VAYEIRA 5787



The Greater Washington Community Kollel
SHABBOS DELIGHTS
Sponsored by the Cypess Family Foundation

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

Presented by Rabbi Menachem Winter, Rosh Kollel
From our archives

In our quest to infuse our lives with spirituality and meaning, we can become frustrated and disheartened by our need to attend to the quotidian tasks that impose themselves upon us. Even the few moments we are able to engage in something spiritual – be it lending a hand to another or the little time we can carve out for prayer or study – don't feel meaningful and significant. How do we reenergize ourselves as we go through everyday life? How do we transform the mundane into the sublime?

As Avraham is convalescing from his circumcision, he sees what appear to be three weary travelers making their way towards him. The Torah records in rich detail every aspect of the narrative: how Avraham graciously and generously cared for his guests, how he ran to greet them and implored them to rest and recuperate from their journey, the lavish meal he prepared for them, etc. The verbosity employed by the Torah substantially deviates from its normally concise mode of expression. Why such detail?

Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz shares with us the following. The righteous understand the significance and importance of their actions. Rabbi Levovitz gives an analogy of someone who inherits a house – when referring to their new property, they don't say much except that they have a new home. However, when someone purchases land and builds their own home, they talk about every step of the process and convey every feature of the house with the greatest detail. Here, they are invested. Here, they are impassioned. And here, every detail matters. Rabbi Levovitz continues that the righteous are aware that through their actions and deeds they are building a spiritual edifice. They are forging a bond with G-d by emulating Him with their conduct. Because of this, the Torah records Avraham's encounter with his guests in such detail, reflecting the significance Avraham himself attached to it.

The "small" things we do every day are in reality imbued with great importance. The "insignificant" smile we share to uplift a coworker's spirits, the "little" things we do to care and nurture our children and spouses, and the "few" minutes we are engaged in prayer and study, are invested with transcendental meaning. We only have to open up our hearts and minds to it.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Hashem remembered Sarah… (21:1)
Elokim remembered Rachel… (Vayeitzei 30:22)

Why does the Torah use the four letter name of Hashem in regard to Sarah being remembered for a child, and the name Elokim in regard to Rachel being remembered for a child?

Parsha Riddle

How old was Yishmael when he was sent away from Avraham's house? How old was Yitzchak at the time of the Akeida?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:
How old was Avram when he went to Eretz Yisroel for the first time?
Answer: 70

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Vayeira*, the Torah relates: "Avraham circumcised his son Yitzchak at the age of eight days … The child grew and was weaned. Avraham made a great feast on the day Yitzchak was weaned (הִגָּמַל)."

The literal meaning of the phrase "the day Yitzchak was weaned" is the day that he was weaned from nursing. Rashi states that this occurred at the conclusion of twenty-four months from his birth (as per the Talmudic norm for nursing – see *Kesubos* 60a). R. Bachya b. Asher suggests that this is when Avraham introduced Yitzchak to Torah study. *Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer* (29), however, interprets the phrase as referring to the eighth day of Yitzchak's life, the day of his circumcision - the word הִגָּמַל can be interpreted as ה+ג מל, meaning "was circumcised on the eighth" (*Machzor Vitri Milah* 506; Rabbeinu Tam, cited in Tosafos *Shabbos* 130a s.v. *Sas*) – and states: "Our Sages derived from here that a person is obligated to make a celebration and party on that day that he merited to circumcise his son."

In addition to the universal custom to hold a celebration following the performance of the circumcision, some have the custom to hold a celebration on the night before its performance, the "*vach*" or "*vach-nacht*"; the *Machzor Vitri* writes that this celebration as well is in honor of the *mitzvah* (and cf. *Dagul mei-Revavah YD* 178).

A third celebration associated with the birth of a baby boy is the *shalom zachar*, held on the Friday night following the birth. The origins of and reason for this celebration, and in particular the reason it is held specifically on Friday night, are unclear. The most basic and down-to-earth understanding of the custom is that it is simply a celebration of the safe birth of the child, and it is held on Friday night since that is when people are home (*Terumas ha-Deshen (*1:269), based on an idea of Rabbeinu Tam cited in Tosafos *Bava Kamma* 80 s.v. *L'Bei Yeshua ha-Ben*). Many, however, offer more exotic explanations, including ones that connect the custom to the *agaddic* teaching that an infant is taught Torah *in utero* but made to forget it upon being born (*Nidah* 30b – Maharshal to *Tur YD* 265, cited in *Drishah YD* end of 264; *Migdal Oz, Birchas Shamayim* 15).

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I ?

1. I am not Talmud Bavli.
2. I was turned upside down.
3. I was home to cruelty.
4. I was one of five.

#2 WHO AM I ?

1. I was tangled.
2. Moshiach will use me.
3. I don't beep.
4. I was at Matan Torah.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Sarai/Sarah (I was in the teivah, My end was Yehoshua's beginning, My father also had a Lot, I am not "sorry.")

#2 Bris Milah (My time is 8, I was at 13, 1 before 100, I override Shabbos.)

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