



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

# SHABBOS DELIGHTS

Sponsored by the Cypess Family Foundation

## TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

### Inner Gratitude

Presented by Rabbi Moshe Sadwin, Kollel Adjunct

**"And Hashem said to Moshe, 'Say to Aharon, "Take your staff and stretch your hand over the waters of Egypt and their rivers ..."' (7:19)**

This week's parsha contains the first seven of the ten plagues. Interestingly, when the first two plagues, blood and frogs, are brought upon Egypt, Moshe Rabbeinu is not the one who initiates them. Instead, Hashem instructs Aharon to stretch out his hand over the water. This raises an obvious question: as the leader of the Jewish people and messenger of Hashem, why didn't Moshe himself strike the river?

Rashi explains that since the Nile had once protected Moshe – when he was placed there as a baby – he could not bring himself to strike it, whether for the plague of blood or for the plague of frogs.

The commentaries on Rashi wonder what difference it would have made to the water, which is inanimate and has no feelings, to have been struck. Would it have cared?

Rav Mattisyahu Salomon raises an additional difficulty. Later on, regarding the plague of lice, Rashi tells us that Moshe again did not strike the ground because the earth had once helped him by hiding the body of the Egyptian taskmaster he killed. That protection, however, was only temporary. Dasan and Aviram eventually informed Pharaoh, forcing Moshe to flee. If the earth ultimately failed to protect him, why did Moshe still owe it such gratitude?

Rav Mattisyahu explains that even one night of peace has value. For that single night, Moshe slept calmly, believing his secret was safe. That alone was enough to oblige him in gratitude. True appreciation is not measured by long-term results, but by recognizing and valuing every act of kindness, no matter how brief.

The same principle applies to the water. It is not about whether the river could feel appreciation, but about the person expressing it. Someone who strives for refined *middos* (character traits) does not dismiss kindness simply because the giver is unaware. Moshe Rabbeinu lived with a deep sense of gratitude, and for that reason, he could not bring himself to strike the water that once protected him.

**Wishing you a Good Shabbos!**

## SPONSOR

**This week's Shabbos Delights is sponsored l'iluy nishmas Yaakov ben Eliezer a"h (Poppa Jack Ruchelman). His Yahrzeit will be on the 1st of Shevat.**

## TABLE TALK

### Point to Ponder

**The river shall swarm with frogs and they shall ascend and come into your house... and into your ovens... (7, 28)**

Where did Chananya, Mishoel and Azarya get the courage to throw themselves into a fiery furnace? They took a lesson from the frogs in Egypt. Even though frogs are not commanded to sanctify Hashem's Name, they jumped into the ovens for His sake. We, who are obligated to sanctify Hashem's Name, all the more so must jump into a fiery furnace to sanctify His Name. (Pesachim 53b)

Terach told Nimrod that Avraham had smashed his idols. Nimrod threw him into a fiery pit. (Rashi Noach 11, 28)

Why did Chananya, Mishoel and Azarya need to learn the lesson of mesiras nefesh from the frogs? Why didn't they learn from Avraham that one must allow himself to be thrown into a furnace in order to sanctify Hashem's Name?

### Parsha Riddle

**What is the longest word in the Torah?**

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

**Last week's riddle:**

**Why did Hashem specifically give Moshe the sign of a snake, and Tzoraas?**

**Answer: Since he had spoken Lashon Hora about B'nei Yisrael, which is the craft of the nachash/snake, and Tzoraas is the punishment for speaking lashon hora. (Rashi Shemos 2:4,6).**

## HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

### HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In parashas Vaeira (8:23), Moshe tells Pharaoh: "Let us go [for] a three day journey in the desert and sacrifice to the L-rd, our G-d, as He will say to us." This is the third mention of a three day journey (the first was in G-d's orders to Moshe at the burning bush [3:18], and the second in Moshe and Aharon's initial demand to Pharaoh [5:3]). Commentators disagree over whether this was an honest proposal, and G-d actually intended, at least initially, for the Israelites to return to Egypt after serving Him in the desert (Rabbeinu Bachya, *ha-Ksav v'Ha-Kabbalah*, *Ha'amek Davar*, *Emes l'Yaakov*), or a disingenuous ploy, and there was no intention of the Israelites ever returning to Egypt (Rashbam, Ralbag).

One of the arguments, advanced by R. Yaakov Kamenetsky, for interpreting the proposal as an honest one is the theological objection to the idea that G-d, whose seal is truth (*Shabbos* 55a), would instruct His servant Moshe, whom He Himself describes as "faithful throughout My household" (*Bamidbar* 12:7), to prevaricate. It is interesting, however, that R. Yaakov himself elsewhere, in justifying Yaakov's multiple deceptions of his father Yitzchak and brother Esav and reconciling his conduct with (what he considers to be) our tradition's characterization of him as a man of unimpeachable integrity, argues strongly for the position that the imperative of telling the truth is not an absolute value, even going so far as to declare that speaking the truth in the wrong circumstances cannot even be considered "truth!" (*Emes l'Yaakov Bereishis* 27:12)

This radical redefinition of truth is most clearly articulated by R. Dessler, who claims that the definition of truth as "the relating of facts as they occurred" (what philosophers call the correspondence theory of truth) may be correct in simple cases, but truth is more precisely defined as "that which leads to good and to the will of the Creator," and falsehood as "that which gives success to the affairs of the lord of falsehood, the 'other side'" (*Michtav Me-Eliyahu* 1:94-96).

Others, however, apparently endorse the traditional definition of truth (see *Nesivos Olam Nesiv ha-Emes* p. 197), and some note that the Zohar (1:185b) teaches that although Yaakov acted appropriately in deceiving his father, he was nevertheless punished for doing so and for causing him anguish by his own sons deceiving and anguishing him by the faking of Yosef's death (see R. Yehudah Shaviv, *Ha-Ma'ayan*, 8:2 pp. 79-80).

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

## KIDS KORNER

### Who Am I?

#### #1 WHO AM I?

1. I am for a tree.
2. I am for a Bris.
3. I was for Moshe's lips.
4. I am not a URL.

#### #2 WHO AM I?

1. Lose your wine.
2. I was seven plus three.
3. I am also a masechta.
4. I was a targeted attack.

#### Last Week's Answers

**#1 Hashem's Shem Hameforash** (I am the explicit one, I cause His honor to be blessed, I kill, You don't know me.)

**#2 Moshe's signs for the Jewish people** (I was spots, For me was a 'sticky' snake, I will be what will be, Show them.)

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- How do we consider?
- Current Danger vs. Future Danger
  - Preemptive Treatment
  - Safeik Pikuach Nefesh/Uncertain Danger

Presented by Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman

*Presented by*  
**Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman**  
**Wednesday, January 28 at**  
**8:30pm on Zoom**  
**Register at**  
<https://thegreaterwashingtoncommunitykollel.com/medicalhalacha>