



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

# SHABBOS DELIGHTS

## TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

### “Geshmak to Be a Yid!”

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

**“And Rachel and Leah replied and said to him, ‘Do we still have a share or an inheritance in our father's house? Are we not considered by him as strangers, for he sold us and also consumed our money?... So now, all that G-d said to you, do.’” (31:14-16)**

After negotiating a deal with his father-in-law, Lavan, Yaakov amasses a small fortune attracting the jealousy of Lavan's family. Shortly after Yaakov notices that Lavan's view of him has greatly soured, G-d instructs Yaakov to “return to the land of your forefathers.” (31:3) Yaakov summons his wives, Rachel and Leah, and proceeds to describe to them the many challenges he has encountered while dealing with their father, Lavan. Yaakov concludes by recounting how an angel of G-d had instructed him to “leave this land and return to the land of your birth.” (31:13)

While we can readily understand why Yaakov took the time to explain to them why remaining in Lavan's home was a bad idea – this would make it easier for them to accept G-d's instruction to leave, Rachel and Leah's reaction seems problematic. “Do we still have a share... in our father's house?” they say. “Are we not considered by him as strangers? So now, all that G-d said to you, do.” From their standpoint it should have been very simple. Whatever G-d says to do, we will do. Why do they need to first validate the positive benefits of the command before declaring that they should all do as G-d instructed?

Rav Moshe Feinstein answers that Rachel and Leah are teaching us an invaluable lesson about how we should view G-d's commandments. Every *mitzvah* (commandment) is for our benefit (See Devarim 6:24 and 30:40) and we will not lose out by fulfilling them. We therefore should not view the *mitzvos* as tests or trials, but rather as opportunities. Rav Moshe laments those who complain, “*shver tsu zayn a yid* – it is difficult to be a Jew.” When someone labels Jewish observance as challenging, even if that person can overcome those challenges, they leave an impression on their children and others that the *mitzvos* are difficult, and there's no telling if *they* will be able to overcome those trials as well. Instead, we should emphasize how the *mitzvos* are good for us and provide opportunity for a joyous and fulfilling lifestyle. It was this perspective that Rachel and Leah were modeling. They were certainly ready to follow G-d's command no matter what. At the same time, they contemplated and then expressed how G-d's will for them was not a test but rather what was best for them.

This lesson is particularly potent in times like these. When antisemitism rears its ugly head, we must strengthen our own Jewish pride and recognize how fortunate we are to be chosen by G-d to learn his Torah and fulfill his *mitzvos*. The motto we are to live by and to pass on to our children should be that it's “*geshmak to be a yid* – it is delightful to be a Jew!”

**Wishing you a Good Shabbos!**

## SPONSOR

To sponsor an issue of Shabbos Delights, please contact [info@gwckollel.org](mailto:info@gwckollel.org).

## TABLE TALK

### Point to Ponder

**He (Yaakov) took from the stones of the place... (28:11)**  
**Yaakov arose early in the morning and took the stone... (28:18)**

The stones began to argue one with the other, "The Tzadik should rest his head on me..." Hashem immediately made them into one stone. Therefore the verse later refers to the stone as a single stone (Rashi).

Where does the original verse relate that Yaakov took multiple stones? Why is Rashi bothered by a contradiction between the verses? It merely says that Yaakov took from the many stones, it does not specify if he took one or more stones.

### Parsha Riddle

**When was Har HaBayis (The Temple Mount) not in Yerushalayim?**

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

**Rivka says: "Why should I be bereaved of both of you on the same day?" (27:45) How was this prophecy fulfilled?**

**Answer: Yaakov and Eisav both died on the same day.**

## HATORAH V' HAMITZVAH

### HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Last week, we noted the Talmud's assertion that Yaakov had unjustifiably neglected his filial duty during the twenty-two years he spent away from his father in the house of Lavan and on the journey home (*Megillah* 17a). Rabbeinu Bachya b. Asher (28:5) raises an obvious difficulty with this indictment of Yaakov: his parents had explicitly **ordered** him to travel to Padan Aram and take a wife from among Lavan's daughters, which is what he did, so why was he punished for this? R. Bachya answers that his parents' intention had been for him to marry Leah and return immediately when they sent for him, but he chose to pursue Rachel ("due to her beauty") and offered to work for her for seven years, and so the entire duration of his stay there was in the service of his **own** interests, and so he was punished for this.

This approach of R. Bachya seems to contradict a ruling of R. Yosef of Colon (the Maharik), regarding a man whose father objected to his choice of a wife. The Maharik maintains that the son need not, and indeed should not, obey his father in this matter, on several grounds, including the principle that it is a Torah imperative for a man to marry "the woman that he desires, and who finds favor in his eyes," and this imperative overrides the commandment to honor one's parents (*Shut. Maharik* 166:3). It would seem to follow from this remarkable contention of the Maharik that once Yaakov had fallen in love with Rachel, he was **obligated** to marry her, and he would not even have been **permitted** to relinquish her in favor of Leah out of filial duty!

The truth is that the Maharik's assertion of a *halachic* imperative to marry the woman that he loves notwithstanding, other authorities have ruled that ethical considerations can sometimes make marrying a woman that one does not love (or at least to whom one is not physically attracted) the right thing to do. R. Yisrael Yehoshua Trunk of Kutna encouraged a man whose fiancée's face had become ravaged by smallpox to keep his engagement, despite his claim that she was now repulsive to him. Although according to the letter of the law he was within his rights to terminate the engagement, it would be wrong to do so, to breach the covenant between them and to humiliate the poor woman who had done nothing wrong whatsoever (*Shut. Yeshuos Molcho EH* 46).

PRESENTED BY  
 RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

## KIDS KORNER

### Who Am I?

#### #1 WHO AM I?

1. We were spotted (but not necessarily spotted) at the well.
2. Designs differentiated us.
3. For us there was separation.
4. We made Yaakov wealthy.

#### #2 WHO AM I?

1. I am the simple one.
2. I am sharp.
3. I am truthful.
4. I could mislead.

#### Last Week's Answers

**#1 Esav/Edom** (I caused kicking, I caused the missing Aleph, I was complete, I am named for a color.)

**#2 Yaakov** (I am named for my grasp, My name can mean trickery, I was named for my battle, Am I the firstborn?)

## KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD



**Learn Gemara with GWCK!**

Join the movement and get

**On the Same Page**

Beginning the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of Maseches Kiddushin  
 this week! NOW is a great time to join!

Learn an Amud (page) of Gemara each week with learning options that fit YOUR lifestyle:

- \* Attend weekly live classes in person or on Zoom
- \* Learn on your own schedule with uploaded audio/video lectures

For more info or to register visit:

[gwckollel.org/onthesamepage](http://gwckollel.org/onthesamepage)

or contact Rabbi Shaps:

[hshaps@gwckollel.org](mailto:hshaps@gwckollel.org), 347.869.9361