



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

The First Mitzvah

Presented by Rabbi Moshe Sadwin, Kollel Adjunct

“This renewal of the moon shall be for you a beginning of renewals.” (12:2)

The first commandment we were given as a nation was Kiddush Hachodesh, to sanctify the month upon seeing the new moon. This raises the following question. What is so important about sanctifying the month with the new moon that it has the privilege to be the very first commandment given to us as a nation?

Rav Hirsch makes an interesting parallel. He notes that just as Noach was shown the rainbow as a symbol of the covenant between Hashem and mankind after the world was destroyed by the flood, Hashem shows Moshe and Aharon the new moon on the threshold of the birth of the Jewish people as a symbol. Hashem tells them: The renewal of the moon will be for you a beginning of renewals; from now on, there will be a special significance to the new moon. The cycle of the moon is unique in that it waxes and wanes. At times it will disappear and no longer reflect the sun's light, but it will always return. Hashem tells us this renewal is for **you**. The renewal of the moon is a message about our own rejuvenation, both physically and spiritually. We can never be annihilated or wiped out. We can always achieve rebirth and a revival of our connection to Hashem, even when we feel we are far away from him. This is the secret to our national immortality, as well as the power of *teshuvah* (repentance) – our constant ability to reconnect with Hashem.

This is the message of Rosh Chodesh. Hashem taught this message to Moshe and Aharon, just as the Jewish people were becoming the Jewish nation, to underscore the magnitude of the message – the Jewish Nation cannot be destroyed and will always restore itself and its G-dly connection.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

There was a thick darkness throughout the land of Egypt for a three day period... (10:22)

Darkness that they could not see each other for three days, and another three days that they could not move from their positions. Why did Hashem bring this plague on the Egyptians? Since there were Jewish sinners who did not want to leave Egypt, so Hashem made them die during those days, so that the Egyptians would not see the death of those Jews.... (Rashi)

There were eight plagues before this one. Rashi was concerned to ask about any of them why Hashem sent each plague. Why specifically here was Rashi bothered to ask this question?

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:

**...And the staff of Aaron swallowed their staff. (7, 12)
Where else in the Torah did such a thing occur?**

Answer: Aharon's staff swallowed the staff of Korach and his men. (Baal Haturim)

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In parashas Bo (12:2), Hashem declares: "This month shall be for you the beginning of the months, it shall be for you the first of the months of the year." Rambam explains that this is a commandment to formulate the calendar: to calculate months and years and establish when each month shall begin, and to sanctify the new moon (Sefer HaMitzvos esin #153 and introduction to Kiddush HaChodesh).

Unlike the Gregorian calendar, which is purely solar, with its months being purely artificial constructs with no relation to the actual lunar cycle, and the Islamic Hijri calendar, which is purely lunar, with its years being purely artificial constructs with no relation to the actual solar cycle, our calendar is a hybrid system, with lunar months and solar years. Since one solar year is approximately eleven days longer than twelve lunar months, some sort of adjustment is necessary to keep the lunar and solar aspects of the calendar synchronized. But we cannot simply add extra days to the year, since the verse states "the months of the year" – years must comprise only months, and not individual days (Megillah 5a), so the only possible adjustment is to add an extra month to some years, which are termed shanim meubaros ("leap years").

Under the original system, the decision to add an extra month was made on a year by year basis, and was based on a variety of considerations. The preeminent one was the necessity of ensuring that Passover fell out in the spring, as per the Biblical verse (Devarim 16:1) "You shall observe the month of springtime and perform the pesach-offering for Hashem your G-d, for in the month of springtime Hashem, your G-d, took you out of Egypt at night," but a variety of other policy considerations were also taken into account (Kiddush HaChodesh Ch. 4). In our current fixed calendar, leap years follow a standard nineteen year cycle: years 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, and 19 are leap years, and the rest ordinary years (ibid. 6:-10-11). Under this system, the average (mean) year is quite close to, although not precisely equal to, the solar year (see Kiddush HaChodesh 10:6).

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. We finished the remainder.
2. We made it dark.
3. We were not four.
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 make some fast.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Blood (I was for some, I was the first, I am not unintelligent, I am not value.)

#2 Frogs (I was one, I was many, We were baked, We were piled up.)

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

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Building
Kit**



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!**

THE NEXT
RAFFLE WILL BE
Feb 11.

LAST CHANCE
TO RESERVE
FOR THE
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GWCK/YISE Shabbaton with Rabbi Baruch Levine!

Shabbos Parshas Beshalach – Feb 7-8



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