



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

Finally reunited with Yosef, Yaakov and his family settle in Egypt for the last 17 years of his life. As he senses his time drawing near, he calls Yosef and has him swear that he would bury him in Canaan, the resting place of his fathers, rather than in Egypt. Sometime later, Yosef is informed that Yaakov took ill, and takes his two sons, Menashe and Ephraim, to visit Yaakov. As Yosef presents his sons, Yaakov declares that they would both be counted among Yaakov's own children and each will head a distinct tribe of their own. Yaakov then stretches out his right hand, which symbolizes supremacy, and places it on the younger son Ephraim's head. He places his left hand on the head of Menashe, the older child, and blesses them both. Yosef, thinking that Yaakov had been mistaken as to who was the firstborn, attempts to switch Yaakov's hands.

Yaakov, however, tells Yosef that the placement of his hands was intentional. Although both sons would become great tribes, the tribe of Ephraim would be greater. Yaakov continues to bless them, and says "By you shall Israel bless saying, 'May G-d make you like Ephraim and Menashe,'" designating them forever as the prototype for blessing. Indeed, throughout the centuries, Jewish parents have blessed their sons with the blessing, "May you be like Ephraim and Menashe."

Why did Yaakov choose specifically Ephraim and Menashe to be the enduring model of blessing? Why not the Patriarchs Avraham or Yitzchak? Were the other tribes not worthy of this distinction?

Too often, the relationship between brothers is characterized by rivalry and contention. In fact, the world's first set of brothers stand as the paradigm for sibling strife, with Kayin killing his brother Hevel. Standing before him, Yaakov saw brothers living together in respect and harmony. Even when Yaakov gives precedence to the younger brother Ephraim, it is accepted with grace and understanding. Upon this demonstration of peace and harmony, Yaakov proclaims that they should be a timeless symbol of blessing.

Perhaps another reason why Ephraim and Menashe are the enduring prototypes for blessing is that they were the first of the family to be born and exclusively raised outside of Israel. Yaakov prophetically foresaw not only the glorious times when the nation would be ensconced in the Holy Land, but the long hard years of the exile as well. Distanced from our homeland and cast into a hostile environment, the Jewish people would need great courage and fortitude to cling to their traditions. It was in the two sons of Yosef, raised in a country of idolatry and immorality, that Yaakov perceived this strength of character.

Let us continue to bless our children with the timeless blessing of "Yesimcha Elokim k'Ephraim v'k'Menashe. And let us be certain to give over the powerful lessons of brotherly love and the conviction to always hold fast to our precious heritage.

Have a wonderful Shabbos!

Rabbi Menachem Winter

TABLE TALK

POINT TO PONDER

Yaakov lived in Mitzrayim for seventeen years... (47: 28)

Why is there no space in the Sefer Torah between this parsha and the previous parsha? Because when Yaakov died, the hearts and eyes of Bnai Yisroel were sealed because of their servitude in Mitzrayim (Rashi).

The servitude did not begin until all of Yaakov's children died (Shemos Rabba 1:8).

If the servitude did not start for many years after Yaakov died, how did the servitude cause the hearts and eyes of Bnei Yisrael to be sealed when Yaakov died?

PARSHA RIDDLE

The scepter shall not pass from Yehuda... (49:10)

When in Jewish history was this command transgressed?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last issue's riddle:

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

Answer: Osnas bas Dina.

TIMELESS WISDOM

Zevulun shall settle by the seashores. He shall be at the ship's harbor, and his last border will reach Zidon (49:13).

Two businessmen came to Rav Yaakov Abuchatzaira zt"l for a beracha for success in their business. Rav Abuchatzaira told them, "I have a guaranteed segula for you. In shacharis davening we say, 'Getting up early and staying late in the Bais Medrash... are things that one reaps benefit from in this world, but the principle remains for the world to come.' Heed those words." The businessmen declared that they go to shul to daven every morning, but Rav Abuchatzaira pointed out that it does not refer to a shul, but rather to a Bais Medrash, a place of learning, indicating that success in business is tied to learning in a Bais Medrash.

"That is for Torah scholars," the businessmen argued. "We are Zevulun people who are supposed to be working." Rav Abuchatzaira answered as follows. "When the posuk states that Zevulun shall settle by the seashore, it does not only mean that he will live near his commerce. It also means that he shall settle near the water of Torah. Although he does not spend the majority of his time in the Bais Medrash, he must spend some time at the shore of Torah. Furthermore, the word Zidon is the numerical value of Hashem's name. Therefore, the end of the posuk can be explained that if one spends time in the Bais Medrash, Hashem will support him and ensure his success in business."

These businessmen followed the advice, and accomplished great achievements in their Torah and business.

KIDS KORNER

WHO AM I?

#1 WHO AM I ?

1. I was said to grandchildren.
2. I am said at night.
3. Some sing me.
4. I am angelic.

#2 WHO AM I ?

1. I gave the birthright to Yosef.
2. I caused Levi to work in the Bais Hamikdosh.
3. I made Yehuda King.
4. I am the personification of repentance.

LAST ISSUE'S ANSWERS

- #1 Yocheved** (I wasn't listed, but I was counted; I was conceived in Canaan and born in the gate; my son was the leader.)
- #2 Yehuda** (I guaranteed my brother and founded the Yeshiva; royalty comes from me; I bear Hashem's name.)

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Aryeh and Tzipora Miller

To see the complete list of those who answered correctly, visit the Kollel website.

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

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

Win a
550 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!

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

Join Money Matters Choshen Mishpat Kollel as it begins a new topic

"Ani Mehapech B'Charara: 'Dibs' in Halacha" this Monday, December 16.

**Two tracks are available (2 or 4 nights a week).
Mon. - Thurs., 8:45 - 9:45 PM, followed by Maariv.**

This Sunday, the Kollel, in conjunction with Young Israel Shomrai Emunah, invites men and women of the community to a Jewish Ethics Lecture by Rabbi Walter.

The topic is "Falling on a Grenade: Self-sacrifice in Jewish Law." The lecture will be held on Sunday, December 15th at 9:30 AM in YISE's social hall.