



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.

In this week's Torah Portion of Va'eira, we read of the onset of the ten plagues. Pharaoh, in his great cruelty and haughtiness, refuses to come to terms with his fate and the fate of his nation. All the might and array of the plagues did nothing to impact and impart upon Pharaoh a change of heart and mind. However, with the seventh plague of hail stones raining down upon Egypt, destroying all cattle, plant life, and people that remained in the field, Pharaoh has a genuine, heartfelt moment of contrition and recognition of G-d. The verse in chapter 9:27 states "This time I [Pharaoh] have sinned, G-d is the Righteous One and I and my people are the wicked ones." What a wondrous statement by Pharaoh, encompassing not only his own guilt, but G-d's justice and mercy. How are we to understand this change of heart amidst the utter destruction of all life in the field?

The great commentator, the Riva, explains that it lies in the fact that G-d had forewarned Pharaoh and his people to take in all their possessions from the field in advance of the plague (chapter 9:19). G-d had given the Egyptians an opportunity to protect themselves before the seventh plague and as a result, Pharaoh was moved in a very special way. Not by might, but by kindness. All the might of G-d did not move Pharaoh. Self-preservation did not achieve its objective. However, G-d's kindness, given to this ruler of consummate cruelty, was totally disarming.

We learn such a powerful and important lesson. We are far better served in reaching and influencing people with kindness than intimidation or other devices. If the stone heart of Pharaoh could be pierced by benevolence, how much more so ordinary people will be touched by kindness and good will.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Therefore say to B'nei Yisrael... "I shall take you out... I will save you... I will redeem you... I will take you... and I will bring you.... (6, 6 – 8)

The four cups of wine we drink at the Seder correspond to the four terminologies of redemption mentioned in the above verse. (Rashi Pesachim 99b)

The four cups of wine we drink at the Seder correspond to the three cups of wine in Pharaoh's dream, with the fourth cup being used for Birchas HaMozon. (Rashi Pesachim 108a)

Is there a way to explain the apparent contradiction in Rashi?

Parsha Riddle

Besides the Plague of Arbeh (Locusts) which happened in Egypt, where in Tanach did another plague of locusts occur?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Who did Basya bas Pharaoh marry?

Answer: Kalev (Vayikra Rabba 1, 3)

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Hashem said to Moshe, "Say to Aharon, 'Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt ... and they shall become blood ...'" (7:19)

Why were the waters not afflicted by Moshe? Hashem said to him: "The waters that guarded you when you were cast into the River, it is not right that they should be afflicted by your hand; they will therefore only be afflicted by Aharon's hand." (Shemos Rabbah 9:10)

Based (in part) on this *midrash*, R. Yitzchok Zilberstein suggests that a patient who is asked to give adverse testimony against a doctor who has treated him should not do so. He notes that in the case of Moshe, Aharon was able to substitute for him, and he therefore concludes that insofar as the giving of testimony is essential and cannot be performed by anyone else, such as in a civil case where the testimony is necessary to enable a litigant to collect his due from the doctor, then the patient must testify despite his gratitude obligation toward the doctor. If others are able to testify, however, or if the proceeding against the doctor does not involve an obligation to another litigant (e.g., a hearing regarding a traffic violation), then "it is possible that it is permitted to show gratitude and refrain from testifying," provided that three conditions are met: the doctor has not injured anyone, he does not frequently commit such infractions, and he regrets his actions. R. Zilberstein adds that if the patient faces jail or other punishment for refusing to testify, then he is permitted to testify, since as with other positive commandments, the obligation of gratitude does not require one to suffer imprisonment (*Shiurei Torah le-Rofim* 1:63).

Elsewhere, R. Zilberstein cites a discussion by R. Tzvi Pesach Frank of the propriety of a judge adjudicating a court case involving an institution from which the judge had learned most of his Torah and benefited greatly. R. Frank suggests that it is inappropriate, due to a general principle that "when someone derives some benefit or enjoyment from something, it is inappropriate for him to take any action that may cause it some injury." (*Ibid.* 2:89. These discussions of R. Zilberstein are cited in *Olamot, Hakaras ha-Tov.*)

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I ?

1. I am for a tree.
2. I am for a bris.
3. I was for Moshe's lips.
4. I am not a URL.

#2 WHO AM I ?

1. Lose your wine.
2. I was seven and three.
3. I am not a Mesechta.
4. Targeted attack.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Aharon (I was silent, I rejoiced for my brother, I was a peacemaker, I was my brother's equal.)

#2 Snake (My food is dusty, I tricked the Mother of All Life, I almost swallowed the humble, When I was copper, I healed.)

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