



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

A New Direction

Presented by Rabbi Zacharia Schwartz, Kollel Adjunct

This week's *Parsha* continues the story of the plagues that *Hashem* brought upon the Egyptians, reaching its climax with the plague of the death of the Egyptian firstborn, and the freeing of the Jewish people from slavery. The Jews were commanded to sacrifice a lamb and put its blood on their doorposts before the plague of the death of the firstborn was to begin. This was done so that that *Hashem* would see that blood and skip over the Jewish homes during the plague, leaving the Jewish firstborn alive.

This begs the question: could it possibly be that *Hashem* needed to look at each house's doorpost in order to determine whether its inhabitants were Jews or Egyptians? Certainly not. Rather, the commentaries explain, the blood was to serve as a declaration by the Jewish people that their allegiance was to *Hashem*. For two centuries many Jews had joined the Egyptians in worshipping the sheep as a god. By slaughtering the sheep and painting its blood on their doorposts, they were actively abandoning these false gods and embracing *Hashem*.

From here we can derive an important lesson. At times we may feel that we are falling short of what is expected of us – not living up to the great potential that *Hashem* has given us. We may think that we need to do something grandiose in order to propel ourselves in the right direction. That is not necessarily the case. Sometimes a small and simple action is what is really needed if it can demonstrate what we really value and in which direction we wish to head. Whether it's committing to a few extra minutes of learning Torah, giving up a few extra minutes of sleep to come earlier to *davening*, or something else of the like, redirecting some of our time, energy, or resources to our relationship with *Hashem* can go a long way toward showing *Hashem*, and ourselves, where our priorities lie, and who we really want to be.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Bnei Yisrael did according to the word of Moshe, they requested from the Egyptians silver vessels, gold vessels, and garments. (12, 35)

Bnei Yisrael merited to leave Mitzrayim because they did not change the following: 1) their names 2) their language 3) their clothes. (P'sikta Zutra Shemos 6, 6)

If not wearing Egyptian clothes was a merit to the Jewish people, how could they be commanded to take garments from the Egyptians when leaving Mitzrayim?

Parsha Riddle

Which halacha is derived because of the addition of the letter "hay" in this week's parsha?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

From where in this parsha do we learn the lesson of mesiras nefesh/martyrdom?

Answer: From the frogs that went into the ovens and killed themselves in order to plague the Egyptians, as Hashem wanted.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In parashas Bo, the Torah commands: "For seven days, leaven may not be found in your houses (se'or lo yi'matzei be'vateichem) ..." (12:19) and "Matzos shall be eaten throughout the seven-day period; no chametz may be seen in your possession ("lo yei'raeh lecha chametz"), nor may leaven be seen in your possession in all your borders." (13:7) Rambam counts these prohibitions – generally referred to as bal yei'raeh and bal yi'matzei – as two of the six hundred and thirteen mitzvos (lo saaseh 200-01), and rules that one who maintains chametz in his possession over Passover violates both of them. (Hilchos Chametz U'Matzah 1:2) He explains further (based on the Talmudic discussion) that the phrase "lo yei'raeh lecha" teaches us that the prohibitions do not encompass chametz owned by a non-Jew, even if it is located in a Jew's home. (ibid. 4:1-2)

This exemption of chametz that belongs to a non-Jew is the basis for the widespread mechanism of the pre-Passover sale of chametz. Although the chametz remains on Jewish premises, the prohibitions of bal yei'raeh and bal yi'matzei do not apply, since the chametz now belongs to a non-Jew and not a Jew.

The procedure of selling chametz in order to avoid the prohibitions of bal yei'raeh and bal yi'matzei is already mentioned in the Tosefta (compiled about two millennia ago – Pesachim 2:6), although until relatively recently, such sales generally took place on an individual basis, with particular Jews directly selling their chametz to non-Jews. It is only over the last couple of centuries that the contemporary communal form of the sale of chametz appears, where large groups jointly sell their chametz to a single non-Jewish purchaser. The dominant model today is that numerous individuals appoint an agent (generally a communal rabbi) to sell their chametz, and that agent then sells all his principals' chametz in a single transaction to a non-Jew. In the nineteenth century, however, another model was also commonly utilized, where the individuals actually sold their chametz to a particular Jewish buyer, who then in turn sold all the chametz to a non-Jew. (See S'dei Chemed Maareches Chametz U'Matzah 9:6; R. Asher Weiss, Mechiras Chametz 5772)

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#1 WHO AM I?

1. My seventh was at sea.
2. I restricted movement.
3. I allowed searching.
4. I allowed death.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. Belt tied.
2. Shoes on.
3. Hold your stick.
4. Don't confuse me with a roast.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Dam (Blood) (I am not for beavers, Don't confuse me with money, I am life, I killed the fish.)

#2 Tzfardeya (Frogs) (I was one yet many, We were baked in a pie, I caused hitting, It was hopping.)

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