



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

G-d reveals Himself to Moshe and tells him that the time to fulfill His promise to the Patriarchs has arrived. The Jewish nation would soon be freed from over two centuries of slavery and taken to the Land of Israel. Moshe demands, in the name of G-d, that Paroh free the nation. The Egyptian King refuses to listen. Paroh stubbornly ignores the warnings, and devastating plagues begin to descend on Egypt. Paroh is unmoved by the mighty display of G-d's power and continues his defiance until the 7th plague, hail. As the destructive hail takes its toll on man, beast, and produce, Paroh calls to Moshe and asks him to intervene with G-d to stop the destruction. Paroh admits his wickedness and that of his nation, acknowledges G-d's righteousness, and agrees to free the Jewish nation. At Paroh's behest, Moshe asks G-d to cease the plague, whereupon the hails stops. Now freed of the devastating plague, Paroh reneges on his word and refuses to release the people.

Paroh's declaration of remorse sounds genuine. He confessed his wrongdoing and guilt, and fully acknowledged the righteousness of G-d. Why does Paroh fail to carry out his promise?

Rabbi Nosson Tzvi Finkel (Alter of Slobodka) in Ohr Hatzafun teaches that Paroh fundamentally misunderstood suffering. His perspective was that the pain inflicted was solely a punishment for his evil conduct. When the cost of his wrongdoing became unbearable, Paroh relented and conceded his position. Once the punishment subsided, however, Paroh resumed his old ways. In truth, the distress that G-d visits on a person are not there to punish, but to arrest the bad behavior and cause a person to reflect. It is meant to correct future behavior, not simply punish past deeds. Once reoriented, the person is able to mend his relationship with G-d and re-enter His embrace. With this attitude, even when the suffering terminates, he is left standing taller, stronger, and once again in G-d's midst.

We hope and pray that we and our families know only joy and happiness. But when those moments of distress infiltrate our life, we should know that there too G-d's kindness is found.

*Have a wonderful Shabbos,
Rabbi Menachem Winter*

TABLE TALK

POINTS TO PONDER

The river shall swarm with frogs, and they shall ascend...into your ovens and into you kneading bowls (7:28).

How did Chanaya, Mishael, and Azarya know to allow themselves to be thrown into the fiery furnace? They figured, if the frogs, that are not obligated to sanctify Hashem's name, threw themselves into the hot ovens, then we, that are obligated to sanctify Hashem's name, all the more so should be thrown into the fire in order to listen to Hashem (Pesachim 53b).

Avraham had allowed himself to be thrown into the fiery furnace with Nimrod. Why did Chanaya, Mishael, and Azarya need to learn a lesson from the frogs? They could have learned the lesson from their grandfather Avraham!

PARSHA RIDDLE

Which two plagues were not completed in Mitzrayim?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

"An Egyptian man..." (2:19)

How did this statement affect Moshe's burial?

Answer: Since he appeared as an Egyptian man, he did not merit to be buried in Eretz Yisrael.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Parshas Va'Eira chronicles the efforts of the Egyptian wise men, sorcerers and magicians to duplicate the miraculous feats performed by Moshe and Aharon. They apparently succeeded in transforming their rods into serpents and water into blood and bringing forth frogs, but failed to bring forth lice. Some major Jewish rationalists entirely reject the existence of genuine magic (*Ibn Ezra Va'Yikra* 19:31, *Rambam Hilchos Avodas Kochavim* 11:16), and they apparently must therefore understand the actions of the Egyptian magicians to have involved illusion or deception (see *Ralbag, Abravanel, and Malbim*).

The Rambam rules that even illusory magic - such as "throw[ing] a ring into the air and extract[ing] it from the mouth of a man before him" - is Biblically prohibited (*Sefer Ha'Mitzvos lo sa'aseh* #32), and some *acharonim* assume that this includes even magic performed as entertainment, and therefore forbid its performance, its commission, and even its spectation (unless the performer is a non-Jew, as the prohibition of magic is not among the Noachide laws - *Chochmas Adam* 89:6, *Yabia Omer* Vol. 5 *Yoreh De'ah* #15).

Other *acharonim* are more lenient, arguing that illusory magic is only forbidden when deceptively represented as genuinely supernatural, but not when it is clear that it is mere illusion. Some authorities require that the performer explicitly declare this, or display clear signage to this effect, and some add that he should publicly demonstrate the mechanism behind at least one of his tricks (*Teshuvos Ve'Hanhagos* 1:455, R. Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg, cited in *Ohr Someyach's* "Ask the Rabbi" #53, and see *Shut. Igros Moshe Yoreh De'ah* 4:13).

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

WHO AM I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. One large or millions small.
2. Control your anger.
3. We were baked.
4. We were second.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I am one of the seven.
2. I was for the doorposts.
3. I was the first of ten.
4. I am not dumb.

Last Week's Answers:

#1 The Burning Bush (On me the laws of nature were broken; Matan Torah and I have something in common; I was a thorny situation; don't confuse me with a President or two.)

#2 Removing the Shoe (I was for the burning bush; I am for the Bais HaMikdash; I am for chalitza; in Rus I am for acquisition..)

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

Win a Casio Mini Keyboard!



The next raffle is February 16th.

Congratulations to Yaakov Baars and others for answering last week's questions correctly!

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.

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For Learning, Snacks, and Prizes!

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Mishna Enrichment with Rabbi Slepoy
For 5th and 6th grade boys



Wednesdays 8:15 – 9:00 PM
Sensational Sugyos with Rabbi Shaps
for 7th – 9th grade boys