



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

Time For Renewal

Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps, Kollel Scholar and Director of Special Projects

As the time of the Exodus nears, G-d instructs Moshe and Aharon in the *mitzvah* of Rosh Chodesh, sanctifying the new month. G-d shows them the new moon and says: "When the moon renews itself, it will be Rosh Chodesh." (Rashi 12:2) Why was it necessary to impart this *mitzvah* at this particular juncture? Seemingly, it could have waited until the Jewish people received the rest of the *mitzvos* at Mt. Sinai.

Perhaps the answer can be found in the deeper symbolism of the *mitzvah* of Rosh Chodesh. The Midrash explains that the Jewish people, whose calendar is lunar, are compared to the moon. Just as the moon renews itself each month, so too, the Jewish people have the power to renew and rebuild from the direst of circumstances. As the Jewish people prepared to leave Egypt, it might have seemed unimaginable that they could ever recover from so many years of suffering and servitude. How could a people who had suffered so much emotional, physical, and spiritual harm ever recuperate and become a great nation? The answer can be found in the *mitzvah* of Rosh Chodesh. This *mitzvah* is "for you," G-d says. (Shemos 12:2) Rabbi Menachem Bentzion Zacks explains that G-d was telling Moshe and Aharon that He has imbued the Jewish people with the power of the moon – the power of renewal and resurgence. This destitute nation will stand at Mt. Sinai, barely two months removed from leaving Egypt, and receive the Torah as a proud and elevated people.

The pattern of the moon has accompanied the Jewish people throughout our entire history. Just as the moon wanes in the second half of each month, so too, the Jewish people have had countless periods of trials and tribulations, both physical and spiritual. Every time, however, we have rebounded and recovered, tapping into this special power of renewal. No matter how dire our circumstances may seem, we have the power, as individuals and as a people, to persevere. May we soon merit to experience the ultimate renewal with the coming of Moshiach!

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die...the firstborn of the maidservant who is behind the millstone. (11, 5)

Why did the firstborn of the captive die? In order that they should not claim that their god is taking revenge on their behalf. (Rashi)

The verse does not mention the death of the firstborn of the captive. Why does Rashi discuss it here?

Furthermore, why does the verse here mention the firstborn of the maidservant, while the verse (14, 29) that speaks of the actualization of the plague mentions the firstborn of the captive?

Parsha Riddle

What does the Gemara say is written on Hashem's tefillin?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

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

Answer:

During the Reign of Menashe. (Yoel 1, 1)

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Moshe concludes his warning to Pharaoh about the impending Plague of the Firstborn as follows:

"Then all these servants of yours will come down to me and bow to me, saying, 'Leave – you and the entire people that follows you.' After that, I will leave!" And he left Pharaoh's presence in a burning anger. (11:8)

The Talmud (*Zevachim* 102a) cites Reish Lakish's opinion that when Moshe "left Pharaoh's presence in a burning anger," he "slapped him and left," but then presents a dispute between him and R. Yochanan over Moshe's posture toward Pharaoh in general, beginning with his initial warning to him before the Plague of Blood. Reish Lakish maintains that Hashem told Moshe: "[Pharaoh] is wicked, and so you should be insolent to him," whereas R. Yochanan maintains that Hashem told him: "[Pharaoh] is a king, and so you should be amiable toward him."

The Talmud subsequently cites the statement of R. Yannai that:

Fear of the kingship should always be upon you, as it is written: "Then all these servants of yours will come down to me, but he did not say this of Pharaoh himself, even though this was the eventual outcome. Rather, he spoke to Pharaoh with the respect due to a king.

The *Chasam Sofer* asserts that it is a very great *mitzvah* to show honor to a king, as we see that Hashem commanded Moshe to treat Pharaoh with respect, despite his great villainy toward us, "and one who violates this is considered by us like one who did not lay tefillin." And if this is so *vis-à-vis* a king who is a villain and tyrant, *a fortiori* are we commanded to honor "the pious Kaiser" who is a great protector of ours and supports us in the practice of our religion. (*Shut. Chasam Sofer CM* #190. He seems to assume the position of R. Yochanan and R. Yannai as normative, as opposed to that of Reish Lakish.)

R. Asher Weiss, however, inclines to the view that there is no *mitzvah* to honor a wicked king, and Hashem's command to Moshe to show respect to the villainous Pharaoh is the exception that proves the rule, "and we know nothing of Hashem's mysteries," but it nevertheless serves as a precedent for the imperative to honor kings in general (*Kavod Malchus* 5771).

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I ?

1. I am for the afikoman.
2. I was determined by the harp.
3. I was for the tenth.
4. I am in the middle.

#2 WHO AM I ?

1. I am for a son.
2. I am for Kosher animals.
3. I am for a donkey.
4. I was the target of the tenth.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Arla (I am for a tree, I am for a bris, I was for Moshe's lips, I am not a URL)

#2 10 Makkos (Lose your wine, I was seven and three, I am not a Mesechta, Targeted attack.)

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