



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

Sponsored by the Cypess Family Foundation

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

A Gentle Reply

Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps, Director

Our parsha opens with Yehuda approaching Yosef to plead for Binyamin's release. At the end of last week's parsha, Yosef – still unrecognized by his brothers – dramatically declared that Binyamin would remain in Egypt as his slave, while the rest of the brothers could return home. Yosef had orchestrated this outcome by planting his silver goblet in Binyamin's sack and then accusing him of theft.

When we consider the situation, the injustice is glaring. Yehuda knows that Binyamin did not steal the goblet, and he may even suspect that Yosef himself arranged the entire plot. Instead of Yosef being angry at them, the brothers would seem to have every right to be furious with him. A person with less self-control might erupt in anger, protesting the injustice and lashing out at Yosef. Yet Yehuda holds himself back. Instead, he approaches Yosef calmly and respectfully, and engages him through thoughtful and reasoned dialogue.

Rabbeinu Bachya writes that in doing so, Yehuda was embodying the wisdom of Mishlei (15:1): "A gentle reply turns away wrath..." Yehuda understood that allowing anger to creep in would get him nowhere. Despite the immense emotional challenge, Yehuda is able to maintain composure and engage with Yosef – eventually awakening Yosef's mercy.

At times, it can be difficult to restrain our anger – in particular when we feel we are being mistreated. When someone else's temper flares at us unjustly, we are tempted to respond in kind. But, as the verse in Mishlei continues, "a distressing word stirs up anger." An angry response will only escalate the situation. Yehuda reminds us that a much better approach is to respond gently. "A gentle reply turns away wrath" and allows both parties a chance to collect themselves and proceed with calmness and reason.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

And Yisrael said, "There is much! My son Yosef still lives! I shall go and see him before I die." (45:28)

He (Yaakov) descended to Egypt and sojourned there. (Ki Savo 26:5) 'He descended to Egypt... forced by the word of Hashem (Pesach Haggadah)

The first verse above seems to imply that it was Yaakov's initiative to go see Yosef. Why does the Haggadah refer to that as 'forced by the word of Hashem?

Parsha Riddle

How does this week's parsha affect how we daven Shemoneh Esrei?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Yosef was called Tzofnas Paneiach. Who wrote a sefer with that name?

Answer: The Rugatchover Gaon, Rav Yosef Rosen.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Vayigash*, Yehuda tells Yosef: "But he (Yaakov) said, 'My son shall not go down with you, because his brother is dead, and he alone is left, and if misfortune befalls him on the way (*ba-derech*) you are going, you will bring down my gray head in sorrow to the grave.'" Rashi (citing the Tanchuma) comments: "For the Satan accuses at a time of danger." The Talmud Yerushalmi (Shabbos 2:6) and Bereishis Rabbah (91:9) elaborate that this idea is alluded to by the word *ba-derech*: "'On the way' – but at home not? Rather, from here (we learn) that the Satan only accuses at a time of danger."

The Yerushalmi invokes our verse as one of several sources for the principle that "the Satan only accuses at a time of danger." A cognate discussion in the Talmud Bavli (Shabbos 31b-32a) makes the same basic point, that when someone is in a dangerous situation he (or she) is particularly susceptible to punishment for his sins, although it does not contain the same terminology of the Satan and his accusations and does not mention our verse.

The Bavli proceeds with the obvious corollary that one should always avoid dangerous situations: **Rabbi Yannai would examine the ferry and cross.** The Gemara comments that **Rabbi Yannai acted in accordance with his reasoning** stated elsewhere, as **he said: A person should never stand in a place of danger saying that they on High will perform a miracle for him, lest in the end they do not perform a miracle for him. And, moreover, even if they do perform a miracle for him, they will deduct it from his merits.** ... Similarly, the Gemara relates that **Rabbi Zeira would not go out and walk among the palm trees on a day when there was a southern wind** blowing due to the fear that the trees might fall on him.

The Maharil, in his famous responsum endorsing flight from a city afflicted by the plague (41:1 in the Machon Yerushalayim edition), marshals this passage among his Torah-based arguments in favor of prudent efforts to avoid danger and against his correspondent's apparent endorsement of passivity in the face of danger due to his theological fatalism.

The Rema (YD 116:5) codifies a general prohibition against "going to any place of danger," as well as the Maharil's endorsement of flight from a city afflicted by the plague.

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. We hint to Mordechai.
2. We were each worth a fifth.
3. We were not intended for jealousy.
4. We were for the youngest.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I atone.
2. I am not a wagon.
3. I was a sign to Yaakov.
4. Death causes me.

Last Week's Answers

#1 7 (I was for the Menorah, I was for the cows, I am for Shemittah, I was for the wheat.)

#2 Pharaoh's Dreams (I had a cow, I was wheat free, I was one in two, I caused saving.)

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

Series #1: The Halachos of Pikuach Nefesh (Saving a Life) on Shabbos and Yom Kippur

**Danger Defined:
What Is Considered Choli She'yeish Bo Sakanah/an Endangered Person? Part I**

1st Shiur:

What is the status of?

- Sakanas Eiver (an endangered limb)
- Severe Pain
- Sakanas Ubar (an endangered fetus)
- Psychological Conditions, etc...



**Presented by
Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman
Tuesday, December 30 at
8:30pm on Zoom
Register at**

<https://thegreaterwashingtoncommunitykollel.com/medicalhalacha>