



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

It is an honor to present this week's Torah Minute from our archives. The following was penned by our founder, Rabbi Kalman Winter ZT"L.

This week's Torah portion of Vayitzei begins with the narrative of Yaakov leaving his family home in Be'er-Sheva. The Torah records in chapter 28, verse 10: "Yaakov departed from Be'er-Sheva and went towards Charan." This follows last week's Torah reading describing the angst of Rivka, Yaakov's mother, upon hearing that her eldest son, Eisav, intended to kill Yaakov for usurping his blessing. Consequently, Rivka urges her husband, Yitzchak, to send Yaakov forth to seek a mate, never divulging to Yitzchak her deepest fears and true motive for sending Yaakov from home.

In this week's Haftarah (supplemental reading from the Book of Hosea), however, the prophet records more accurately that Yaakov did not simply depart from his home, but rather he fled. The question is self-evident. Did he depart or did he flee with a compelling urgency?

The answer is... both narratives are true. To the casual observer, one would surely conclude that Yaakov fled from home, fearing for his life. Nevertheless, on a deeper level, Yaakov understood and believed that the course of events that dictated that he leave home was a directive and the beginning of a new chapter in his life. Secure in the knowledge that all that transpired was from Above, Yaakov does not assimilate this in his mind as "fleeing from home," but rather as departing to confront new challenges in a different direction.

One of the great Torah leaders of the generation of the Holocaust, Rabbi Eliyahu Meir Bloch, upon coming to our shores, declared, "I am not a refugee fleeing from Europe; instead, I am an emissary from Above to build Torah in America." In all of life's challenges and difficulties, we are to understand that we are never to flee; rather we should go forth with faith and resolve that all comes from Above.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Yaakov left Be'er Sheva and traveled to Charan... (28, 10)

A father may forgo on his honor. (Kiddushin 30a)

Chazal (Megilla 17a) say that Yaakov was punished with the disappearance of Yosef because when he was away from his parents he did not fulfill the mitzva of honoring one's parents.

Since Yitzchak had commanded him to go, why was Yaakov punished for not honoring his parents? Had they not forgone on their honor?

Parsha Riddle

Why did Lavan hug and kiss Yaakov?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

What is the connection between Avraham's death and Esav?

Answer: Avraham died five years early so he would not have to witness Esav's evil.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Vayeitzei* (30:31-43), the Torah relates Yaakov's arrangement with Lavan to divide between themselves the offspring of Lavan's sheep and goats based on the offspring's coloring, and Yaakov's subsequent manipulation of their coloring in his favor via a technique involving the placing of peeled wooden rods facing the sheep when they came to drink.

Many commentators either explicitly or implicitly raise the problem that Yaakov's conduct seems to constitute cheating, and they grapple with his seemingly unethical conduct:

- Ramban on our *parashah* simply rejects the assumption that Yaakov's conduct violated the rules of their arrangement: "As soon as they agreed that his hire would be these colors, it was permissible for Yaakov to do whatever he could to cause them to give birth in this manner." Furthermore, "Perhaps Yaakov had made a condition that he may do with them whatever he wants." Elsewhere (48:15), however, Ramban characterizes Yaakov's behavior *vis-à-vis* Lavan as "twisted" and "not the path of truth."
- R. Yosef Kimhi (cited by his son Radak) and R. Yitzchak Or Zarua (responsa #769) explain that Yaakov only used the rods to manipulate the coloring of the offspring of his **own** sheep (which were rightfully his regardless of their coloring, since their arrangement applied only to the offspring of **Lavan's** sheep), in order to forestall Lavan's (baseless) suspicions that Yaakov had stolen them from him, but not to manipulate the coloring of the offspring of **Lavan's** sheep.
- Some explain that Yaakov was justified in cheating since Lavan had already violated the rules of their arrangement, either by removing the **adult** colored sheep (which was unfair since the chance of colored offspring would thereby be reduced), or by removing not just the "speckled" sheep, as per their arrangement, but even the "ringed" ones. Cheating a cheater is justified, as per the verse (Shmuel 2 22:27) "with the corrupt You act perversely." (Tosafos, and cf. Or ha-Chaim)
- Some explain that it was actually Divine providence, rather than the rods, that caused the sheep to be colored in Yaakov's favor, and they accordingly offer various alternative explanations of the purpose of the rods (*Midrash Lekach Tov, Rabbeinu Bachya*).

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I was many.
2. I was one.
3. I was a Mizbeiach.
4. I was a monument.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I was promised to Yaakov.
2. I caused Sefer Bereishis.
3. My air wizens.
4. I am watched all year long.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Pesach (I was the day of the blessing, I have my own offering, I am a day of redemption, I correspond to Avraham.)

#2 Bigdei HaChamudos/Esav's special clothes (I was for Adam, I was for Nimrod, I was for Esav, I was for Yaakov.)

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