



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

G-d tells Moshe that His promise to the Patriarchs will soon be fulfilled and His nation would soon be free. Moshe relates the message, but the Jews are too demoralized and dispirited to take the message to heart. Moshe wonders aloud how he could effectively communicate the message to Pharaoh if his own tribesmen won't listen to him. Additionally, Moshe worries that his speech impediment would interfere with his ability to convey G-d's message to Pharaoh. G-d assures Moshe that after enduring the plagues, Pharaoh would send the nation to freedom. To assuage Moshe's concern over his speech, G-d appoints Aharon as a spokesman. The Torah goes on to delineate the genealogy of Moshe and Aharon and concludes the account with the verse "This is Aharon and Moshe to whom Hashem said 'Take out the Israelites from the land of Egypt, according to their legions'" (6:26).

The sages note that at times, like in our verse, Aharon precedes Moshe, whereas in other verses Moshe precedes Aharon. The Midrash tells us that this is to teach that Moshe and Aharon were equal. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein comments that it is startling to claim that Moshe and Aharon were of equal stature. The Torah itself declares that Moshe was the greatest prophet (Devarim 34:10) and it was through Moshe, who ascended to the heavens, that the Torah was given to Israel.

Rabbi Feinstein suggests two approaches to understand this equality of Moshe and Aharon. First, Aharon is described as an equal because of his crucial role in assisting Moshe in securing the nation's freedom. True, Moshe was greater. Nevertheless, the exodus was brought about only with Aharon's partnership, thus giving him equal merit. A second approach offered by Rabbi Feinstein is that Aharon, just like Moshe, fulfilled his maximum potential. Although Moshe was gifted with greater potential, G-d only expects from us according to our capabilities.

As we take stock of our past successes and look to the future for opportunities to serve our fellowman, we should allow these two powerful ideas to serve as a guide and inspiration. We do not need to erect towering edifices singlehandedly to attain greatness. When we make ourselves part of a team, we are wholly credited with its success. In addition, we need not concern ourselves with whether we measure up to the perceived accomplishments of those around us. Rather, we must only make certain that we are fulfilling our own personal mission.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Therefore, say to Bnai Yisrael, "I am Hashem, and I shall take you out from under the burdens of Mitzrayim, I shall rescue you from their service, I shall redeem them with an outstretched arm..." (6:6)

On Rosh Hashana, the servitude in Mitzrayim stopped (Rosh Hashana 11a).

It is understandable why there is a separate promise of redemption for the stopping of slavery (service) and being taken out of Mitzrayim. However, what is the first promise, "I shall take you out from under the burdens of Mitzrayim"? Prior to Bnai Yisrael stopping to work as slaves, what redemption took place?

Parsha Riddle

Which two plagues were not completed in Mitzrayim?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's 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?

Answer: The words "v'aile shemos" stand for vchayav adaam likro haparsha shnaim mikre vechod targum.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Va'eira*, the Torah relates that Pharaoh's "wise men," "sorcerers," and "necromancers" attempted to duplicate the various miracles performed by Moshe and Aharon at Hashem's behest; they were able to transform their staves into snakes (7:11-12) and water into blood (7:22), and to bring forth frogs (8:3), but were unable to bring forth lice (8:14-15). As we have previously discussed (*Va'eira* 5776, 5779, and 5780), some Jewish thinkers deny the existence of magic, and apparently understand that Pharaoh's "wise men," "sorcerers," and "necromancers" were actually frauds, although the more traditional and widely held view is that they did indeed possess genuine supernatural powers.

In our previous discussions, we have noted that the Torah prohibits practices rooted in superstition and idolatry, and *halachic* authorities struggle to articulate the distinction between such practices and those rooted in the natural order, which are permitted even insofar as we may not understand the science behind them. One controversial practice discussed by several *halachic* authorities of the previous century is homeopathy. R. Moshe David Tendler attributes the following statement to his father-in-law, R. Moshe Feinstein:

Homeopathic therapy cannot be considered therapy that is "proven and tested," that is possible for people to use without it being in opposition to the will of Hashem.

A therapeutic doctrine that disparages rationality leads to nonsensical beliefs and renders its practitioners dangerously susceptible to (foreign) forms of worship, hidden beliefs, and finally to the denial of the order of the world ordered by Hashem Yisbarach (*ha-Maor* 5743 35:3 p. 34).

Some have challenged R. Tendler's ascription of these words to R. Moshe (*ibid.* p. 35), and in any event, other *halachic* authorities look much more favorably upon homeopathy (*Shevet ha-Levi* 5:55, *Mishneh Halachos* 10:112).

In our generation, R. Asher Weiss writes:

[You] did not ask my opinion about the worth of all these ("one brain," "kinesiology," and "emotional freedom techniques"), and to what extent they are effective. In my opinion, most of the things that the masses run after are matters of foolishness and nonsense, but the Torah does not forbid being foolish, and in my humble opinion, there is no prohibition whatsoever in any of these, since according to the doctrines of their practitioners we are speaking about therapy that is based on the ways of nature, physical and spiritual, and we are not dealing with paranormal matters ... (*Shut. Minchas Asher* 2:128)

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I am one of the seven.
2. I was for the doorposts.
3. I was the first of ten.
4. I am not dumb.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I caused people to be boiling in the winter.
2. I was from ash.
3. I was for man and animal.
4. I blossomed but I am not a flower.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Chol/Sand (I protected Moshe, Moshe could not harm me, I could be a weekday, Bnei Yisrael are compared to me.)

#2 Serpent (I swallowed Moshe, I was from a staff, I caused eating from the Eitz Hadaas, I was also copper.)

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Parsha Explorations

An in-depth weekly exploration of a theme associated with the coming week's parshah.

Presented by Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman

Sunday Evenings 7:30pm
at Kemp Mill Synagogue (KMS) and
on Zoom. Zoom link at
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