



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

Your Brother's Role

Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps, Kollel Director

As the end of his life approaches, Yaakov calls his sons to gather together so that he can tell them that "which will occur to them at the end of days." (49:1) It seems, however, that he never did this. As the verses continue, Yaakov blesses each of his sons, highlighting their character traits and prophesizing regarding their futures. Rashi explains that Yaakov's original intention was to reveal the *keitz* – the time of the coming of Moshiach, but G-d's Presence suddenly left him and he was unable to – so he began "to tell them other things." Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky explains that Yaakov's goal in revealing the *keitz* was to instill hope in his children as they prepared for the long exile in Egypt. When this information was suddenly taken from him, he pivoted to a different approach. He would share with each of his sons, their unique role and contribution in bringing the Jewish people closer to redemption.

It is noteworthy that before Yaakov blesses each of his sons, he repeats his instruction that they should gather together – only this time instead of using the word "hey'asfu" as before, (49:1) he uses the word "hee'kavtzu." (49:2) Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch explains that while "hey'asfu" connotes an instruction to gather in unity – coming together in mind and purpose, "hee'kavtzu" means to gather close together in space – to draw near each other. Why was it important to Yaakov that his sons stand close to each other when he identified for each of them their unique purpose?

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky explains that although Yaakov's main goal was to impress upon each of his sons their specific role, it was important that each of them also hear and recognize the purpose and mission of their brothers and to, therefore, treat them with honor and respect despite their differences in approach. When Yaakov instructed them to draw near, it was as if he was telling them, "Listen closely to your brothers' unique character traits and missions and understand that each of you has a different way of contributing to the success and development of the Jewish nation."

Nowadays, our people are no longer divided by *shevatim* (tribes), yet we still find many different approaches in serving G-d. These varying approaches, when rooted in Torah values, each contribute in their own way to the character of our people and help maintain a balance of the many ideals that are central to Jewish life. When we encounter Jews who seem different than us and emphasize different facets of Jewish observance, we should remember how it was Yaakov's intent that each of his sons honor and respect the unique role of each of the other tribes.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Yissachar chamor garem / is a strong boned donkey... (49:14)

Hashem assisted Leah that night, (when she paid Rachel with the dudaim, in order that Yaakov should sleep in her tent) with the assistance of the donkey that Yaakov was riding on. (Rashi: Hashem directed Yaakov's donkey to bring him to Leah's tent.) As the verse says "chamor garem" which can be translated, "the donkey caused." (Niddah 31a)

Why did Yaakov find it necessary to hint to this during the bracha of Yissachar?

How did the embalment of Yaakov cause the salvation of Ninveh?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

On which two occasions in this week's parsha do we find that words caused someone to die early?

Answer: 1) When Yosef allowed his brothers to refer to his father, Yaakov, as "your servant" ten times, he lost ten years of his life. (Yalkut Shimoni) 2) When Yaakov was asked by Pharaoh for his age, and Yaakov responded that his life was a bitter one. There are thirty-three words in that conversation, which caused Yaakov to die thirty-three years earlier than his father. (Daas Zekeinim)

Parsha Riddle

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Vayechi* (47:29-30), Yaakov requests of Yosef: "... please do not bury me in Egypt. For I will lie down with my fathers and you shall transport me out of Egypt and bury me in their tomb," to which Yosef responds: "I personally will do as you have said." Later in the *parashah* (50:29-30,12), Yaakov instructs all his sons: "I shall be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave ... that is in the field of Machpelah..." and indeed, "His sons did for him exactly as he had instructed them."

Commenting on both these narratives, the *Midrash ha-Gadol* cites the principle that "It is a *mitzvah* to fulfill the statement of the dead." This principle appears in the Talmud in various contexts as a *halachic* principle mandating the carrying out of the instructions of a decedent with respect to the disposition of his estate. One example is the following:

In a case of **one who says at the moment of his death: So-and-so, my maidservant, gave me satisfaction and one should do for her something that gives her satisfaction, the court compels the heirs to give her satisfaction**, and if she will be satisfied only by being emancipated, they must do so. **What is the reason for this? It is a *mitzvah* to fulfill the statement of the dead.** (*Gittin* 40a)

Despite the fact that the *Midrash ha-Gadol* cites this principle in the context of Yaakov's instructions for his burial, whether the principle actually extends to burial instructions or is limited to directions for the disposition of one's estate is the subject of debate. While some authorities rule that there is indeed a *mitzvah* incumbent upon children to honor their parents' burial instructions (*Shut. Ha-Rashba* 1:369, *Shut. Maharashdam YD* 203), others maintain that "a man at the time of his death is neither a prophet, nor a king or prince, who has the authority to command the living to comply with his instructions, *for there is no authority on the day of death* (from *Koheles* 8:8)" (*Shut. Tashbatz* 2:53). Even the latter opinion may agree, however, that a decedent has the power to condition the inheritance of his estate upon compliance with his directions, and so the heirs must obey his directives insofar as they wish to inherit his property (see *Tashbatz* 3:130 and R. Yoel Amital, *Parashas Vayechi: Mitzvah le-Kayeim Divrei ha-Meis*).

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. First of four damages.
2. I am not sure.
3. I represent the eleventh.
4. Don't pair me with a donkey.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. Yaakov in Egypt.
2. Yosef at the time of his sale.
3. I equal good.
4. A year before Chupa.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Serach bas Asher (I am not Avraham's father, My father is not "a share," My music got me long life, I was a news reporter.)

#2 Wine (I am for the order, The old like the old, I am for kiddush, I am for the lots day.)

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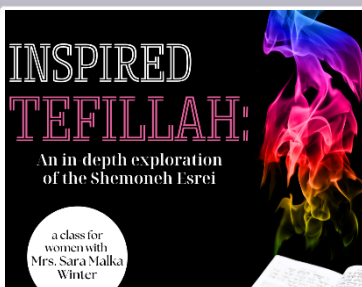
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