



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**

As Yaakov and his twin brother grow into young adulthood, their respective character begins to emerge. Eisav is described as a "hunter" and "a man of the field." In contrast, Yaakov is described as a "wholesome man," as someone who is occupied in sedulous study. One day, Eisav returns from a hunting expedition and is tired and hungry. Seeing Yaakov preparing a lentil stew, he demands it from his brother. Yaakov agrees on the condition that Eisav forfeit to him his rightful birthright (as the elder of the twins) to perform the future Temple service. Eisav agrees to the arrangement and Yaakov serves him the lentils and bread. The Torah concludes the narrative by sharply criticizing Eisav, stating that "Eisav spurned the birthright."

Why did Eisav agree to relinquish his rights to perform the Divine service? Rashi in his commentary explains that Eisav was concerned about the great responsibility it entailed. There were many laws and procedures, and their contravention could be punishable by death! Daunted by the awesomeness of the task, Eisav willingly transferred it to his brother. Seemingly, this rationale is very reasonable and justifiable. Why does the Torah condemn Eisav for his decision?

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein explains that given the unique and special opportunity afforded Eisav, he should have steeled himself to the risks and challenges associated with it. Losing heart in the face of potential difficulties and relinquishing rights to something so precious testified to Eisav's lack of regard for the treasured Temple service.

We are often presented with opportunities to assume responsibility. It may be to head or help a charitable organization, assist a local synagogue, or spearhead an effort to meet the spiritual or physical needs of our fellow brothers and sisters. Invariably, we will be confronted with all sorts of challenges. Let us make sure to fortify ourselves and not allow these potential difficulties to stand in the way of serving G-d and our fellows. As we pray in synagogue Shabbos morning: "and all who are involved faithfully in the needs of the community, may the Holy One, Blessed is He, pay their reward and remove sickness, heal them, and forgive their sins. And may He send blessing and success to all their endeavors, along with all Israel, their brethren, and let us say: Amen."

**Wishing you a Good Shabbos!**

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## TABLE TALK

### Point to Ponder

**The first one emerged red, entirely like a hairy mantle; so they named him Esav (25:25).**

When Yitzchak saw the red coloring of Esav, he thought that Esav's blood had not been absorbed properly in his body, and it would be dangerous to give him a bris at eight days. Once Esav was a couple of years old, and his coloring remained, Yitzchak realized that this was his natural coloring and not on account of a blood issue. So Yitzchak said, "Since I did not circumcise him at eight days, I will wait and circumcise him at the age of thirteen, just as Yishmael was circumcised (Da'as Zekainim)."

Yishmael was circumcised at the age of thirteen since that is when he was commanded. There is nothing auspicious about the age of thirteen for bris milah. So why would Yitzchak choose to wait until Esav was thirteen?

### Parsha Riddle

**How old was Yaakov when he received the brachos from Yitzchak?**

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

**Who was "Bakol?"**

**Answer: Avraham's daughter (according to one opinion in Bava Basra 16b).**

## HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

### HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Toldos* (25:21-23), the Torah relates: ... *Rivka conceived. The children agitated within her, and she said, "If so, why am I thus?" And she went to inquire of Hashem. And Hashem said to her: "Two nations are in your womb; two regimes from your insides shall be separated; the might shall pass from one regime to the other, and the elder shall serve the younger."*

This is the first recorded instance of pre-natal screening in our tradition. In our era, pre-natal screening techniques include both invasive methods such as amniocentesis and chorionic villus sampling (CVS) as well as non-invasive methods such as blood tests (including non-invasive prenatal testing [NIPT] and various forms of maternal serum screening) and ultrasounds.

The invasive methods entail small but non-negligible risks to both mother and fetus, the most significant of which is apparently miscarriage. R. Avraham Sofer Abraham, after asserting that the risk of miscarriage from CVS testing is between 2.3-5% (depending upon when in the pregnancy it is performed), reports that R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach nevertheless allowed such testing where blood tests of the parents indicated that both parents were carriers of a genetic disorder or where a previous child of theirs was born with such a disorder (*Nishmas Avraham* [Second Edition] Volume 4 p. 157).

R. Eliezer Yehudah Waldenberg was asked about amniocentesis for pregnant women in their late thirties ("advanced maternal age") for the purpose of diagnosing (or ruling out the possibility of) Down syndrome ("mongolism"). He rules that despite the risk involved to both mother and fetus (he asserts the risk of death to the latter via needle injury to be between 1-1.5%, although he acknowledges the claim that a "special instrument" (ultrasound equipment?) can be used to precisely aim the needle and avoid striking the fetus), the procedure is technically permitted, although he recommends that it generally not be performed unless the couple has previously had a Down Syndrome child or the mother is of advanced maternal age and is overwhelmed by anxiety over the possibility of her fetus having Down syndrome, and can only be calmed by definitively ruling this out (*Tzitz Eliezer* 14:101-02).

R. Shlomo Aviner encourages prenatal screening in general for women of advanced maternal age. One should prefer methods that entail the lowest possible risk, but even methods that do involve some (minimal) risk to the fetus may be appropriate when medically indicated (*Assia* 49-50 – 13, 1-2).

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

## KIDS KORNER

### Who Am I?

#### #1 WHO AM I?

1. My father is not the 'father of the king'.
2. The first was my similarity.
3. I found one hundred.
4. I established the "Offering" prayer.

#### #2 WHO AM I?

1. I kicked for idols.
2. I caused the missing Aleph.
3. I was complete.
4. I got another name because of my menu choice.

#### Last Week's Answers

**#1 Sarah's years/lifespan** (We equal Achashverosh's kingdom, We were all good, The bind ended us, I am the title now.)

**#2 Maaras Hamachpeila** (I have four sets, I was four hundred, I am in the city of four, I am the 'double'.)

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