



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

Distinct and Proud

Presented by Rabbi Zacharia Schwartz, Kollel Adjunct

While the Book of Bereishis concludes with the Children of Israel at the height of dignity and prosperity, in light of their relation to Yosef, the beloved viceroy of Egypt, the Book of Shemos begins with the precipitous descent of the Jewish nation into slavery and persecution. How are we to understand such an unfortunate turn of events and in particular the drastic change in attitude on the part of the Egyptians vis-à-vis the Jewish people?

The Sforno explains that when Yosef, his brothers, and the great leaders of that generation died, the Jewish people slowly began to emulate the Egyptians and their culture. On a similar note, the Malbim writes that when the verse says, "and the land became full of them," (Shemos 1:7) it means to say that the Jews left the isolated city of Goshen that had been allotted to them and began to live amongst the Egyptians in their neighborhoods. Perhaps, as has been the case many times throughout history, the Jewish people's very desire to integrate with the surrounding culture and become like them led the Egyptians to push back and keep the Jews separate. Similarly, Chazal tell us that the Jewish people merited to be redeemed because they never changed their names, their language, or their clothing. Ultimately, it was their recognition that they were different and must remain distinct that saved them.

Let us always remember that we are unique and special, chosen by Hashem to fill the world with His presence. We have a critical mission of our own, and we have no need to try to be anyone other than who we truly are.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Pharaoh heard about this matter (Moshe killing the Egyptian) and sought to kill Moshe, so Moshe fled from before Pharaoh... (2:15)

Pharaoh handed Moshe to the executioner, but the sword did not work, since Moshe's neck turned into marble... (Rashi)

Then Hashem said to him (Moshe), "Who makes a mouth for man, or who makes one dumb..." (4:11)

Who made Pharaoh dumb, that he was unable to enforce his command that you be killed for killing the Egyptian? And who made the officers deaf, so they did not hear the initial command to kill you? (Rashi)

Was Moshe saved because of the hearing loss of the officers, or because of his neck's miraculous change to marble? Was he taken to be executed or not?

Parsha Riddle

Where is shna'im mikra v'echod targum – the obligation to read the verses of the parsha twice and the translation once - hinted to in this parsha?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

And Yisrael bowed towards the head of the bed (47:31). Which halachos are derived from this verse?

Answer: Since the Shechina rests on the bed of the ill person, one must be careful how they conduct themselves around an ill person (i.e. one cannot sit on the head of the bed of an ill person...).

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In parashas Shemos, the Torah relates:

The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives ... "When you deliver the Hebrew women ... if it is a son, you are to kill him ..." But the midwives feared G-d and they did not do as the king of Egypt spoke to them, and they caused the boys to live. (1:15-17)

The Torah subsequently indicates that Hashem rewarded the midwives for their heroism, and we take for granted that the midwives acted correctly in refusing to comply with the king's genocidal order.

The basic principle that the duty of obedience to a king, even a generally righteous, Jewish one, does not extend to an order to violate the Torah is found in the Talmud (in the context of an order of King David that would have resulted in a problematic disruption of Torah study):

It is written: "Any man who rebels against your commandment, and will not listen to your words in all that you command him, he shall be put to death" (Yehoshua 1:18), indicating that the king of Israel has unlimited power. Based on these words alone, one might have thought that the king must be obeyed **even** when that would lead to abstention from the study of **the words of Torah**. Therefore, that same **verse states: "Only [rak] be strong and of a good courage."** The word "rak" is a restrictive term that serves to limit the king's authority in a situation where obeying his command will minimize the study of Torah. (*Sanhedrin* 49a)

The Talmud subsequently provides two other examples of royal orders that should not have been obeyed since they entailed a violation of the Torah: King Shaul's order to his footmen to kill the priests of Nov (*Shmuel* 1 22:17), and King David's order to his general Yoav to bring about the death of Uriah the Hittite (*ibid.* 2 11:14-15).

This principle is codified by the Rambam:

A person who negates a king's command because he was occupied with a mitzvah, even a minor one, is not liable. Whose words should have precedence in case of conflict, the words of the Master or the words of the subject? Needless to say, if a king decrees that a mitzvah should be negated, his words should not be heeded. (*Melachim* 3:9)

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I protected Moshe.
2. Moshe could not harm me.
3. I could be a weekday
4. Bnei Yisrael are compared to me.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I swallowed Moshe.
2. I was from a staff.
3. I caused eating from the Eitz Hadaas.
4. I was also copper.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Hamalach Hagoel (I am for "all the youth," I am for your bed, Some sing me, I am fishy business.

#2 Shimshon (The serpent is my reference, I was a "crown," My prayer is mentioned in this parsha, In my blindness I killed thousands.)

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