



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

# SHABBOS DELIGHTS

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## TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

### Deaf to the Situation

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

The Gemara (Sotah 13a) relates that when the *Shevatim*, the sons of Yaakov, arrived at the *Me'aras Hamachpela* to bury Yaakov Avinu, they were confronted by Eisav. Eisav insisted that the final remaining burial plot in the cave belonged to him. The *Shevatim* responded that Eisav already sold that portion to Yaakov, but Eisav demanded proof of the sale. The *Shevatim* dispatched the light-footed Naftali to run back to Egypt to get the documents that proved that Yaakov was the rightful owner of the burial plot.

Meanwhile, Chushim, the son of Dan, who was deaf and had not followed the unfolding argument, asked why the burial had been delayed. When he learned that it was as a result of Eisav's protest that Yaakov Avinu's burial was being delayed, he was shocked. He exclaimed, "Should my grandfather be forced to wait in disgrace until Naftali returns?" and, with that, he struck Eisav and killed him.

Reb Chaim Shmulevitz, zt"l asks: Why was it only Chushim, out of all Yaakov's children and grandchildren, who reacted with such decisiveness?

He answers that the nature of a person is to become acclimated to situations that face them. Everyone who had participated in or witnessed the back and forth between Eisav and the *Shevatim* gradually accepted the reality of the situation and step by step had acclimated and become desensitized to the humiliating state that Yaakov's body currently found itself in. Their sense of outrage dulled simply because the process unfolded slowly. Chushim, however, had heard nothing. When the situation was explained to him all at once, he felt the full force of its absurdity and disgrace, and reacted accordingly.

From here we learn a profound truth about human nature: people can become accustomed to almost anything. This is both a blessing and a curse. Our adaptability allows us to survive difficult circumstances – but it also desensitizes us to things we should never tolerate. A person must know when to resist that numbing process and insist, "This is something I should never get used to."

**Wishing you a Good Shabbos!**

## Point to Ponder

## TABLE TALK

## Parsha Riddle

**There (in the Cave of Machpeila) they buried Avraham and his wife, Sarah; there they buried Yitzchak and his wife, Rivka; and there I buried Leah. (59, 31)**

One should not refer to a parent by their name, not during their life, nor after they have passed on; one should say, my father..." (Yoreh Deah 240, 2)

Wasn't Yaakov calling his parents by their names when he said, "there they buried Yitzchak and Rivka"?

**How old was Eisav when he died?**

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

**Last week's riddle:**

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

**Answer: Just as Yehuda stepped forward towards Yosef to talk to him, we are supposed to step forward when we begin Shemoneh Esrei. (Darkei Moshe 95 in name of Rokeiach)**

## HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

### HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Vayechi*, when Yaakov speaks to his children shortly before his death, he addresses Zevulun prior to Yissachar, despite the fact that the latter was born first. The Tanchuma (11) explains the reason for this:

For Zevulun would engage in commerce, and Yissachar would engage in Torah (study). They made a partnership between them, that the commerce of Zevulun would be (shared with) Yissachar (and the value Yissachar's Torah would be shared with Zevulun). ... "It (the Torah) is a tree of life to those that support it" (Mishlei 3:18), and (Yaakov) therefore put Zevulun before Yissachar, for if not for Zevulun, Yissachar would not have engaged in Torah.

The Talmud (*Sotah* 21a) states:

**Hillel and Shevna were brothers; Hillel engaged in Torah study and remained impoverished, whereas Shevna entered into a business venture and became wealthy. In the end, Shevna said to Hillel: Come, let us join our wealth together and divide it between us; I will give you half of my money and you will give me half of the reward for your Torah study. In response to this request a Divine Voice issued forth and said: "If a man would give all the fortune of his house for love, he would utterly be condemned"** (Song of Songs 8:7).

R. Yerucham b. Meshulam explains the difference between the Yissachar Zevulun partnership and Shevna's proposal to Hillel:

One who engages in Torah, before he engages he can stipulate that his fellow will engage in commerce and take a share of his study, like Yissachar and Zevulun, but after he already engaged and he gives him (a share of his study) in exchange for money, this is utterly ineffective, "If a man would give all the fortune of his house," and this is the affair of Hillel and Shevna ... and it is logical that the one who engages (in Torah) loses (the value of his Torah), for he has nullified his share. (*Toldos Adam v'Chavah Nesiv 2 chelek 5*)

The Tur (YD 246) rules:

Every member of Israel is obligated in the study of Torah ... One for whom it is impossible to study, because he does not know how to study at all, or due to burdensome circumstances, should provide (resources) for others who study, and this will be considered as though he studies himself, as our Sages have expounded...

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

## KIDS KORNER

### Who Am I?

#### #1 WHO AM I?

1. I was hidden from being revealed.
2. My concealment caused concern.
3. My response was Shema.
4. Wait for me!

#### #2 WHO AM I?

1. I am near the end of the first book.
2. I am near the end of the last book.
3. There are 12 of me.
4. Even though you did not sneeze, I...

#### Last Week's Answers

**#1 The 5 garments Yosef gave Binyamin** (We hint to Mordechai, We were each worth a fifth, We were not intended for jealousy, We were for the youngest.)

**#2 Eglarufa (Axed Heifer)** (I atone, I am not a wagon, I was a sign to Yaakov, Death causes me.)

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A Torah Perspective on Anti-Semitism

**Rabbi Dovid Rosenbaum**  
Rabbi, Young Israel Shomrai Emunah



**Sunday, Jan. 11 at 9:30am**  
at Young Israel Shomrai Emunah, 1132 Arcola Avenue

