



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

Sponsored by the Cypress Family Foundation

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

Alone in the Dark

Presented by Rabbi Yitzchak Kaminetsky, Kollel Scholar

According to many commentaries, the Ten Plagues followed a progression beginning with those that were easier to endure and progressing to those that were increasingly severe. With some of the plagues, this process is intuitively understood. Physical suffering intensifies, livelihoods are destroyed, and Egypt is left in ruins. Yet one plague stands out as surprising: the second-to-last *Makkah, Choshech* – darkness. At first glance, darkness seems far less devastating than many of the earlier plagues, which caused direct physical harm to both people and land.

Even if we understand *Choshech* in light of the *Midrashim* – that the darkness became so thick it immobilized people, preventing them from standing or sitting – why was this plague considered more severe than others that involved pain, destruction, and loss?

Rav Shabsi Yudelevitz, the famed *Maggid of Yerushalayim*, offers a profound insight. He explains that throughout the first eight *Makkos*, the Egyptians were still able to find some measure of comfort in the fact they were together. Even as chaos unfolded around them, families and friends could gather together to face the suffering as a group. There was fear and hardship, but there was also companionship.

That changed with *Choshech*. The darkness isolated each person completely. They were frozen in place, unable to move, unable to see, and unable to connect with anyone else. After enduring months of upheaval and trauma, the most devastating blow was not physical pain, but crushing loneliness. To be cut off from human connection, even temporarily, was a punishment more severe than any plague that came before it.

This idea carries an important message for us. Loneliness can be one of the deepest forms of suffering, even when no physical harm is present. At the same time, simple presence can be an extraordinary source of comfort. Being available, reaching out, or offering a listening ear can mean far more than we realize.

The *Makkah* of *Choshech* reminds us that while we cannot always remove hardship from others' lives, we can often ease it by ensuring that no one faces it alone. Sometimes, the most powerful response is simply refusing to let someone sit in the dark by themselves.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

This month is the beginning of the months... (12, 2)

When Rosh Chodesh is two days, the first day of Rosh Chodesh is the end of the previous month, meaning the thirtieth day of the month, and the second day of Rosh Chodesh is the beginning of the new month. (Orach Chaim 427, 1)

Why do we refer to both days as Rosh Chodesh and celebrate them as such? The first day should be Sof Chodesh - the end of the month - without Hallel or any celebration?

Parsha Riddle

What is written in Hashem's Tefillin?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

What is the longest word in the Torah?

Answer: Parshas Vaeirah 7:28 - בְּמִשְׁאָרֶתֶת יְהִי

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parshas Bo* (11:1-2), the Torah relates: "The L-rd said to Moshe, 'I will bring one more plague upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go from here. ... Please, speak into the ears of the people, and let them borrow, each man from his friend (*rei'ehu*) and each woman from her friend, silver vessels and golden vessels.'" The Netziv explains that although in G-d's earlier mention of this borrowing prior to the commencement of the Ten Plagues, He did not use the term "friend" (see 3:21-22), "great friendship" had developed between the Jews and the Egyptians over the course of the Plagues, particularly during the Plague of Darkness during which the Jews had provided the helpless Egyptians with food and other necessities.

R. Bachya b. Asher, commenting on the language of the ninth of the Ten Commandments "You shall not bear false witness against your friend (*rei'acha* - 20:13), explains that the Torah there uses the term *rei'acha* as opposed *achicha* (your brother) since it means to prohibit the bearing of false witness even against non-Jews, and the term *achicha* is limited to Jews, whereas the term *rei'acha* includes non-Jews as well, as is evident from our *parashah* where the Egyptians are referred to as *rei'ehu*. As R. Asher Weiss points out, however, R. Bachya there blatantly contradicts his own comments to our *parashah*, where he explains that before the giving of the Torah, all human beings were on the same spiritual level and so non-Jews could be described as "*rei'acha*," but after the giving of the Torah, the term *rei'a*, like the term *ach*, extends only to Jews (*B'Yesod Geder Mitzvos she-Bein Adam la-Chaveiro*).

The *acharonim* also point out that R. Bachya's position in our *parashah*, that the term *rei'ehu* does not include non-Jews (at least subsequent to the giving of the Torah), is asserted by our Sages in various places (e.g., *Bava Metzia* 87b, *Mechilta Mishpatim* 21:8) – although in at least one context, the Talmud acknowledges that it is possible to construe the term either narrowly, as limited to Jews, or broadly, as extending even to non-Jews, and it does not explicitly resolve the question (*Bava Kamma* 38a - see *Kli Chemdah Yisro* 9; *Imrei ha-Tzvi Bava Kamma* *ibid.* #16; *Pardes Yosef Shemos* 11:2; R. Asher Weiss *ibid.*)

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I ?

1. I am for Rabbinic fence.
2. I was determined by the harp.
3. I was for the tenth.
4. I am in the middle.

#2 WHO AM I ?

1. I am for your sons.
2. I am for kosher animals.
3. I am for donkeys.
4. Holy.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Arla/אַרְלָה (I am for a tree, I am for a Bris, I was for Moshe's lips, I am not a URL.)

#2 Makos/Plagues (Lose your wine, I was seven plus three, I am also a masechta, I was a targeted attack.)

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD



Series #1: The Halachos of Pikuach Nefesh (Saving a Life) on Shabbos and Yom Kippur

Danger Defined: What Is Considered Choli She'yeish Bo Sakanah/an Endangered Person? Part II

How do we consider?

- Current Danger vs. Future Danger
- Preemptive Treatment
- Safek Pikuach Nefesh/Uncertain Danger

Presented by Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman

Shiur #2

Presented by
Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman
Wednesday, January 28 at
8:30pm on Zoom
Register at

<https://thegreaterwashingtoncommunitykollel.com/medicalhalacha>