



# The Greater Washington Community Kollel SHABBOS DELIGHTS

## TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

*It is an honor to present this week's Torah Minute from our archives.  
The following was penned by our founder, Rabbi Kalman Winter ZT" L, in 2009.*

In this week's Torah portion of Vayishlach, we read of the eternal struggle of our patriarch, Jacob, and his brother Esau. The Torah records, in Chapter 32, Verse 25, "Jacob was left alone and a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn." The midrash comments: "Who was this man? He was the angel Samael, the angel of death, who appeared to Jacob in the guise of a man." He wrestled with him until dawn, which is interpreted to mean that his struggle would continue until the end of time — the coming of the Mashiach.

Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman, a great scholar of the previous generation, asks why the angel delayed in striking. If his intention was to do eternal harm, why not attack Abraham, our first patriarch, or Isaac, our second patriarch? Rabbi Wasserman answers that from here we learn that the force of evil and destruction was directed primarily upon Jacob alone and what he represented. Each of the patriarchs distinguished their service to G-d in a different fashion. Abraham, though observing all the traditions, carried out his service to G-d through kindness and philanthropy. Isaac, bound upon the altar, reflected his service to his Creator through prayer and sacrifice. Jacob expressed his unique service to G-d through study and scholarship. Each of our patriarchs endowed their progeny, the Nation of Israel, with their special strengths and gifts. However, when the angel Samael evaluates his prospective target to determine where he can maximize his damage, it is Jacob whom he chooses. The nation Israel can survive even if their social services wane. Our people can survive a first strike, even if our houses of prayer and worship are attacked and destroyed. However, a strike against our institutions of learning, study, and scholarship of Torah is a strike that is nuclear. It is the death knell of the Jewish nation. The angel of death waited patiently and precisely for the right moment in history, the moment when our third patriarch, Jacob (and only Jacob), would be alone. At that moment, he struck to kill and destroy the eternity of our people.

Through our long, difficult, and magnificent history, we have survived when our charitable institutions were under attack. We survived when our places of worship were assaulted. However, when the light of Torah is dimmed and the fountain of Jewish knowledge is drained, acculturation, assimilation, and intermarriage are certain to follow. Leading a moral life alone, devoid of our rich history of Jewish scholarship, law, customs, and traditions, aids and abets the work of those forces from above that attacked to destroy our patriarch Jacob.

*Have a wonderful Shabbos!*

*Rabbi Menachem Winter*

## TABLE TALK

### POINTS TO PONDER

#### **Yaakov arrived intact at the city of Shechem... (33:18)**

His body was complete, that he had healed from his limp. Intact with his money, that he had not lost on account of the gift that he sent to Esav. Intact in his Torah, that he had not forgotten his Torah knowledge while in Lavan's house (Rashi).

**Rav said, "Intact in his body, intact in his money, intact in his Torah" (Shabbos 33b).**

Intact in his Torah: that he did not forget his Torah on account of the difficulty traveling (Rashi).

Why did Rashi offer two different explanations to the same thought?

### PARSHA RIDDLE

#### **How does this parsha help us determine the age for Bar Mitzvah?**

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

#### **Last week's riddle:**

When was Har HaBayis not in Yerushalayim?

**Answer:** *When Hashem relocated it to Bais El (see Rashi 28:17)*

## HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

### HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *Parshas Va'Yishlach*, Yaakov worries that Shimon and Levi's massacre of Shechem will provoke the annihilative vengeance of the Canaanites and Perizzites, to which the brothers retort "Should he deal with our sister as with a harlot?" (*Bereishis* 34:30-31) How does this address Yaakov's concern? He was not denying the provocation, but merely worried about the family's survival! The *Or Ha'Chaim* suggests that the brothers actually meant to challenge their father's attitude that their act of bloody vengeance was reckless. On the contrary, they argued, **ignoring** Shechem's outrage would have placed them in grave danger. Doing nothing would allow the nations to conclude that there was no price to pay for such behavior, and it was precisely **through** their savage retaliation that deterrence would be maintained and their safety thereby secured.

This theme appears in various halachic contexts as a basis for the imperative to seek justice for crimes committed against Jews, even at significant cost. The *Tzemach Tzedek* (Nikolsburg - #111) rules that there is a communal imperative to fund the effort to bring a murderer to justice, "for if *chas ve'shalom* they would not exact vengeance from the murderer, then the blood of members of the Covenant would *chas ve'shalom* be ownerless, and they will continue to do such things, *chas ve'shalom*." Similarly, the *Divrei Malkiel* (5:60, and cf. *Imrei Shefer* [Kalatzkin] end of #82) permits the filing of a criminal complaint against the suspected perpetrator of a murder, even though this will trigger an exhumation of the victim's body for the purpose of a forensic autopsy, something normally prohibited as disrespectful to the body, "for if they will not invoke justice on the murderer, Jewish blood will *chas ve'shalom* be ownerless, for they will say that there is no justice [meted out] to the killer of a Jew."

PRESENTED BY

**RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH**

## KIDS KORNER

### WHO AM I?

#### **#1 WHO AM I?**

1. I caused being alone.
2. I may be little but I caused a fight.
3. For me there was a return.
4. I was left.

#### **#2 WHO AM I?**

1. I was for Efron.
2. I was men for Esav.
3. I am "tough".
4. I was left.

#### **Last Week's Answers:**

**#1 The Sheep** (We were spotted at the well; designs differentiated us; for us there was separation; we made Yaakov wealthy.)

**#2 Yaakov** (I am the simple one; I am sharp; I am truthful; I could mislead.)

All children 13 and under who answer a "Who Am I?" correctly will be entered into a raffle to *win a pair of two-way radios!*



*The next raffle is December 15<sup>th</sup>.*

*Congratulations to Liam Ratner for answering last week's questions correctly!*

Visit [gwckollel.org](http://gwckollel.org) to submit your answers.

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

## KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD



### **Celebrate Chanukah with the GWCK!**

**Monday, Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 p.m.**

**Join the Kollel for our annual Chanukah Festival!**

**Come enjoy delicious Chanukah refreshments and dancing with music from Kol HaLev. Featuring a special theater performance by Shlomo Horwitz and a magic show for children!**