



Greater Washington Community Kollel SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

Do You Speak Hebrew?

Presented by Rabbi Yisrael Glassberg

Director of Kollel Alumni

In this week's Torah portion, we learn of the passing of Yaakov Avinu. His death impacts not only the twelve tribes and their respective families, but the entire land of Egypt. Yosef requests permission to bury Yaakov in the land of Israel, citing an obligatory oath that he took to his father. Pharaoh permits Yosef to leave, as the pasuk states, "And Pharaoh said 'go up and bury your father as you have sworn.'"

Rashi explains that Pharaoh was reluctant to allow Yosef to leave Egypt and would have preferred that Yosef break his oath to his father. Pharaoh was concerned, however, that had he compelled Yosef to violate the oath, Yosef would violate a separate oath that he made to Pharaoh many years earlier. While Pharaoh was able to speak seventy languages, he was unable to speak *lashon hakodesh*, Hebrew. Yosef, on the other hand, was able to speak that language. Pharaoh had Yosef take an oath that he would not expose this secret so as not to embarrass Pharaoh. As such, Yosef was able to leverage the preservation of that oath to Pharaoh in exchange for honoring the oath to bury Yaakov in the land of Israel.

The Gemara in Sotah (36b) relates that Yosef even tried teaching Pharaoh Hebrew, but Pharaoh was unable to pick it up. How is it that he successfully spoke seventy languages yet was unable to add Hebrew to his repertoire?

Perhaps we can suggest that, indeed, *lashon hakodesh* is more than just a language. It is replete with spiritual depth and recognition of the Almighty. Ever since Yosef came to Egypt and enjoyed success, he was vocal about that success emanating from Hashem. It was apparent from his speech that he recognized a higher, spiritual being that was guiding his hand. This is the speech that Pharaoh could not assimilate into his lexicon. Pharaoh was not incapable of learning *lashon hakodesh*, but *unwilling* to accept the very premise upon which the language is built.

When we delve into the holy words of the Torah and Tefilah, we uncover and unlock powerful words that uplift the spiritual level of the world. The great Rabbis of the Sanhedrin created the Shemoneh Esrei, and when we recite these words they travel to the Heavenly throne! Let us commit to studying these words and their deeper meanings and with that merit their acceptance in the heavens.

Have a wonderful Shabbos!

TABLE TALK

POINT TO PONDER

And I buried her (Rachel) on the road to Ephrat... (48:7)

And I did not even take her to Beis Lechem, to bring her into Eretz Yisrael. I know there are hard feelings in your (Yosef's) heart (that I am asking you to bury me (Yaakov) in Eretz Yisrael while I did not do that for your mother). However, you should know that by the Word of Hashem I buried her there, so that she should be an aid to her children when Nevuzaradan will exile them. When they will pass by Rachel's tomb, she will emerge from her grave and weep and seek mercy for them... (Rashi)

If Yaakov had buried Rachel on a road within the borders of Eretz Yisrael, would Rachel not have been able to plead for her children when they passed her grave on the way to exile?

PARSHA RIDDLE

How can one transgress the prohibition of 'upsetting your friend' (Behar 25:17) without performing an action?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

When does one make a mezonos on a food on which he knows he will be required to bentch afterwards?

Answer: One who eats pie for dessert that meets all the requirements of *pas haba b'kisnin* recites a mezonos. The after beracha is bentching.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *Parashas Vayechi* (48:7), Yaakov tells Yosef: "And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem." Rashi (citing *midrash*) explains that Yaakov was justifying his having buried Rachel outside of Eretz Canaan, despite the place of her death having been but a short distance from the Land: "It was based on the [Divine] Word that I buried her there, so that she should be a help to her children when Nebuzaradan will exile them, and they will pass by that spot, Rachel will emerge upon her grave and weep and beseech mercy for them ..."

This *midrash* merely asserts that the righteous dead can intercede on behalf of the living, but makes no mention of praying to or addressing them, or even of visiting graves for the purpose of prayer at all. There are, however, other sources in *Chazal* for the practice of visiting and praying at graves, such as the Talmudic account of Caleb prostrating himself upon the graves of the Patriarchs in Hebron and saying to them: "My fathers, beseech mercy for me that I be saved from the scheme of the spies" (*Sotah* 34b).

Some authorities disapprove of the popular custom of visiting graves, arguing that it may violate the prohibition against necromancy ("*doreish el hameisim*" (*Devarim* 18:10-11) - R. Chaim Paltiel, cited in *Bach YD* end of #217), but others note that visiting graves for the purpose of prayer is a well-established Jewish custom (*Bach ibid.*, *Radvaz* to *Yad Hachazakah Hilchos Eivel* 4:4).

Some maintain that when praying at graves, prayers must be directed only to Hashem, but addressing the dead themselves may violate the necromancy prohibition (*Chaye Adam* 138:5 and *Chochmas Adam* 89:7, based upon *Sefer Maharil Hilchos Taanis*), but others suggest that it may be permissible to ask the dead to intercede with Hashem on our behalf (*Pri Megadim OC siman* 581 AA #16).

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 finished the first book.
2. I finished the last book.
3. There are twelve of me.
4. Even though you did not sneeze I ...

Last Week's Answers:

#1 Yosef (I am allowed death; I am one but two; I arranged salvation; I gathered in embarrassment)

#2 Yehuda (I was four for twelve; I tried replacement; I prevented murder; draw near.)

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

win



JUMBO

Answer as
Many as you can.
Each correct
answer will entitle
you to another
raffle ticket and
increase your
chances of winning!

NEXT RAFFLE:
JANUARY 25TH!

Visit gwckollel.org to submit your answers.

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

Join Rabbi Shaps for pre-shacharis inspiration!

"A Taste of Tefillah"

meets weekday mornings, 5 minutes before the 6:25 shacharis minyan at SEHC.

Get inspired for davening with a short thought about prayer and the words of our tefillos!

Monday - Friday, 6:20 AM.