



The Greater Washington Community Kollel SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

“Smaller” Blessings

Presented by Rabbi Zacharia Schwartz, Kollel Adjunct

“And Yisro said, ‘Blessed is Hashem Who saved you from the hand of Egypt and the hand of Pharoah...’” (18:10)

The Midrash relates that when the Torah recounts how Yisro blessed Hashem for taking the Jewish people out of Egypt, it is by implication calling out the Jewish people for the fact that nobody amongst them blessed Hashem over this. This revelation is puzzling. After all, the Jewish people sang a deep and profound song of praise for the miraculous splitting of the sea. How then could it be that they did not express their thanks for being freed from their enslavement?

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein explains that it is human nature to overlook “smaller” gifts in the face of larger ones. The Jewish people, he suggests, were so overwhelmed with appreciation for the splitting of the sea and the Divine revelation therein that they neglected to give thanks for the comparatively “minor” act of freeing them from slavery.

This facet of human nature has other manifestations as well. Sometimes we don’t notice the good things we have because we are focused on greater things, sometimes we don’t notice them because we have become used to them, and sometimes we simply... don’t notice them. We must learn to notice and appreciate all the good that we have. By focusing on all the good in our lives and appreciating those who gave it to us, we will live happier lives and deepen our relationships with our family, our friends, and of course, with Hashem.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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Point to Ponder

Yisro, the minister of Midyan, the father-in-law of Moshe, heard all that Hashem did to Moshe and B'nei Yisrael... (18:1)

What did Yisro hear that impacted upon him to convert? He heard about the splitting of the Yam Suf and the war with Amalek (Rashi).

The entire world heard about the miracles that Hashem did for B'nei Yisrael and still were not influenced to convert. What motivated Yisro to convert? In addition, why did the war with Amalek impact upon Yisro to convert? Shouldn't the victory over Amalek have been the inspiration for Yisro to convert?

TABLE TALK

Parsha Riddle

Where in this week's Parsha is the source to 'shuckel' while learning?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

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

Answer: Beshalach 16:16. One other verse in the Torah contains all the letter: Devarim 4:34

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parshas Yisro* (19:1-6), upon the arrival and encampment of the Children of Israel at the Wilderness of Sinai, Hashem instructs Moshe to inform them of His intention to give them the Torah: "So shall you say (*ko somar*) to the House of Jacob (*le-beis Yaakov*) and relate (*ve-sageid*) to the Children of Israel (*livnei Yisrael*) ..."

While several commentators explain that the phrases "say to the House of Jacob" and "relate to the Children of Israel" are simply repetitive formulations of the same idea, for psychological and literary effect, Rashi cites a famous midrashic interpretation that distinguishes between the two phrases: "To the House of Jacob" - This denotes the women — to them you shall speak in gentle language. "And relate to the Children (lit. 'the Sons') of Israel" - explain to the men the punishments and the details of the commandments in words that are as hard (distasteful) as wormwood (*giddin*).

This midrashic interpretation of the phrase *beis Yaakov* as referring to Jewish women is the basis of the choice of the name "Beis Yaakov" for the network of schools for Jewish girls that were established a century ago by Sarah Schenirer and her supporters and allies.

These schools were revolutionary, from both the perspective of tradition and custom – for millennia, Jews had not established schools for girls - as well as the perspective of normative *halachah*, which asserts that "the Sages commanded that a person should not teach his daughter Torah" (Rambam Talmud Torah 1:13, *Shulchan Aruch* YD 246:6). But despite the remarkable novelty and seemingly problematic nature of such schools, and the fact that their primary proponents and architects were a "simple" woman and her lay supporters (Frau Schenirer did obtain some degree of rabbinic approval for her project, but she also faced some rabbinic opposition, and even some of the support she received was apparently quite tepid), the movement was incredibly successful, to the extent that formal schooling for girls, something literally unheard of a mere century ago, is today nearly universal within Orthodox Judaism (although the breadth and depth of the curricula in such schools varies between communities).

One prominent opponent of the movement was R. Yekusiel Yehudah Halberstam, the Sanz-Klausenberger Rebbe, who insisted that girls may absolutely not be taught Torah via primary sources, although even he agreed that they may be taught practical *halachah* and religious faith via special works composed for women (*Divrei Yatziv* YD 139-40).

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I am an in-law.
2. I am in the Law.
3. I saw a flaw.
4. I advised on the law.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I was from the binding.
2. I will be for Moshiach.
3. I am a blast.
4. I cause trembling.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Milchama/War (I am the opposite of raw, To avoid me, they detoured, I could be a mitzvah, My root is bread.)

#2 Amalek (Remember me, Forget me, I was for Purim, I am for doubt.)

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