



Greater Washington Community Kollel SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

Heavenly Solo

Presented by Rabbi Yisrael Glassberg, Director of Kollel Alumni

This week's Torah portion depicts the struggle between our patriarch Yaakov and his brother Eisav. The Midrash elaborates that this confrontation was a spiritual one in which the eternal forces of good, represented by Yaakov, engaged in battle with the enduring forces of evil, embodied by Eisav's guardian angel. The struggle lasted through the night, until the angel requested that Yaakov dismiss him, "for dawn has broken." (32:37) What was the significance of daybreak that prompted Eisav's angel to disengage from this epic encounter?

Rashi cites the Midrash that it was the angel's turn to recite song before Hashem in the morning and that he was therefore required to return to the heavenly spheres to perform this sacred duty. How it is that Eisav's angel, whose entire purpose was to challenge Yaakov, would seemingly leave his mission incomplete?

Rabbi Simcha Zissel Brody explains: The Midrash is teaching us just how significant and meaningful it is to praise Hashem through song. Despite the angel's specific mission to combat Yaakov, a truly higher calling was afforded to him. As such, it was essential that he take advantage of this opportunity, notwithstanding the importance of his current mission.

In the course of our daily lives we are presented with many opportunities to sing praises to Hashem. The first section of our daily prayers is referred to as *Pesukei D'Zimrah (Verses of Song)*, replete with verses from King David's Psalms. These verses describe the unification of all creation in song and praise to Hashem and act as an integral prelude to the *Shema* and *Shemoneh Esrei* prayers. It is important to set aside time to deepen our appreciation for these foundational prayers and to search for methods to increase our level of concentration as we recite them.

Another setting where song plays a crucial role is during our weekly Shabbos meals. Our heartfelt *zemiros* (songs) not only honor the Shabbos but are a tangible melodic expression of our burning desire for a close and sustained relationship with Hashem. When we take the time to appreciate the meaning of these songs and study their origins, we enrich our prayers and truly deepen our spiritual connection to Hashem.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

TABLE TALK

POINT TO PONDER

And it came to pass on the third day, when they were in pain... (34, 25)

Where is the source for the halacha that one may bathe a baby on the third day after his bris, even if it is Shabbos? From the verse, "And it came to pass on the third day, when they were in (the most) pain." (Shabbos 134a)

When circumcising a convert, it should not be performed on Thursday, since on the third day, Shabbos, one may have to desecrate Shabbos to ensure his health. (Bais Yosef Yoreh Deah 265)

PARSHA RIDDLE

What was the name of Rivka's mother?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Identify the stories of kfitzas haderech (miraculously shortened journeys) found in Sefer Bereishis?

Answer: 1) Eliezer going to find a wife for Yitzchok
2) Yaakov turned around to travel to Har HaMoriah and daven there

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Vayishlach* (32:5), Yaakov tells Esav: "im Lavan garti" - "I have sojourned with Lavan". Rashi comments that the word *garti* has the *gematria* (numerical value) of *Taryag* - 613. Yaakov was informing Esav that he had kept the 613 commandments even while residing with the wicked Lavan.

Although Rashi's source for this exegesis is not entirely clear (see *Torah Sheleimah ibid.*), the basic idea that the Patriarchs and their descendants followed the laws of the Torah, even though it had not yet been given, is one found throughout Talmudic and Midrashic literature (*Mishnah Kidushin* 82a; *Yoma* 28b; *Bereishis Rabah* 79:6, 92:4, 95:3). Many medieval commentators, however, either explicitly or implicitly reject the idea that these pre-Sinaitic figures kept the actual technical commandments that make up our Torah (see, e.g., *Ramban, Chizkuni, Bechor Shor and Radak to Bereishis* 26:5, and *Rambam Hilchos Ishus* 1:4, *Moreh Nevuchim* 3:49 and *Maharsha Sotah* 10a s.v. *giyores ani*). R. Avraham b. Ha'Rambam declares that Yaakov's destruction of idols (35:2-4), along with the Patriarchs' monotheistic beliefs and rejection of polytheism, and service, fear and love of Hashem, constitute what *Chazal* meant by their declaration that the Patriarchs "fulfilled the entire Torah", "not that they kept Shabbos or ate *matzah* on Pesach, as one might think". [This is quite baffling in light of explicit statements by *Chazal*, in the sources cited above, that Avraham, Yaakov and Yosef did keep Shabbos! There are also Midrashim that Avraham and Lot ate *matzah* on Pesach (see *Torah Sheleimah* 18:6 #83 and 19:3 #28).]

The Ramban (*ibid.*) vacillates between the view of *Chazal* that Avraham (and, he assumes, his descendants) kept the laws of the Torah, and other interpretations of the verses cited by *Chazal* as evidence of this. He notes a number of instances of the Patriarchs and their descendants apparently violating the laws of the Torah, including Yaakov's marriages to two (or even four) sisters, and he proposes that *Chazal* meant that they kept the Torah only in Eretz Yisrael, but not outside of it (Yaakov's marriages took place in Charan). He even makes the provocative suggestion that it is for this reason that Hashem caused Rachel to die upon the family's entry to Eretz Yisrael - in Yaakov's merit Hashem caused him to avoid violating the Torah in Eretz Yisrael (*Vayikra* 18:25).

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

WHO AM I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. Tasteless
2. Boneless
3. Eatless
4. I am not Gad.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I am Taf.
2. Rav Preida's repetition
3. Exile to Egypt.
4. I frighten this week.

Last Week's Answers:

#1 Leah (I was older; I cried; I had 6 boys; I knew the signs.)

#2 Lavan (I am not white; I am tricky; father-in-law/uncle; I am not Naval.)

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

Win
LASER PEGS
HELICOPTER SET



Congratulations to Avraham Graham and others for answering last week's questions correctly!

Visit gwckollel.org to submit your answers.

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

THE NEXT
RAFFLE WILL BE
DECEMBER 26th.

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

Upcoming Events

Jewish Ethics Lecture Series » **Redefining Truth: When a Falsehood Fits the Definition of Truthfulness**

Rabbi Moshe Walter, Rabbi of Woodside Synagogue Ahavas Torah

Sunday, December 10 at 9:30am at Young Israel Shomrai Emunah, 1132 Arcola Ave.

GWCK Chanukah Celebration » GWCK invites the entire community to a gala Chanukah Celebration!

Join us for inspiring words of Torah, delicious hot Chanukah refreshments, live music, spirited dancing, a magical performance for the kids, and much more! Free admission.

Wednesday, Dec 13 at 7:00pm at Greater Washington Community Kollel, 10900 Lockwood Dr.

