



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

Calculated Avoidance

Presented by Rabbi Moshe Sadwin, Kollel Scholar

"He said to Yosef, 'Behold, your father is ill'... Yaakov was told, 'Behold, your son Yosef has come.' " (48:1-2)

Nearing the end of his life, Yaakov instructs his son Yosef not to bury him in Egypt, making Yosef swear to uphold that request. Sometime later, a messenger informs Yosef that his father has taken ill, whereupon Yosef goes to visit Yaakov with his children.

The verses seem to indicate that Yosef was not usually in Yaakov's company, that he had to be called whenever Yaakov needed him. This is somewhat remarkable. Yosef was Yaakov's favorite son; one would reasonably expect that Yosef would spend as much time as possible in Yaakov's presence, especially once reunited after so many years apart. The Midrash calls attention to this situation and asks: Is it praiseworthy that Yosef abandoned his father and thus did not know that Yaakov was ailing until informed by a messenger?

The Midrash concludes that this actually demonstrates Yosef's piety. He was afraid that, had he been alone with his father, Yaakov would have asked how he had arrived in Egypt. Yosef would then have been required to inform Yaakov that his brothers had sold him as a slave. He feared that his father would be so distressed by the suffering inflicted by his brothers that Yaakov might even curse them. Yosef therefore separated from his father to avoid a situation in which Yaakov might learn of the circumstances surrounding his enslavement.

Yosef was prepared to forgo the privilege of spending time with his father — from whom he had been forcefully separated for twenty-two years — in order to avoid the possibility of speaking *Lashon Hara* about his brothers. The lengths to which Yosef went to avoid speaking ill of others stand as a sterling example for us in our own lives. Let us also endeavor to avoid circumstances in which we may speak ill of others, even if we must sacrifice personal gratification to do so.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

And Yisroel saw Yosef's sons and he said, "Who are these?" Yosef said to his father, "They are my sons whom Hashem has given me with this." (48, 8 – 9)

He wished to bless them but the Shechina departed from him, because Yehoram and Achav were destined to come from Ephraim, in addition to Yeihu and his sons coming from Menashe. Yaakov asked, "From where did these who are unfit for blessing emerge?" Yosef showed Yaakov a document of marriage and a Kesuba. Yosef prayed and the Shechina returned to Yaakov. (Rashi)

What relevance does the legitimacy of Yosef's marriage have to do with his sons being fit to receive a bracha from Yaakov?

Parsha Riddle

Why are Jews called Yehudim? Why not Shimonim etc..?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

How does this week's parsha affect how we daven Shemoneh Esrei?

Answer:

Just as Yehuda stepped forward towards Yosef to talk to him, we are supposed to step forward when we begin Shemoneh Esrei.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In Parshas Va'Yechi, upon Yaakov's death, his body was embalmed by the Egyptian physicians under orders from their master Yosef, whose own body was subsequently embalmed upon his death. (Bereishis 50:2;26) As we noted several years ago, halachic authorities infer from this that embalming is not strictly forbidden by halachah, although there is considerable discussion over what sort of embalming is allowed, and for what purpose.

Some understand the embalming of Yaakov and Yosef to have been quite invasive, involving the removal of the brain, heart, liver, and other tissue from the cadavers (Abarbanel, and see also Midrash Agadah 50:2; Shut. Ha'Radvaz 1:484), but others note that the Zohar categorically rejects this possibility and insists that the bodies were not opened, but merely treated externally with perfumes. (Shut. R. Yedidiah Tiah Weil YD #100; Emek Halachah 1:48)

R. Yechiel Michel Tucazinsky, in his modern halachic classic Gesher Ha'Chaim on illness, death, burial, and mourning (1:5:7), notes that "great acharonim and great rabbis of the previous generation" have debated the propriety of embalming Jewish remains. He records that the custom is that when the deceased needs to be transported a distance of "a day or two" during hot weather, an "artificial embalming-like procedure" is performed, in which perfumes and other preparations are poured into the body "via the ear or via the navel", and the blood is not removed. For longer journeys, such as those between the United States and Israel [before air travel], the blood and other fluids are mechanically pumped out (although the internal organs are not removed), and various preparations are injected into the body to harden it. It is preferable to send any removed blood and fluids along with the body for burial together with it.

The former type of embalming, where the body is not opened but merely has decomposition-retarding agents poured into it, is also permitted by R. Yehoshua Baumel (Emek Halachah ibid.) and R. Yekusiel Yehudah Greenwald (in his modern halachic classic on illness, death, burial, and mourning, Kol Bo al Avelus, 3:19). They both forbid, however, the more intrusive form of embalming, with R. Greenwald noting that the use of ice is obviously preferable. R. Greenwald also proudly notes that he thwarted an attempt by the Ohio state legislature in the year 5690 [1929/30] to mandate universal embalming "by demonstrating to them that embalming is against the traditional law of Israel".

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I am for "all the youth."
2. I am for your bed.
3. Some sing me.
4. I am a little fishy.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. We are the blessing.
2. We were swapped.
3. We are two of twelve.
4. We had wicked offspring.

Last Week's Answers

#1 The five garments Yosef gave

Binyamin (We hint to Mordechai, We were each worth a fifth, We were not intended for jealousy, We were for the youngest.)

#2 Eglu Arufah (I atone, I am not a wagon, I was a sign to Yaakov, Death can cause me.)

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

Win a Great Prize!

Congratulations to Shmuel Slater

on winning a Mibro Really Rad Robot!

THE NEXT RAFFLE WILL BE February 26.

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!

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

The Greater Washington Community Kollel and the Vaad Harabanim of Greater Washington invite men and women of the community to a **Kashrus Challenges of the 21st Century** and **Hands-on Kashrus Demonstration**

Rabbi Moshe Heinemann

9:30am

Kashrus Symposium

Sunday, Dec 23

at Young Israel Shomrai Emunah 1132 Arcola Ave.
10:30-10:45am Intermission & Refreshments

Rabbi Amitai Ben-David

10:45am