



# The Greater Washington Community Kollel SHABBOS DELIGHTS

## TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

### Immune to Influence

**Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps, Kollel Scholar and Director of Special Projects**

Our Parsha begins with the births of Yaakov and Esav. Despite being raised in the home of Yitzchak and Rivka, two tremendously righteous individuals, Esav develops into a murderous and immoral person.

When discussing the prophet Ovadiah's sole prophecy – a vision of the eventual destruction of Esav's progeny – the Talmud (Sanhedrin 39b) questions why it was fitting for Ovadiah, specifically, to prophesize on this matter. The Talmud explains: "Let Ovadiah who dwelled amongst two *reshaim* (evildoers), and did not learn from their ways, prophesize about Esav who dwelled between two *tzadikim* (righteous people) and did not learn from their ways." What is the Talmud trying to teach us here?

Rav Mattisyahu Solomon offers a tremendous insight based on a teaching of the Rambam. The Rambam (Deyos Chapter 6) writes that a person's natural tendency is to be influenced by the views and actions of his or her friends and to conform to the societal norms of the region. Therefore, a person should take care to dwell amongst the righteous and distance oneself from evildoers.

Because it is natural for a person to conform to the opinions and behaviors of those around him/her, Esav should have easily emerged as a righteous individual. In order to become the man he was, it wasn't a simple matter of poor character and weakness in the face of temptation. Rather, Esav must have had a tremendous drive toward evil in order to overcome what should have been his natural path – the path of righteousness.

Ovadiah was the opposite. He grew up in the home of two *reshaim*, Achav and Izevel. To overcome their evil influence, he too had to exercise tremendous willpower in order to emerge as the *tzadik* that he became. Ovadiah knew what it takes to overcome one's surroundings and therefore had great appreciation for the depths of Esav's evil. It was, therefore, fitting that Ovadiah be the one to prophesize about Esav's destruction.

In a society that inundates us with conflicting messages of right and wrong, where it is so obvious how people's opinions are shaped by their environment and by the media that surrounds them, we must remember how natural it is to be drawn in and how much we must resist those messages. We are blessed to possess the Torah, the embodiment of G-d's will. Let us always turn to the Torah for guidance in our lives.

**Wishing you a Good Shabbos!**

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## TABLE TALK

### Point to Ponder

**Yitzchak was forty years old when he took Rivka... as a wife for himself. (25, 20)**

Yitzchak was thirty-seven when Sarah died. At that juncture Rivka was born. He waited for her until she could halachically be married (three years old) and then married her. (Rashi) However, the Seder Olam (1) maintains that Rivka was fourteen years old when she married Yitzchak.

**Her brother and her mother said, "Let the maiden remain with us for a few days..." (Chayei Sarah 24, 55)**

The word 'days' means a year - they wanted Rivka to remain home for a year. (Rashi) A girl under the age of twelve and a half years, who got engaged, remains home for twelve months in order to acquire possessions for her marriage. The source of this halacha is from Rivka's mother's request. (Kesubos 57b)

According to the Seder Olam that Rivka was fourteen when she got engaged, is there any proof that this halacha applies specifically to a girl under twelve and a half?

### Parsha Riddle

**How old was Yaakov when he received the brachos from Yitzchak?**

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

**Who was Bakol?**

**Answer: Avraham's daughter**

## HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

### HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

*Parshas Toldos portrays Rivka as a wife who is remarkably independent of her husband Yitzchak. When her unborn children "agitate within her", she does not consult her husband but rather goes "to inquire of Hashem"; when the children are born, although her husband loves Esav, she loves Yaakov; when her husband plans to bestow the blessings upon Esav, she plots with Yaakov to thwart her husband's intentions and secure the blessings to Yaakov; and when she subsequently urges Yaakov to flee Esav's wrath, she apparently does not disclose to her husband her true motivation in sending Yaakov away, but merely implies to him that Yaakov must travel from the region in order to find an appropriate wife.*

*In the area of religious custom, the general halachic consensus is that a wife should adopt her husband's customs, although the extent of this rule is not entirely clear. R. Shimon b. Tzemach Duran invokes the principle that "a man's wife is like his own self" (ishto kegufo) and asserts that it is inconceivable that two people who share the same table shall have different ritual standards, but he does not provide a clear legal rationale or direct precedent for his view. (Shut. Tashbatz 3:179) R. Moshe Feinstein explains that the Biblical essence of marriage (nisuin) is that a wife's place is with her husband, and she is therefore treated as an individual who moves from one location to another, who is supposed to follow the customs of his new location and not those of his old one. (Shut. Igros Moshe OC 1:158, and see also EH 1:59, EH 4:100, and OC 3:38)*

*R. Moshe Shternbuch cites the Chazon Ish, however, as maintaining that insofar as a wife's stringent practice has no adverse impact on her husband, he should not impose his customs upon her. (Shut. Teshuvos Vehanhagos 2:231) Similarly, R. Shraga Feivish Shneebalg argues that a wife should not abandon her religious stringencies in deference to her husband, since a cardinal rule of marriage is that "she rises with him, but does not descend with him", i.e., insofar as she has higher standards than he does, she is entitled to retain her standards. [This rule originally appears in the context of material standards, but R. Schneebalg extends it to spiritual ones.] (Shut. Shraga Hameir 2:35)*

PRESENTED BY  
**RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH**

## KIDS KORNER

### Who Am I?

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

*Win a  
Mibro  
Really  
Rad Robot*



#### #1 WHO AM I?

1. I was for the first.
2. I ended up for the third.
3. Watch your drinking.
4. Esav rejected me.

#### #2 WHO AM I?

1. I was made.
2. I was red.
3. I was not bald.
4. I was a fielder.

#### Last Week's Answers

**#1 400** (I was the exile in Egypt, I was Esav's army, I was Avraham's offer, I am sometimes called "tough.")

**#2 Rivka** (I raised the water, I returned the cloud, I was three, I am the second of four.)

Congratulations to Yehoshua, Binyamin, and Talya Kushnier for answering last week's questions correctly!

Visit [gwckollel.org](http://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 18.

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Beth Shalom Cong. Potomac, MD

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