



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

The Roots of Appreciation

Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps, Kollel Scholar and Director of Special Projects

The Midrash relates that Esav excelled in the *mitzvah* of honoring his father. At the same time, our Sages teach us that Esav transgressed the worst of sins, including adultery and murder. How is it possible for these two conflicting forms of behavior to coexist in one person?

Rav Eliyahu Dessler explains that Esav's fulfillment of the *mitzvah* to honor his father was not rooted in a positive character trait, but rather in a negative one. In most instances, honoring parents expresses a child's gratitude to his or her parents. Rav Dessler explains that recognizing the good others do for us and expressing our gratitude stems from the trait of generosity. Someone who is a "giver" always prefers to give, rather than to receive. When they do receive from another, they are filled with a desire to return the favor or, if that is not an option, to express their gratitude. A "taker," on the other hand, believes that he or she is deserving of everything. When they receive something from another, they feel no obligation to reciprocate or express appreciation.

Rav Dessler explains that there are times, however, when expressing gratitude can emanate from the negative traits of a "taker." When a person expresses gratitude in order to influence the other person to give to them again or with the hope of motivating others to give to them, that expression of appreciation is now self-serving. It is no longer an act of giving, but is now an act of taking. Similarly, when Esav honored his father, it didn't come from a desire to give back to Yitzchak whatever he could, but instead was self-serving. Esav knew that he too would one day grow old and need the help of his children. If he did not serve his father, neither would his children serve him. It was this selfish attitude that motivated Esav to not only honor his father, but to excel at it.

The ability to recognize and express our gratitude for all the good that G-d, our parents, and others do for us is a hallmark of the Jewish people. The word "Jew" originates in the name "Yehuda," which was itself an expression of Leah's gratitude to G-d for his birth. Let us take care to cultivate this wonderful trait to ensure that it is always rooted in the trait of generosity and never stems from a desire to take.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

"Two nations are in your womb; and two regimes from your insides shall be separated; and one regime will become stronger than the other regime..." (25, 23)

Two nations are in your womb; this refers to Rebbe and Antoninus... (Rashi)

And one regime will become stronger than the other regime - they shall not be equal in greatness. When one rises, the other one will fall. (Rashi)

If the verse is referring to one regime rising and the other regime falling, Rebbe and Antoninus are not a good example of this. Didn't they both reign at the same time?

Parsha Riddle

Who was named before they were born?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

When is Sara Immeinu's yartzeit?

Answer: Rosh Hashana

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

As we have previously noted, parashas Toldos portrays Rivkah as a wife who is remarkably independent of her husband Yitzchak. When her unborn children "agitate within her", she does not consult her husband but rather goes "to inquire of Hashem"; when the children are born, although her husband loves Esav, she loves Yaakov; when her husband plans to bestow the blessings upon Esav, she plots with Yaakov to thwart her husband's intentions and secure the blessings to Yaakov; and when she subsequently urges Yaakov to flee Esav's wrath, she apparently does not disclose to her husband her true motivation in sending Yaakov away, but merely implies that Yaakov must travel from the region in order to find an appropriate wife.

The halachic literature discusses a wife's obligation to respect her husband. The Talmud rules that if one's father and mother simultaneously request him to serve them by bringing them water to drink, then if the couple is married, his father's request takes precedence, since "[he] and [his] mother are both obligated in the honor of [his] father." (Kiddushin 31a) This is an explicit statement that a wife is obligated to honor her husband, although the precise nature and scope of this obligation are not spelled out.

R. Yehudai Gaon (eighth century Iraq) rules that:

When her husband enters from outside, a woman is obligated to stand upon her feet, and she is not permitted to sit until her husband sits. (Cited in Otzar Haposkim 69:7:30:3)

But this does not appear to be contemporary custom. Similarly, R. David Kimchi (twelfth-thirteenth century Provence) maintains that a wife should not refer to her husband directly by his name, but R. Betzael Stern (twentieth century central Europe / Melbourne) rejects this, noting that no one whatsoever is particular about this. (Shut. B'tzeil Hachochmah 1:70:2-3)

R. Pinchas Halevi Horowitz (eighteenth-nineteenth century Ukraine / Germany) maintains that a wife is obligated in kavod (respect), but not mora (reverence), of her husband. Similarly, a wife is under no general obligation to obey her husband's instructions where his personal comfort is not involved, and the idea that a wife should "fulfill her husband's desire" is merely an ideal but not obligatory. (Sefer Hamikneh 30b)

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. Why thus?
2. Dirt and dust.
3. I begin the ten.
4. I am "I am."

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I was dug.
2. I was filled.
3. I have a city named for me.
4. I caused a treaty.

Last Week's Answers

#1 127 years of Sara (I woke up the students, I caused Esther to rule, I have three "years," I was equal for good.)

#2 Ephron (I said a lot, but did a little, I was the opposite of Avraham, I got appointed, I am not a pencil.)

The raffle has been postponed until after the shuls are reopened. We are still accepting entries to the raffle.

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

WIN a Claw Machine Arcade Game



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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