



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

Sensing that the end of his life is drawing near, Yaakov calls for his son Yosef, the powerful viceroy of Egypt. Yaakov asks Yosef to ensure that he will not be buried in Egypt, transported instead to the Land of Israel (Canaan) and buried together with the Patriarchs and Matriarchs in Chevron. Furthermore, Yaakov asks Yosef to take an oath that he will carry out these instructions, to which Yosef readily agrees. Yaakov then prostrates himself toward the head of the bed (47:28-31). Rashi, citing the Medrash, explains that Yaakov was bowing to the Divine Presence, for as is taught in the Talmud (Shabbos 12b), the Presence of G-d attends the sick and infirm.

Why is the Divine Presence found specifically by the unwell and ailing?

Imparting an important and consequential spiritual principle, Rabbi Wolbe explains: When we recognize G-d in our lives and acknowledge that He guides us, we bring G-d closer and strengthen our attachment to Him. If we deny G-d's role, however, and attribute what occurs to us to chance, skill, or other causes, we distance and alienate ourselves from Him.

When one is successful and in good health, it is common that he does not think of G-d and fails to properly attribute his blessings to Him. He believes that his success is a product of his own acumen and wisdom. In contrast, when one is ill and vulnerable, he divests himself of the illusion of control and turns his thoughts to G-d. This new perspective provides the proper ingredient for a profound and wholesome connection to G-d.

As people with a great spiritual legacy, we need not fall prey to this common human dynamic. Instead, in wealth, in health, and in prosperity, we can recognize G-d as the source of our blessings and compound our good fortune further by bringing G-d's Presence into our lives.

*Have a wonderful Shabbos,
Rabbi Menachem Winter*

TABLE TALK

POINTS 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 that night) with the assistance of the donkey that Yaakov was riding on. As the posuk says "chamor garem" which can be translated, the donkey caused (Nidah 31a).

Why did Yaakov find it necessary to hint to this during the beracha of Yissachar? How does this affect Yissachar's beracha?

PARSHA RIDDLE

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 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" he lost years of his life. 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.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *Parshas Va'Yechi*, upon Yaakov's death, his body is embalmed by the Egyptian physicians under orders from their master Yosef, whose own body is subsequently embalmed upon his death (*Bereishis* 50:2;26). Yosef may have had his father embalmed out of respect for him, as that was the custom for dignitaries, and certainly for those with royal connections (*Or Ha'Chaim*, who also offers other possibilities).

Halachic authorities infer from here that embalming is not forbidden by *halachah*, and they derive from this the permissibility of using lime to hasten the decomposition of a dead body, to facilitate its transportation to an appropriate burial place (*Shut. Ha'Rashba* 1:369), or to minimize the soul's post-mortem suffering, in accordance with the doctrine that the soul suffers, and cannot enter its resting place, as long as the flesh remains intact (*Taz Yoreh De'ah siman* 369 s.k. 3). Indeed, in the Mishnaic era dead bodies were first buried in "deep, moist" pits, in order to hasten the decomposition of the flesh, and only subsequently interred in a more dignified resting place, and the *Tiferes Yisrael* explains that this was because the Divine judgment remains in effect until the flesh has decomposed (*Tiferes Yisrael Ohalos perek* 16 *Yachin* #56).

The *Radvaz*, however, while agreeing that hastening the body's decomposition using lime is technically permitted, is nevertheless opposed to doing so in order to minimize the suffering of the departed. He considers this an attempt to outsmart the natural order established by G-d, and therefore pointless: does He lack alternative - and more severe and bitter - modes of punishment for those who deserve punishment? And for the righteous who do not require such punishment, He will simply cause the body to disintegrate instantaneously, or over a brief duration. Such stratagems, he concludes, fall afoul of the exhortation to "be wholehearted with Hashem, your G-d" (*Devarim* 18:13. *Shut. Radvaz* 1:484).

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

WHO AM I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I have a fishy resemblance.
2. I am in 'on the bed.'
3. I am for 'all the youths.'
4. I bless you with multiplication.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I am for hard work.
2. I am for the time of Moshiach.
3. I give you no break.
4. I am closed.

Last Week's Answers:

#1 Binyomin (I was of mourning; I did not bow; I had 10 sons; I am of the right.)

#2 Yaakov (I am a general; I was the 3rd; I am at the ankle; I looked old.)

Congratulations to Zev Samberg
and others for answering last
week's questions correctly!

All children
13 and under
who answer a
"Who Am I?"
correctly will
be entered
into a raffle to

Win a
Casio Mini
Keyboard!



The next
raffle is
February 16th.

Visit gwckollel.org to submit your answers.

Answer as many as you can - each correct answer will entitle you to another raffle ticket and increase your chances of winning.

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