



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

# SHABBOS DELIGHTS

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## TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

### **Do Your Part and Rely On Me**

**Presented by Rabbi Moshe Sadwin, Kollel Adjunct**

**"Only remember me... and mention me to Pharaoh..." (40:14)**

Towards the end of our Parsha, we find Yosef languishing in prison. While he is there, he is joined by two of Pharaoh's servants – the butler and baker – who are also incarcerated there. The butler and baker each have dreams, and Yosef interprets each one. Yosef's interpretation of the butler's dream is that the butler will be reinstated as Pharaoh's servant in just three days' time. Yosef asks the butler to mention his name to Pharaoh in the hope that Pharaoh will grant Yosef clemency for the false charges on which he has been imprisoned.

Our sages reveal to us (see Rashi) that Yosef was punished for this request. He should have only relied on Hashem and not the butler to save him from his predicament. Therefore, since Yosef used two words, *zichartani* and *v'hizkartani*, which translate as "remember me" and "mention me," his jail time was extended for two more years before he was set free.

Many commentaries are troubled by this teaching. We know that we are not supposed to rely on miracles, but rather do our part in bringing about the results we need. Why would Yosef be punished for doing *hishtadlus* – engaging in human effort to free himself?

Rav Chaim Soloveitchik posed an additional question: If Yosef's jail time was extended two years because of the two words he uttered to the butler, what would have happened if Yosef only uttered one word to the butler to remember/mention him to Pharaoh? Would he then only have had to remain in jail for one extra year?

Rav Chaim answers that Yosef would not have had to remain even one extra year. Yosef could have used one expression to the butler because a person is permitted – and even obligated – to seek every natural means to save himself from danger and misfortune and not rely on a supernatural salvation. Therefore, one expression would have been fine for Yosef as his attempt to get help by means of the butler. By reinforcing his request a second time, however, Yosef showed that his motivation in asking the butler was not merely a token effort to seek aid through natural means, but rather was placing his actual reliance on the butler and not on Hashem. Therefore, Yosef was punished not only for the second expression but even for the first, as the repetition demonstrated that even the first expression was also with improper intent.

**Wishing you a Good Shabbos!**

## TABLE TALK

### Point to Ponder

**He (Yaakov) recognized it and he said, "My son's tunic! An evil beast devoured him! Yosef surely has been torn to bits. (17, 33)**

Rav Yaakov said, "The reward for the fulfillment of mitzvot is not in this world. Rav Yaakov saw a man tell his son to climb onto a roof and bring down the chicks. The son climbed to the top, sent away the mother bird and took the chicks. The son thereby fulfilled the mitzva of honoring his father and of sending away the mother bird. In regard to both of them, the Torah promises long life. As the son descended, he fell and died... What happened to the promise of long life? The verse means it will prolong your life in the world that is long - Olam Habo. (Kiddushin 39b)

Why didn't Chazal bring a proof to this premise from Yaakov Avinu? Yosef was sent by his father to check on his brothers' welfare. (37, 13) If the place for reward for fulfilling mitzvot was in this world, how could Yaakov have thought that Yosef was killed?

### Parsha Riddle

**Why do we perform Pidyon HaBen (Redeeming the Firstborn) with five shekalim?**

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

**Last week's riddle:**

**What does this week's haftorah have in common with the haftorah of Mincha on Yom Kippur?**

**Answer: For both we read an entire sefer of Tanach. Yom Kippur: Yonah. Vayishlach: Ovadya**

## HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

### HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In parashas Vayeishev (37:26-27), the Torah relates: "And Yehuda said to his brothers, 'What is the gain if we slay our brother and cover up his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, but our hand shall not be upon him, for he is our brother, our flesh.'" And his brothers hearkened." Our sages apparently disagree over whether Yehuda's compromise proposal to sell Yosef rather than kill him is praiseworthy or deplorable. The Talmud cites an opinion that is sharply critical of Yehuda: **Rabbi Meir says: ... anyone who blesses Yehuda for this act is cursing G-d, and of this it is stated: "And the covetous [uvotze'a] blesses himself, though he despises the L-rd"** (Tehillim 10:3), interpreted homiletically as: "And whoever blesses the profiteer [botze'a] despises the L-rd." (Sanhedrin 6b) Rashi explains that "he should have said 'let us return him to our father,' since his brothers were hearkening to his words."

This perspective toward Yehuda's compromise appears in the Midrash as well: *When Yosef's brothers sold him and they went to console their father, he was not consoled. They said: It was Yehuda who did all these things to us, for had he not sought it, we would not have sold him. Just as he said to us: 'Do not kill him,' and we heeded him, had he said: 'Do not sell him,' we would have heeded him. Instead, he said to us: "Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites." They stood and ostracized him ... (Shemos Rabbah 42:3, cited by Rashi to Bereishis 38:1)*

A different Midrash, however, actually does praise Yehuda for his proposal: "And Yehuda said to his brothers ..." - Rabbi Yehuda bar Ilai said: The verse is speaking in praise of Yehuda. ... (Bereishis Rabbah 84:17)

The Yfei Toar explains that the assessment of Yehuda's compromise turns on the question of whether he indeed had the power to persuade his brothers to entirely abandon their malicious plans: the opinions that condemn him understand that he could have done so, and accordingly criticize him for not doing so, while the latter opinion understands that the brothers would not have listened to an appeal to return Yosef to their parents unharmed, and accordingly maintains that Yehuda indeed acted properly by doing the best he could on Yosef's behalf. This discussion obviously has important ramifications for the general question of the acceptability of moral compromise where a morally ideal stance seems infeasible.

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 heel.
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 Shechem** (I came from a donkey, but I am not one, I am shoulder, but not below the neck, I caused circumcision, I am a city.)

**#2 Eliphaz** (I robbed Yaakov, You must wipe out my son, I was Esav's first, I had Taiman.)

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Greater Washington Community Kollel

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