



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

Hear the Call... and Do Something About It!

Presented by Rabbi Zacharia Schwartz, Kollel Adjunct

"And Yisro heard..." (18:1)

"What did Yisro hear that caused him to come? The splitting of the sea and the war against Amalek" (Rashi)

Our Parsha begins with Moshe's father-in-law, Yisro, coming to join the Jewish people. Rashi, cited above, tells us that one of the things that prompted Yisro to come at this time was the news of the war between the Jews and Amalek. This seems strange. After all the great miracles that Hashem performed for the Jewish people, what was it specifically about the war against Amalek that inspired Yisro? One answer is that Yisro took note of the fact that Amalek also knew about all the miracles that the Jewish people experienced, and yet was willing to pick a fight with the very people who so clearly had Hashem on their side. Yisro took to heart that a person can stare the truth in the face and pretend it is not there. The antidote to such behavior, Yisro recognized, is to act immediately upon recognizing the truth in order to turn it into a tangible reality.

Whether it is a personal experience, a moving story, or an inspiring speech, we have many opportunities to be inspired to grow, to change, and to strive for more. But more important than the moment of inspiration is what we do to make that inspiration real and have a lasting effect. Yisro did not just hear the stories. He acted upon that knowledge, created a plan and implemented the plan. May we all merit the wisdom to do the same.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Yisro, the father-in-law of Moshe brought a korban... for Hashem. Aharon and all the elders of Bnei Yisrael came to eat bread with the father-in-law of Moshe before Hashem. It was on the next day... (18, 12 - 13)

The "next day" refers to the day after Yom Kippur... (Rashi)

If the "next day" is the day after Yom Kippur, then the preceding day, when Aharon and all the elders were eating together with Yisro had to have been Yom Kippur.

How did they eat on Yom Kippur? Since the Torah had already been given, weren't they required to fast on Yom Kippur?

Parsha Riddle

How many of the 613 mitzvahs can we perform nowadays?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Bnei Yisrael were able to retrieve water from a dry rock while they were in the desert. There was another occasion when Hashem made water come from a dry item. For whom and from what item?

Answer: After Shimshon HaGibor killed a thousand Philistim, Hashem made water come from the jawbone of a donkey. (Shoftim 15:19)

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

The sixth of the *Aseres ha-Dibros* ("Ten Commandments") is "*Lo tirtzach*." Christians have traditionally translated this as "Thou shalt not **kill**," and some Jewish sources, both ancient (Targum Onkelos) and modern (ArtScroll's Stone Chumash), do so as well, but Rashbam and Bechor Shor, reject this translation, which Christians had used to argue – hypocritically in light of their actual behavior, and preposterously in light of the numerous Biblical commandments regarding waging war and capital punishment - that the prohibition against killing is absolute, as inaccurate, explaining that the correct translation is "You shall not **murder**," with the Hebrew root "*retzach*," like the English word "murder," connoting only unjust and unlawful killing.

While some explain that the self-evident nature of prohibitions such as that of murder is indeed the reason for the Torah's relative brevity in their expression (*ha-Emunah ve-ha-Bitachon*), R. Aharon Ziegler cites R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik as arguing that the premise that "the prohibition against murder is totally logical to the finite human mind" is actually wrong, and that "Murder is as much a *gezeirat ha'katuv* (a divine imperative to be accepted automatically) as any other inexplicable law." One example he offers is the case of abortion:

Some argue logically, that abortion is always murder and is not permissible even to save the life of the mother. Others claim, equally logically, that abortion is a woman's right, and to deny a woman that right is to violate her privacy. Who is right? Obviously, logic alone cannot answer such questions, but Halacha can, and does. Halacha states that it is allowed only to save the life of the mother.

It is supremely ironic that R. Soloveitchik's example of abortion as a case where "logic alone" cannot establish morality, but "Halacha can, and does," is actually the subject of considerable debate **within** the *halachic* system. R. Soloveitchik's declaration that "Halacha states that it is allowed only to save the life of the mother" is actually quite controversial; while this is indeed the position of a number of other important authorities as well, including R. Moshe Feinstein (*Igros Moshe CM 2:69*), other important authorities, most notably R. Eliezer Yehudah Waldenberg (*Tzitz Eliezer 13:225*) disagree and permit abortion in certain (limited) scenarios where the mother's life is not at stake.

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I ?

1. I added.
2. I loved the Torah.
3. My conversion got me a letter.
4. I was an advisor.

#2 WHO AM I ?

1. I am for the seventh.
2. I was the fourth.
3. Two in one.
4. Sanctify and enjoy me.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Amalek (Wipe out, Remember my deeds, I cooled the bath, I am your cousin.)

#2 Mann (What is this? I was just enough, I melted, I was per head.)

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