

A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

Hashem's Favorite Times

Yaakov lived in the land of Egypt for seventeen years (47:28).

The Torah does not elaborate on what happened to Yaakov during those 17 years. One could wonder what went on in Yaakov's life during that period. Is it possible that there was nothing significant that the Torah would deem necessary for us to know?

R' Yitzchok Zilberstein, *Shlit"a*, explains that during those 17 years Yaakov lived in tranquility without troubles and hardship. There obviously were stories that potentially would be able to teach us a lesson or give us an insight into our lives. The Torah does not deem it necessary to elaborate on any occurrence that happened when Yaakov was in Egypt because it was not a time of hardship, in contrast to points earlier in his life. The Torah only elaborates on his suffering that occurred while Yaakov was living in Eretz Yisroel, such as with Dina near Shechem, when he was living with Lavan, and when he fled from Esav.

The Torah wants

to teach us an important lesson. One should know and understand that the prime time for growing spiritually in his *avodas Hashem* (service of G-d) is when he is going through a difficult and troubling time and must overcome obstacles in his path. The effort we must make strengthens our spiritual muscle and transforms the person we are. G-d is looking for us to make the most of these opportunities for growth; it is therefore precisely at these times that G-d treasures us and our efforts the most and makes Himself closest to us. 🤖

RABBI
ZALMY
EPSTEIN



A RIDDLE FOR YOU

What are two kosher foods that come from non-kosher creatures? 🤖

See reverse side for the answer



Kicking off the New DafYomi Cycle

A TIMELY HALACHA

RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN

Some people have the misconception that the benefit of *davening* (praying) with a *minyan* is to be able to recite *Devarim Shebekdushah* (prayers with the status of sanctity), such as *Kaddish*, *Kedushah*, and *Barchu*.

The *Mishna Brurah* (O.C. 90:28 citing the *Chaye Adam* 19:1) sets the record straight. He writes that obviously there are other secondary advantages in *davening* with a *minyan*: creating community, *davening* slower and with more *kavanah* (concentration), responding to *Kaddish*, and hearing the Torah reading. However, the main *halachic* goal of praying with a *minyan* is to say *Shemoneh Esrei* simultaneously with a quorum—which is the technical definition of *tefillah b'tzibur* (communal prayer).

Based on the above there are many *poskim* (*Igros Moshe*, O.C. 1:28, *Halichos Shlomo* 5:8; see *Minchas Yitzchok* who disagrees 9:6-7) who maintain that *tefillah b'tzibur* necessitates that there be ten people actually *davening* together, not just ten people present. According to these opinions, if there are six people *davening* who are joined by another four who have already *davened*, the former may recite *Kaddish* and *Kedushah*, but they do not get the benefit of *tefillah b'tzibur*.

The *Tur* (O.C. 90) notes that one's prayers are "heard" only when recited with a *minyan* in a synagogue. The *Talmud* (*Ta'anis* 8a) declares that for an individual's prayers to be accepted, proper *kavanah* is necessary. But communal prayers are accepted by G-d

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A TIMELY HALACHA

CONTINUED

even if deficient in *kavanah*. The Talmud goes on to say that one who regularly attends *shul*, morning and night, will be granted long life.

Because of the requirement to say *Shemoneh Esrei* with the *tzibur*, there are detailed *halachic* guidelines enabling one who came late to “catch up.” Thus, for example, for *Ma’ariv*, a latecomer is recommended to first recite the *Shemoneh Esrei* with the congregation and then go back to the beginning of *Ma’ariv* and recite the *Shema* and its accompanying blessings.

There are those who suggest (the Kovno Rov in *Shu”t Be’er Yitzchok O.C. 20*) that the *mitzvah* of *tefillah b’tzibur* even supersedes saying the prayers in the proper sequence. Thus, it follows that a person who arrives very late to *shul* Shabbos morning should join the congregation with *Mussaf* and only afterwards daven *Shachris*.

Because of this notion that all the prayers recited with a quorum combine and ascend to heaven together, there are those who make it a point to daven specifically in a *minyán* where Torah scholars or other righteous individuals are part of the ten. This way, their less-focused and lower-quality prayer can hitch a ride and piggy back on everybody else’s! 🤖

IT HAD TO BE HASHEM

Jewish refugees in Lithuania are desperately trying to escape. Many have “end visas” to Curacao and travel visas that allow them through Japan. They still need travel visas to get through the Soviet Union...

Although it did not seem likely that the Soviet Union would allow for Polish citizens, and

GLIMPSES OF THE KOLLEL



much less Jews, to travel across its land, they had to ask. There was no other choice. Much to their surprise, the request was granted. What the refugees could not have known was that the Soviet Union was trying to send more spies abroad and were therefore at that point interested in letting people out in order to hide their spies among the people leaving their country. Things were still not simple; the Soviets still wanted their pound of flesh. The price for a ticket on the Trans-Siberian railroad was between \$170-\$240 a person and had to be pre-paid in American dollars, even though that was an illegal currency to own in the Soviet Union, to Intourist, the government travel agency. And if the money was not paid soon enough, the travel visas would be rescinded. This was in addition to the money the refugees would need to travel to Japan and beyond. Emergency cables went across the Atlantic to Orthodox Jewish leaders in New York who worked

night and day to raise the money for all those who had passports and visas. In the end, some circumvented the need for dollars by taking the train to Moscow and buying tickets for Vladivostok from there. The train ride took ten days to cross the Siberian steppes. Incredibly, the refugees were treated very well on their trip, as their tickets were first class, and were even put up in four-star hotels during a layover in Moscow. Their trains were heated comfortably even though the temperature outside was 50 to 60 degrees below zero. The refugees knew they were being watched by the N.K.V.D. but, amazingly, no one was detained. The boat ride to the city of Kobe, Japan was supposed to take no more than 36 hours, but things did not go so smoothly. *To be continued...* 🤖

RIDDLE ANSWER

🤖 *Be'e hashem and t'mid milim*

BEYOND ELLIS ISLAND

THE TRAILBLAZERS, TRIALS, & TRIUMPHS OF AMERICAN JEWRY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

Although the Immigration Acts in the 1920s placing quotas on Eastern European immigration were seen as anti-Semitic measures to keep Jews out, they had an unintended effect on American Jewry. This was due to an exception allowing various professionals to be admitted notwithstanding the quota, including actors, artists, lecturers, singers, and, significantly, ministers of any religious denomination. This allowed rabbis in Europe to receive visas, a near impossibility for lay people. It resulted in the growth of the American rabbinate in proportion to the American Jewish population and allowed the rabbinate to gain a firm foothold in America. One indication of this growth was the increase in membership of the Agudas HaRabbonim (Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada). A requirement for joining the organization was that one had to have rabbinic ordination from Europe. Prior to immigration quotas, the Agudas HaRabbonim had a membership of 200. After World War II, its membership stood at 500. Among the those granted visas expressly through this clause were Rabbis Moshe Feinstein, Eliyahu Meir Bloch, Joseph Breuer, Yosef Henkin, Yaakov Kaminetzky, Aharon Kotler, Moshe and Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, and Yoel Teitelbaum, to name a few. These forces would reshape the Orthodox world. 🤖

SOURCE: Sarna, Jonathan, and Zev Eleff. “The Immigration Clause that Transformed Orthodox Judaism in the United States.” *American Jewish History*, vol. 101 no. 3, 2017, p. 357-376.

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