mentioned in the order of the posuk, while in Shacharis they are mentioned out of order?

PARSHA RIDDLE

What did the plague of blood have in common with the plague of darkness?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

What does the magical axiom 'abra kadabra' mean?

Answer: Abra - I will create, Ki - like, Adabra - I speak (Sefer Yetzirah)

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Parashas Bo contains the commandment of *pidyon ha'ben*. Elsewhere (*Bemidbar* 18:16), the Torah specifies that the *pidyon* be performed with five silver *shekalim*. One may utilize actual silver in the weight of five *shekalim*, or other property of equivalent value (*Shulchan Aruch YD* 305:3). There are only three classes of assets that are excluded: real estate, slaves and "*shtaros*" (documents).

In traditional *halachic* terminology, "*shtaros*" generally refers to loan documents. In the nineteenth century, a great debate arose over whether modern "banknotes" are considered ordinary assets, or are actually a form of *shtaros*, and therefore ineligible to be used for *pidyon ha'ben* (as well as being treated differently from normal property in a number of other *halachic* contexts - *Shut. Beis Shlomo CM* #34). A number of different rationales were advanced for distinguishing between modern "banknotes" and classic *shtaros*:

- Banknotes can be universally used to make purchases (*Shut. Heishiv Moshe YD* #55).
- Banknotes are traded in robust markets, resulting in clear pricing and high liquidity (*She'eilas Yaavetz* 1:85. The analysis there actually concerns lottery tickets, but it applies to banknotes as well - *Shut. Maharsham* 2:100).
- Unlike *shtaros* which represent value present externally (in the underlying loan), the value of banknotes resides internally, as evinced by the fact that they will not be replaced even if their holder can prove that they have been destroyed (*Shut. R. Meshulam Igra CM* #16).
- Banknotes derive their value from government fiat (refusal to honor the sovereign currency was apparently a capital offense!), and not ordinary market conditions (*Shut. Chasam Sofer YD* #134).

The consensus is that banknotes are not generally considered *shtaros* (*Maharsham ibid.*; *Minchas Pitim CM* end of #303), although some are nevertheless stringent with regard to *pidyon ha'ben*, since the son is redeemed from Hashem, and He is not subject to the laws of man (*Chasam Sofer ibid.*, and cf. *Chochmas Shlomo CM* beginning of #292; *Aruch Ha'Shulchan YD* 305:18). R. Osher Weiss maintains that in contemporary times, where the value of currency has been completely decoupled from the issuing government's precious metals reserves, and derives entirely from economic considerations, it is certainly valid even for *pidyon ha'ben* (*Shut. Minchas Osher* 1:47).

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

WHO AM I?

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

Win a super prize

THE NEXT RAFFLE WILL BE MARCH 29th!

#1 WHO AM I?

1. We finished the remainder.
2. We made it dark.
3. "Where are my pickles?"
4. 'Gone with the wind'

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I was punctual.
2. I am called 'plague'.
3. I did not include Pharaoh.
4. I made some fast.

Last Week's Answers:

#1 The plague of Dam (Blood) (I am not the Hoover; I made the river 'douglass'; I am not in vain rather in ...; I caused wealth."

#2 The frogs (I was one; I was many; don't hit me; use your earplugs.)

Congratulations to Liam & Lila Ratner and others for answering last week's questions correctly!

Answer as many as you can.

Each correct answer will entitle you to another raffle ticket and increase your chances of winning!

Visit gwckollel.org to submit your answers.

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