



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

Presented by Rabbi Menachem Winter, Rosh Kollel

From our archives

After being sent away from home by his parents in order to protect him from his brother Eisav, Yaakov begins his journey back to his homeland. Separated from his parents for 34 years and now with a large family and much wealth, Yaakov embarks from Charan towards his birthplace and the future Land of Israel. Yaakov prepares for an encounter with the still seething Eisav, sending him a peace tribute, readying his camp for a possible military encounter, and praying to G-d to protect him and his family from Eisav's wrath.

Yaakov transports his family and possessions across the ford of Yabok. Now alone and separated from the camp, Yaakov is attacked by a "man" and is locked in mortal combat. The sages identify this "man" as a spiritual representative of Eisav and his descendants. Although injured, Yaakov is able to restrain his assailant and compel a blessing from him.

The Talmud (Chullin 91a) tells us that Yaakov found himself alone due to the fact the he had gone back to retrieve some small pitchers of little value that were left behind. How do we understand why the great Patriarch Yaakov endangered his life in order to procure a few small items? Couldn't he have just left them behind - after all, Yaakov was now a wealthy man?

Yaakov, spiritual giant that he was, related to these seemingly insignificant items from an entirely different perspective. Knowing that his wealth was acquired with honest labor and integrity, Yaakov saw every sum that came into his possession as a gift from Above. These blessings, in turn, were consecrated and destined to be used to fulfill his and his family's sacred mission. Every dollar and resource was another opportunity to draw ever closer to G-d and attain self-perfection. It was because of this understanding of the latent value of his belongings that Yaakov took such great effort to preserve them.

When we assimilate this perspective of Yaakov, the world around us is transformed. Instead of the mundane, we see the sublime. In the place of the ordinary, we perceive the transcendental. And even in what others might view as insignificant, we discern boundless potential. Every dime we possess, every talent we have, and every experience we encounter is invested with the potential to bring us one step closer to realizing the greatness inherent in each of us.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Yaakov put the maids and their children first, Leah and her children behind them, and Rochel last. (33, 2)

The further back, the more dear to Yaakov. (Rashi) This was an attempt by Yaakov to save those most dear to him.

If a non-Jew approaches a group of Jews and says that they must hand over a specific Jew to be killed or he will kill all of them - they are forbidden to hand over the Jew, and must allow themselves to be killed. (Yerushalmi Terumos 8, 4)

Yaakov was quite aware of Esav's intentions, as Yaakov said, "If Esav attacks one camp, to kill them, the other camp will escape." (32, 9) If so, how could Yaakov expose certain members of his family to the danger of Esav?

Parsha Riddle

What does this week's haftora have in common with the haftora of Yom Kippur by Mincha?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

In which two places in this week's Parsha do we see the power of prayer?

Answer: 1) Leah davened that she should not marry Esav. 2) Leah davened that her fetus, which was destined to be a boy, should become a girl. The purpose of her request was in order that Rochel should have two boys.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In parshas Vayishlach, Yaakov's household and all who were with him "gave to Yaakov all the alien gods that were in their possession, as well as the rings that were in their ears, and Yaakov buried them [vayitmon osam] underneath the terebinth near Shechem." This understanding of the word vayitmon in its normal sense of 'buried' is ArtScroll's; R. Avraham b. HaRambam, citing R. Shmuel b. Hofni, disagrees, explaining that Yaakov did not bury but actually destroyed the idolatrous items. R. Avraham proceeds to explain that this is an example of the monotheistic religion practiced by the Patriarchs, and that this rejection of polytheism, along with their love, fear, and service of G-d, is what our Sages meant by saying that they "kept the entire Torah", not that they observed the Sabbath or ate matzah on Passover. [This interpretation of the Sages' position is quite baffling, as there are explicit midrashic and Talmudic assertions that the Patriarchs and their families did indeed observe the Sabbath and eat matzah on Passover. (Bereishis Rabah 79:6, 92:4; Yoma 28b; Seichel Tov Bereishis 19:3)]

The Torah repeatedly exhorts us to destroy idols: "The carved images of their gods you shall burn in the fire" (Devarim 7:25), "You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations that you shall possess worshiped their gods ... You shall break apart their altars; you shall smash their pillars; and their sacred trees you shall burn in the fire; their carved images you shall cut down; and you shall obliterate their names from that place. (ibid. 12:23)

We are also forbidden to derive any benefit from idols: "And you shall not bring an abomination into your home and become banned like it; you shall surely loathe it and you shall surely abominate it, for it is banned." (ibid. 7:26), "No part of the banned property may adhere to your hand ..." (ibid. 13:18).

Even looking at idols is forbidden: "Do not turn to the idols' - do not turn to worship them. R. Yehudah says: do not turn to look at them, and that is sufficient." (Sifra Kedoshim 1:10, Yerushalmi AZ 3:1) This refers to deliberate, intent gazing (histaklus / le'histakel bo be'yoser), but mere viewing (re'iyah be'alma) is apparently permitted. (Magen Avraham siman 307 s.k. 23)

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 came from a donkey, but I am not one.
2. I am shoulder, but not below the neck.
3. I caused circumcision.
4. I am a city.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I robbed Yaakov.
2. You must wipe out my son.
3. I was Esav's first.
4. I had Taiman.

Last Week's Answers

#1 The word "Vayifga" (I could be meet, I could be pray, I hint to quick travel, I referenced Yaakov's Maariv.)

#2 The spotted sheep (I could be round, I could be straight, A stick caused me, I went to Yaakov.)

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 18.

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GWCK Chanukah Celebration

Monday, Dec 3 - 7:00pm

@ GWCK, 10900 Lockwood Dr.

Guest Speaker! Children's Entertainment! Hot Refreshments! Live Music!

