



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

On the brothers' way back from Egypt to Canaan, the unthinkable happens. Binyamin and the brothers are overtaken by the viceroy's chief-of-staff and accused of stealing his master's precious goblet. They protest their innocence and readily agree to be searched. A search is commenced and the royal goblet is found in Binyamin's sack! Devastated and in mourning, all the brothers accompany Binyamin back to the city. Yehudah steps forward and, after a few introductory remarks, begins an eloquent plea for Binyamin's emancipation. Yehudah relates to Yosef, who still appears to them as a hostile and powerful viceroy, of the great love between Binyamin and his father Yaakov and how the news of Binyamin's enslavement would surely cause Yaakov's premature death. Yehudah concludes his impassioned appeal that he be allowed to serve as a slave in Binyamin's stead, while Binyamin and the brothers are permitted to return to Canaan and their father, Yaakov. Yosef, deeply moved by Yehudah's demonstration of love and devotion, is suddenly inspired to reveal himself — "I am Yosef! Is my father still alive?"

Yehudah's introductory words as he begins his entreaty to the viceroy are quite puzzling. We know that Yosef was concealing his identity from the brothers. In order to preserve the subterfuge, Yosef would communicate with the brothers through an interpreter, pretending to be ignorant of the Holy-tongue that the brothers spoke. Nevertheless, the Torah relates, *"And Yehudah approached [Yosef] and he said, 'please my master, allow your servant to speak in the ears of my master but do not become angry at your servant - for you are like Pharaoh'."* Yehudah is apparently asking to speak directly to the viceroy, unaided by an interpreter. Why would he do this? How would Yehudah make himself understood? How did he hope to influence the viceroy and win Binyamin's freedom?

Yehudah knew that Binyamin was completely innocent of the charges. He knew Binyamin was a righteous individual and understood well the pain and suffering Binyamin's enslavement would cause his father. Yehudah also knew that the power of the truth and the conviction of his plea would be able to pierce the viceroy's hard exterior and touch his heart. The chasm of an unfamiliar language would be bridged by the purity and sincerity of Yehudah's words.

We are often presented with the opportunity to share the beauty of our heritage with those less knowledgeable. Certainly, we must always communicate respectfully and convey the timeless truths of the Torah in a contemporary vernacular, accessible to even the most unlearned. This can be taken, however, too far. We should never feel the need to "dress up" the Torah in order to make it more "palatable." Rather, we should make certain to keep in mind that the Torah possesses the power to uplift and inspire, when spoken and transmitted with genuineness and authenticity.

Have a wonderful Shabbos!

Rabbi Menachem Winter

TABLE TALK

POINT TO PONDER

I (Hashem) shall descend with you to Mitzrayim, and I shall also surely bring you up... (46:4)

And Hashem said to Avraham, "Know with certainty that your children shall be aliens in a land not their own ... four hundred years" (Lech L'cha 15:13).

From the time Yitzchok was born until Bnei Yisroel left Mitzrayim was four hundred years (Rashi).

If the four hundred years started from the time Yitzchak was born, that means that Bnei Yisrael were able to fulfill part of their four hundred year servitude in Canaan. If they could fulfill part of their exile in Canaan, why couldn't they have completed all of it there?

PARSHA RIDDLE

Who was the first of Yaakov's descendants to go down to Mitzrayim?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last issue's riddle:

How do we learn from Chanukah that one should thank Hashem for the natural order of the running of the world?

Answer: The miraculous burning of the oil was for seven days, since there was enough oil to burn for one day. We celebrate Chanukah for eight days, since the mere fact that oil burns is something to thank Hashem for, and celebrate.

TIMELESS WISDOM

And they (the Shevatim) told him (Yaakov), saying, "Yosef is still alive..." (45:26)

Why didn't Yosef send a message to his father earlier informing Yaakov that he was alive? Yosef understood the embarrassment his brothers would feel when Yaakov would interrogate them ... and it is better for a person to be thrown into a fiery furnace rather than embarrass his fellow. Therefore, he remained silent. It was only after Yosef was able to convince his brothers that the sale was for the best ... did he feel comfortable informing Yaakov that he was still alive ... (Ohr HaChaim)

Rav Sholom Hodaya moved to Eretz Yisroel and settled in the Ohel Moshe neighborhood. Surprised at his choice of neighborhood, people asked him why he didn't move into the neighborhood where people from his hometown had settled. Rav Sholom answered, "There is a lot of gossip that is discussed in the streets. I would rather live in an area where I do not understand the conversational language of the people. In that way I can avoid the sin of gossip and will not be tempted to speak badly about people."

Certainly, we cannot live as hermits. Nevertheless, we should heed Rav Sholom's (and Yosef's) lesson and watch what we speak about and be careful never to embarrass another person.

KIDS KORNER

WHO AM I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I wasn't listed, but I was counted.
2. I was conceived in Canaan.
3. I was born in the gate.
4. My son was the leader.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I guaranteed my brother.
2. Royalty comes from me.
3. I founded the Yeshiva.
4. I bear Hashem's name.

All children 13 and under who answer a "Who Am I?" correctly will be entered into a raffle to

*Win a
\$50 LEGO
GIFT CARD!*

Please visit www.gwckollel.org to submit your answers.

The next raffle will be January 21st

Answer as many as you can because each correct answer will entitle you to another raffle ticket and increase your chance of winning!

LAST ISSUE'S ANSWERS

#1 Menashe and Ephraim (Sometimes we are one; uncles are Shevotim; we are a blessing; born in Egypt.)

#2 Menorah (I had seven; stayed lit for eight; made from fire; you light fire on me.)

Please see next week's issue for the answers to this week's questions.

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

Mazel Tov to Rabbi Sussman's Yesodei Hatorah class on its completion of the 4th chapter of Maseches Berachos!

Join us for this special weekly class at YISE and master the skills of Talmud study as they begin Perek Elu Metzius, the 2nd chapter of Maseches Bava Metzia, on Thursday, 8 PM, December 12th !

The Kollel, in conjunction with Young Israel Shomrai Emunah, invites men and women of the community to a Jewish Ethics Lecture on Sunday, December 15th at 9:30 AM at YISE (1132 Arcola Avenue). Rabbi Walter will be speaking on the topic of "Falling on a Grenade: Self-sacrifice in Jewish Law."