



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

# SHABBOS DELIGHTS

## TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

### **Defining Ourselves to Define Our Past**

**Presented by Rabbi Zacharia Schwartz, Kollel Adjunct**

**"...do not disdain the Egyptian, for you were a stranger in his land" (23:8)**

In this week's Parsha we are exhorted not to completely disdain the Egyptians. As opposed to with certain other nations who mistreated us, Egyptian converts to Judaism may marry into the Jewish people after three generations of converts. This is true despite their great cruelty towards us, because "we were strangers in their land."

The Midrash Tanchuma on Parshas Beshalach offers a novel approach to this verse. According to the Midrash, the Torah here is referencing the fact that when the Jewish people left Egypt, Pharaoh provided an escort for them, the way one does when sending away a guest. Rabbi Calmen Weinreb of Yeshivas Ner Yisroel explained that the Midrash is teaching us that since the Jewish people's stay in Egypt ended with them being treated like guests, this can, to a certain degree, reshape the way we view their entire stay in Egypt because "Hakol holech achar hagmar – everything is judged based on the ending."

Presently, we find ourselves in middle of the countdown towards Rosh Hashana. We are in the final month of the year, preparing for a positive start to the next one. One aspect of what makes this time so important is that it is an opportunity for us to define the nature of the entire past eleven months. "Hakol holech achar hagmar" – by doing our best to end off the year the right way, we can shape how the whole year leading up to now will be judged. May we all make the most of this great gift!

**Wishing you a Good Shabbos!**

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## TABLE TALK

### Point to Ponder

**The mother is roosting on the young birds or the eggs; you shall not take the mother with the young (22:6).**

When the bird is sitting without the young, then it is permissible to take the mother for food. Yet, as soon as there are young birds or eggs present, one is not allowed to take the mother. Why? How does the existence of the young birds/eggs create a prohibition on the mother?

### Parsha Riddle

**"When you will go out to war against your enemy..." (21:10) The final letters of these words in the Torah spell "Ohalecha"/ your tents (Chida). What is the Torah trying to teach us?**

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

**What is the significance of the numerical value of the word 'bechor', firstborn son?**

**Answer: Bechor (בכר) = 222. The use of the number "2" hints to the double portion of inheritance that the firstborn son receives.**

## HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

### HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

*Parashas Ki-Seitzei* (22:6-7) contains the commandments of *shiluach ha-kein*: one must not take a mother bird found roosting on her eggs or chicks, but must first send her away, and only then take the eggs or chicks. Various sources explain that compassion for the mother bird is the rationale for these commandments (*Devarim Rabbah* beginning of the *parashah*; Guide to the Perplexed 3:48).

The Talmud (*Berachos* 33b, according to one opinion) apparently rejects this idea, explaining that the reason for the mishnah's ruling that:

**One who recites** in his supplication: Just as **Your mercy is extended to a bird's nest**, as You have commanded us to send away the mother before taking her chicks or eggs, so too extend Your mercy to us ... they **silence him**.

is:

**because he transforms the attributes of the Holy One, Blessed be He, into expressions of mercy, when they are nothing but decrees** of the King that must be fulfilled without inquiring into the reasons behind them.

Ramban, however, defends the idea that *shiluach ha-kein* is rooted in an ethos of compassion, and he explains the Talmudic comment as follows:

It was not a matter of G-d's mercy extending to the bird's nest or the dam and its young, since His mercies did not extend so far into animal life as to prevent us from accomplishing our needs with them, for, if so, He would have forbidden slaughter altogether. But the reason for the prohibition is to teach us the trait of compassion and that we should not be cruel, for cruelty proliferates in man's soul as it is known that butchers, those who slaughter large oxen and donkeys are *men of blood*; are extremely cruel.

The Chasam Sofer (*OC* #100) argues that this understanding of *shiluach ha-kein* as rooted in compassion is normative, and he accordingly rules that if one has no need for the eggs or chicks, then not only is there no *mitzvah* to send away the mother and take them, but this would actually constitute perverse cruelty!

Instead of learning not to be cruel, we will on the contrary accustom ourselves to cruelty and to cause pointless suffering to animals, to chase away the mother from upon her children, and causing suffering to animals is Biblically prohibited.

(This question of whether one who has no need for the eggs or chicks should perform the *mitzvah* anyway is the subject of substantial dispute among *halachic* authorities.)

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

## KIDS KORNER

### Who Am I?

#### #1 WHO AM I?

1. I am a mixture.
2. Tzitzis overrides me.
3. I apply to clothes.
4. I am for the priestly garments.

#### #2 WHO AM I?

1. I am punished for planning.
2. My retribution is usually my plan.
3. I am sometimes whipped.
4. I was in the wrong place at the right time.

#### Last Week's Answers

**#1 A King** (Some things I cannot forgive, You shouldn't, even though it's a mitzvah, I am not a scribe, yet I need a scroll, I was oiled.)

**#2 Ir Miklat/City of Refuge** (For some, I was a must, Mistake is my ticket, Death lets you leave me, My border protects.)

## KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

The Mikvah Emunah Society of Greater Washington invites men and women of the community to a **shiur**

### *Halacha and Design of a Modern Mikvah*

by Rabbi Hillel Shaps of the Greater Washington Community Kollel

Sunday, September 11th at 11:00 AM in the Kemp Mill Synagogue tent

Followed by: *"A Look at the Inner-Workings of The Wallerstein Mikvah"*

A tour led by Alan Broder