



The Greater Washington Community Kollel SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

Bone-afide Commitment

Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps, Director

"And Moshe took the bones of Yosef with him..." (13:19)

As the Jewish people prepared to leave Egypt, Moshe was busy fulfilling the promise made to Yosef Hatzadik that his bones would be brought from Egypt to the Land of Israel for burial. The Midrash (Bereishis Rabba 87) teaches us that the presence of Yosef's bones was a catalyst in splitting the Red Sea. Expounding on the verse in Tehillim, "The sea saw, *vayanos* – and fled" (114:3), the Midrash comments that it was in the merit of Yosef that the sea ultimately split for the Jews. The sea saw the "*vayanos*" of Yosef – how he fled from the wife of Potiphar and it fled/split as well. Many commentaries have attempted to explain the connection between these two events. Rabbi Menachem Benzion Zacks, however, suggests a different reason why the presence of Yosef's remains was crucial to the miracle of the splitting of the sea.

Rabbi Zacks explains that G-d does not perform miracles for no reason and had there been any chance that the Jewish people would decide to turn around and reestablish themselves in Egypt, there would have been no reason to split the sea. The presence of Yosef's bones insured that they would forge ahead. Yosef's strategic plan had saved the Egyptian people through the years of famine and had helped the country amass tremendous wealth from the neighboring lands. Yosef had risen to the highest of positions in the Egyptian leadership. What did all this mean for the future of Yosef and his people in Egypt? Nothing. A new king arose in Egypt and, in short time, the Jewish people went from being a respected and admired group to being lowly slaves. The presence of Yosef's bones accompanying them in the desert was a constant reminder to the Jewish people that they could not be confident of their future in a land like Egypt. With this important message in their midst, G-d would now perform the miracle of splitting the sea for them.

We are fortunate to live in a country that offers us the freedoms and comforts to live as Torah Jews. At the same time, we too must keep in mind the bones of Yosef. We are still in exile and this is not our permanent home. May we soon merit our own redemption with the coming of Moshiach!

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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Point to Ponder

TABLE TALK

Parsha Riddle

But they did not obey Moshe and people left over until morning... (16:20)

There is a Minhag to put out bread for the birds the week of Parshas Beshalach to commemorate how the birds ate the manna that Dasan and Aviram scattered on Shabbos to make it look like manna had fallen. (Minhagei Yeshurun 134)

Every day the manna that fell down for Bnei Yisrael made a pile sixty amos high. (Yoma 76b).

How did Dasan and Aviram think that their small individual portions of manna would make B'nei Yisrael think that Hashem sent manna on Shabbos? Their little portion would pale in comparison to what usually fell!

Which verse in this week's Parsha contains all the letters of the "Aleph Bais"?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

What did the Plague of Blood have in common with the Plague of Darkness?

Answer: According to the Midrash, during the Plague of Blood, when a Jew and an Egyptian drank out of the same cup, the Egyptian would taste blood and the Jew would taste water. Similarly, when a Jew and an Egyptian would sit in the same room during the Plague of Darkness, the Jew had light, while the Egyptian couldn't see.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In parashas Beshalach (15:22), the Torah relates: "they [Israel] went for a three-day period in the Wilderness, but they did not find water." R. Chananel explains that this must mean that the distance they traveled was normally a three-day journey, but they actually traveled it in a single day, and they were only deprived of water for a single day, since "it is not in the nature of (a creature of) flesh and blood to survive three days without water, let alone the children and pregnant women and babies that were there" (cited by R. Bachya and Abarbanel, and cf. Ralbag).

Megillas Esther (4:15-16) relates: "Then Esther said ... fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day; I, with my maids, will fast also." Here, too, there is a midrash that refuses to take this at face value - "Is there a human being who does not eat or drink for three days and does not die?" - and explains that the fast was not actually for a full three days (see *Meshares Moshe* [Atiyah] *Shevuos* 1:7). Similarly, Ibn Ezra reinterprets the phrase "three days" to mean "until the third day," i.e., "they did not eat at night and they fasted two days and two nights."

The Rambam rules:

The fourth [category of *shevuas shav* - an oath taken in vain] - that one took an oath concerning a matter that he is unable to perform. What is implied? He took an oath that ... he would not eat for seven consecutive days ... (*Shevuos* 1:7, and cf. 5:20)

This clearly implies that refraining from eating for any duration of less than seven days is indeed possible. The Yerushalmi (*Nedarim* 2:2), however, states: "'An oath that I shall not eat for **three** days' - we wait until he eats and then flog him," which seems to imply that refraining from eating for even three days is impossible. The *Ma'aseh Rokeach* objects that this contradicts the aforementioned verse in Esther - but as we have seen, some commentaries indeed reinterpret that verse in light of the presumptive impossibility of fasting for three full days. Both the *Ma'aseh Rokeach* and the *Meshares Moshe* note, however, the practice of pious individuals to fast for six consecutive days, from Shabbos to Shabbos, which clearly indicates that it is indeed possible to do so.

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I am the opposite of raw.
2. To avoid me, they detoured.
3. I could be a mitzvah.
4. My root is bread.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. Remember me.
2. Forget me.
3. I was for Purim.
4. I am for doubt.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Tefillin (Wrap me, To remember the exodus, One for one, Four for one.)

#2 Nisan (I am the first, I am the seventh (corrected from sixth), I am not an Altima, Hachodesh heralds me.)

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