



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

Presented by Rabbi Menachem Winter, Rosh Kollel

From our archives

As the Jewish nation journeys forth to the Land of Israel, Moshe invites his father-in-law Yisro to accompany them. Moshe reassures Yisro, who had earlier joined the Jewish nation, that he will be treated well. Yisro demurs, however, telling Moshe that he plans to return to his native land of Midian. Moshe pleads with Yisro not to abandon the nation on its travels "for you have been as eyes to us." Rashi understands this to mean "you will illuminate our eyes" (10:31).

Rabbi Eliyahu Meir Bloch ponders the necessity for Yisro to enlighten the Jewish nation. After all, they were being led by Moshe, the greatest of all prophets, Aharon the High-Priest, and the Seventy Elders. Additionally, the people were surrounded by G-d's Presence in the Ark and the Cloud of Glory. What could possibly be missing from this assemblage of greatness and spirituality?

Rabbi Bloch answers as follows: The Jewish leaders had been born into great and noble families. As such, they were educated in Torah ideals from their earliest days and charged with carrying on the mission of their forebears. Yisro, in contrast, had been living in Midian as an idolatrous priest. He came to recognize G-d and His Torah of his own accord. In his struggle and search for truth, Yisro discerned the fallacy of his religion and committed himself to living as a Jew. Consequently, Yisro was a unique role model who carried a special message for all of mankind. He displayed the inherent potential for greatness which is embedded in every person. Irrespective of upbringing and background, with will and desire, anyone could reach the loftiest of heights. It was for this reason that Moshe begged Yisro to remain with the nation, so that he might be a living testimony to man's innate capacity for greatness and his ability to completely transform himself.

We are fortunate today to be surrounded by many people who have unlocked that hidden potential within themselves – men and women who have bravely embarked on a journey to reclaim a heritage long forgotten. By their shining example, the rest of us can marvel at and consider the greatness imbedded within each one of us.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Hashem said to Moshe, "Gather unto Me seventy men from the elders of B'nei Yisrael, whom you know to be the elders of the people and its officers; take them to Ohel Moed and have them stand with you. (11, 16)

Those whom you know, that they were appointed as officers over them in Egypt [to oversee] the rigorous labor, and they had mercy on them, and were beaten on their account, as it says, "the officers of the children of Israel were beaten" (Exod. 5:14). Now they shall be chosen in their greatness, just as they had suffered in their [Israel's] distress. (Rashi)

Granted, these taskmasters deserved reward. However, what is the connection between helping B'nei Yisrael in their time of pain to gaining the wisdom needed for a seat on the Sanhedrin?

Parsha Riddle

How many Chumashim are there? (Hint: This week's Parsha)

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

At what other point in the year do we read from Parshas Naso?

Answer: Chanukah

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In parshas Behaalosecha, Hashem grants a dispensation for those unable to bring the Paschal offering on the normal date: "If any man shall become contaminated through a human corpse or on a distant road ... he shall make the pesach-offering for Hashem, in the second month, on the fourteenth day ..." (9:10-11) The Talmud brings various interpretations of the phrase "a distant road"; the normative view defines it to be half a day's travel, or fifteen mil (approximately 8.95 - 10.74 miles), from the Temple. (Pesachim 93b) The Talmud further adds that the dispensation applies to anyone beyond this distance, even if he is able to cover it in less than half a day via horses or mules. (Ibid. 94a)

In nineteenth century Germany, R. Yisrael Lifschitz raised the question of whether the definition of "a distant road" is affected by the invention of the railroad. He initially maintained the affirmative, but subsequently retracted, due to the Talmudic assertion that the definition is not affected by the possibility of travel by horses or mules. (Pesachim, Hilchesa G'virta 9:1-2)

There is extensive debate among halachic authorities over the implications of this discussion for other halachos that involve a limit of travel distance, including:

- The requirement to travel up to a mil to obtain water for netilas yadayim (Shut. Beis Yaakov #35),
- The recitation of tefilas ha'derech, which is only recited on journeys of at least a parsah (four mil) (Mishneh Berurah 110:30),
- The recitation of birchas ha'gomeil, which according to some opinions is recited subsequent to any journey of at least a parsah (Pesach Ha'Devir vol. 3 p. 313b; Shut. Yabia Omer 1:OC:13)

While there are various considerations specific to the individual halachic contexts, the fundamental question in all these cases is whether the rule that the Talmud asserts in the case of the Pesach offering, that the criterion is geographic distance, not travel time, and thus not affected by the availability of speedier modes of transportation, is the universal rule, or on the contrary, the exception that proves the general rule that the criterion is really travel time, not geographic distance. According to the latter position, rules that are stated in terms of geographic travel distance must be adjusted to account for speedier modes of transportation.

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. We are seven yet we caused eight.
2. We faced middle.
3. We were up a ramp.
4. Replacement of dedicating.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. We waved but were not saying hello.
2. The first-born replacement.
3. We are usually second up.
4. We are movers.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Nazir (I am a crown, I am a vow, I prevent intoxication, I am separated.)

#2 Shavuot (I am to turn, Some spell me with a "Samech," Some spell me with a "Sin," I may have done the above.)

The raffle has been postponed until after the shuls are reopened. We are still accepting entries to the raffle.

All children 13 and under who answer a "Who Am I?" correctly will be entered into a raffle to **WIN a Claw Machine Arcade Game**



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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