



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

Royal Conduct

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

“His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.” (37:11)

Parshas Vayeishev lays the groundwork for Yosef’s eventual ascent to the throne of Egypt. Yosef raises the ire of his brothers by tattling on them to Yaakov, their father, and by sharing his dreams, which foretell that the brothers will one day bow to him. Yosef’s brothers throw him in a pit to die, but change their minds and sell him to a passing caravan that eventually lands him as a slave to a high ranking Egyptian official. In next week’s parsha, Yosef is appointed viceroy of Egypt and succeeds in providing sustenance to the Egyptian people and other nations.

When Yosef reports his dreams to his family, the Torah records that his brothers became jealous, but Yaakov “kept the matter in mind.” Rashi explains that he was waiting expectantly for the dream to come true. Why was Yaakov so convinced that one day Yosef would be a king and all of them would bow to him?

Some commentaries explain that he sensed that the dreams were prophetic in nature. Alternatively, the Midrash teaches that Yaakov saw with his own Divine Inspiration that the dreams would indeed come to fruition. The Alter of Kelm, Rav Simcha Zissel Ziv, offers a different perspective. He explains that Yaakov believed that the dream would come to pass because he saw the qualities of a king in Yosef. At the beginning of the parsha, Yosef is seen assisting his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, defending them from the mockery of the sons of Leah (see Rashi 37:2). Furthermore, when Yosef reports various misdeeds of his brothers to Yaakov, Yaakov understands that Yosef does so not out of spite or hatred, but rather out of care and concern for his brothers’ spiritual welfare. These actions indicate a deep sense of responsibility and concern for others, essential qualities of a king. Thus, when Yaakov hears of Yosef’s dreams, they make perfect sense to him and he waits expectantly for them to come true.

The Alter of Kelm explains that this trait of Yosef, taking responsibility for others, involves the combination of various faculties of a person. It is not enough for a person to have a caring or compassionate heart. A person also must apply their intellect to contemplate and perceive the needs of others. May we each merit to develop this trait in our own way!

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Yisrael loved Yosef more than all his sons since he was a child of zekunim (old age)... (37, 4)

Zekunim is a contraction of the words ziv eekunim, which means similar appearance. Yosef looked like Yaakov. (Rashi)

Yosef recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. (42, 8)

When he had left them, they had already grown beards, but he had not reached that stage yet. Now that he was with a beard, they were unable to recognize him. (Rashi)

If Yosef looked like Yaakov, wouldn't the beard create a resemblance to their father? Shouldn't the brothers have recognized him?

Parsha Riddle

Why do we perform Pidyon HaBen (Redeeming the First Born) with five shekalim?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Why did Binyamin merit having the Kodesh HaKodoshim (Holy of Holies) built in his territory?

Answer: He did not bow to Esav.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

The final section of *parashas Vayeishev* recounts Yosef's imprisonment "in the prison (*beis ha-sohar*) – the place where the king's prisoners were confined." (39:20)

Unlike in ancient Egyptian (and modern American) society, in classic *halachah* the institution of prison plays almost no role. An assailant who has potentially committed murder is jailed pending his victim's death (in which case he is executed for murder) or recovery (in which case he is merely civilly liable for assault – *Kesubos* 33b). The Talmud (*Pesachim* 91a) mentions (in the context of the laws of the Pesach offering) "a prison belonging to Jews," although it does not specify the grounds for incarceration therein. Rashi explains that the prison was used for the incarceration of potential murderers, as above, or for purposes such as the compulsion of men "to divorce prohibited wives or to pay money." But aside from these somewhat tangential mentions of imprisonment, there is very little discussion of it in the Talmudic literature.

The use of incarceration mentioned by Rashi "to compel him ... to pay money," i.e., debtor's prison, is the one form of imprisonment extensively discussed in the later *halachic* literature and relatively widely practiced for centuries of Jewish history. While normative *halachah* absolutely rejects the idea that an insolvent debtor can be imprisoned (Rambam *Hilchos Malveh ve-Loveh* 2:1 and *Magid Mishneh ibid.*; *Shut. ha-Rashba* 1:1069; *Shut. ha-Rosh* 68:10, 18:4), it allows the imprisonment of a debtor who is "presumed" to have assets that he is illicitly hiding from his creditor, on the grounds that paying a debt is a *mitzvah*, and the court is generally authorized to use force in order to compel the fulfillment of a *mitzvah* (*Rivash* #484; *Agudah Shabbas* #150; *Rema CM* 97:15; although *Beis Yosef ibid.* apparently disagrees).

R. Yoel Sirkes (*Bach ibid.*), however, insists that the imprisonment by communal edict of genuinely insolvent debtors (something that apparently occurred at least occasionally in the early seventeenth century) is unacceptable: "they have nothing to rely upon." A century later, R. Yonasan Eybeschütz (*Tumim ibid. s.k.* 13) similarly declares that:

In our time, it is the widespread custom to incarcerate insolvent debtors, and no one objects. Perhaps everyone is presumed to be hiding assets, but this is difficult, since they have nothing to rely upon.

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I ?

1. I wanted calm.
2. I am for the heal.
3. I am for trickery.
4. I sent my favorite.

#2 WHO AM I ?

1. I gathered-in disgrace.
2. I am a leaping flame.
3. I dreamed.
4. I was brother searching.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Gid Hanashe (Sciatic Nerve/Sinew) (I am tasteless, I was pulled, What a nerve, I am a SIN for YOU.)

#2 Esav (I lost my head, I lost my teeth, I lost blessing, I lost my status.)

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**Rabbi Moshe Walter
Rabbi, Woodside Synagogue**

CHANUKAH CELEBRATION

THIS MONDAY!!

**Monday, November 29
at 7:00pm
at SEHC, 10900 Lockwood Dr.**



BALLOONINESS!

The Wondrous Balloon Show

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Mr. Airhead!!**