



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

Sent away by his mother more than thirty years earlier to escape Esav's wrath over the incidence of the blessings, Yaakov is finally journeying back to his beloved parents and homeland. Having spent the last twenty years working for his devious uncle Lavan, Yaakov travels home with a large family and great wealth. Still concerned about Esav's abiding anger, Yaakov sends a message of conciliation and peace. Included in his message are the words "im Lavan garti" - I lived in the home of Lavan. Rashi cites a Medrash that Yaakov was sending a coded message. The numerical value of the letters of the word "garti" – gimmel, reish, toph, and yud – add up to 613. Yaakov was proclaiming that while he hoped his brother chose peace, should he choose war, he will be afforded Divine protection because he "kept the 613 commandments and never learned from Lavan's ways."

Yaakov's declaration that he didn't learn from Lavan's idolatrous ways in addition to keeping all the commandments seems redundant. Certainly if Yaakov kept the entire Torah, he didn't learn from Lavan's sinful conduct!

In truth, Yaakov understood that the Torah is not just a vast rule book of do's and don'ts. Yaakov knew that the technical fulfillment of the mitzvos is not sufficient. Rather, G-d desires that through the fulfillment of the Torah we become uplifted. The Torah should mold our character and purify our nature, imbuing us with holiness and spirituality. Yaakov was declaring that not only did he fulfill all of the commandments, but his spirit was the spirit of the Torah, uncorrupted by the influence of Lavan.

The lesson that is imbedded in Yaakov's words teaches us that we cannot content ourselves with the fulfillment of the mitzvos alone. We need to be certain that we are being uplifted by the Torah and living a life of sanctity and loving kindness. Our lives must be suffused and directed by the values of the Torah.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

SPONSOR

To sponsor a Shabbos Delights, please contact info@gwckollel.org

TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

But he (Yaakov) got up that night and took his two wives... and his eleven sons... (32:23)

Where was Dinah? Yaakov put her in a box, so that Esav should not see her and take her for a wife. Yaakov was punished for withholding Dinah from Esav, for had she married Esav she may have caused him to become a righteous person. The punishment was that Dinah was taken by Sh'chem (Rashi).

Leah's eyes were tender... (Vayeitzei 2:17)

She would constantly cry due to the possibility that she might marry Esav because people used to say that Lavan has two daughters and Rivka has two sons. The oldest son Esav should marry the oldest daughter Leah, and the youngest son Yaakov, should marry the youngest daughter Rochel (Rashi).

Since she always prayed that she would not marry Esav, Leah merited to be the first one to marry Yaakov, and to have many children with him (Bereishis Rabba).

Why was Leah rewarded for avoiding marriage with Esav, and Yaakov was punished for preventing his daughter's marriage with Esav?

Parsha Riddle

Which Tanna is referenced in the parsha?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

How many matzeivos (stone monuments) did Yaakov erect in this Parsha? For what purpose?

Answer: Two. One before he left Eretz Yisrael for Lavan's house (28:18), and the second as a sign of peace between him and Lavan when he left (31:45).

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Parshas Vayishlach recounts the massacre of the city of Shechem by Shimon and Levi. As we have previously noted, the general consensus of Jewish thought is that the brothers had legitimate justification for the killing. It is generally understood that Shechem's crimes of kidnapping and violating Dinah justified his execution, but commentators offer a variety of justifications for the massacre of the rest of the city, including that of self-defense.

Some explain that Shechem's subjects attempted to oppose Shimon and Levi's execution of their leader, or to avenge his death, and so the brothers killed them in self-defense (*Moshav Zekeinim; Or Hachaim*). Ralbag, however, takes the idea of self-defense much further, and suggests that Shimon and Levi were engaging in **preemptive** self-defense: "Had they killed only [Shechem], his father [Chamor] and all the inhabitants of his city would have avenged him." He is apparently suggesting that although the brothers were in no immediate danger from the rest of the city, since they reasonably anticipated a future retaliatory attack, they were entitled to strike first in preemption.

In a similar vein, Ralbag elsewhere (following Ibn Ezra) invokes the idea of preemptive self-defense in explanation of Hashem's command to Israel to attack the Midianites (*Bemidbar* 25:18): if Israel did not hasten to attack them, they would strive to cause (further) harm to Israel.

There is little *halachic* discussion of the legitimacy of preemptive self-defense of which I am aware. The classic *halachic* framework for the legitimacy of self-defense in general is the law of the *rodef* (one who pursues another with lethal intent), who may (and should) be killed in order to save his victim. A noteworthy extension of the category of *rodef* is the law of the *moser* (one who informs on a Jew to a Gentile), who may be killed as a *rodef* since he is presumed to be endangering the life of his victim. (See *Rosh Bava Kama* 10:27. The general applicability of this law in contemporary times is doubtful.) A further extension of the category of *rodef* is to someone whose criminal activity threatens to bring down the wrath of the authorities upon the Jewish community (see *Biur ha-Gra CM* 388:10-74). Even these cases, however, do not demonstrate the legitimacy of purely preemptive self-defense, where it is anticipated that the target will cause harm in the future but has not yet actually taken any action to do so.

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. Noach was in me.
2. Sarah was in me.
3. Dina was in me.

The Sefer Torah is kept in me.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I was for Moshe.
2. I was for Yaakov.
3. More than a stiff neck.
4. I am not a candy but I was a lifesaver.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Stones (We were many, We were one, We were a pillow, We were for protection.)

#2 Leah (I was older, I cried, I had six boys, I entered Eretz Yisrael.)

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD



CHANUKAH CELEBRATION

Monday, December 19
at 7:00pm
at SEHC, 10900 Lockwood Dr.

