



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

In the beginning of this week's parsha, the Torah relates the death of Sarah, our matriarch. Abraham returns home from the Akeidah (the binding of Isaac upon the altar) and is informed of the demise of his beloved wife. One could but imagine the emotional roller coaster that Abraham endures. Fresh from the Akeidah, with all its spiritual accomplishments and personal growth, he is immediately confronted with another life crisis, the death of Sarah. Abraham needs to bury Sarah and find a most suitable site. He must negotiate with the people of Cheis for the purchase of a family plot. The Torah records (chapter 23, verse 3) "and Abraham rose up from the presence of his dead and spoke to the children of Cheis." The commentaries question the importance and need to state that Abraham "rose up from the presence of his dead." It's self-explanatory - simply let the Torah say that Abraham addressed the children of Cheis.

The Torah is embedding a profound lesson when it says "he rose up." "Rose up" is not intended to be a physical matter, but rather an emotional state of mind and being. In the presence of his beloved Sarah, flush with intense grief and loss, Abraham rises and takes himself forth from his grief to meet and engage the people of Cheis. He locks away his great personal pain and externally, with great calm and bearing, addresses the people of Cheis. Abraham rises to that occasion with the eloquence and stature of a patriarch and prince of G-d. The impetus for this superlative display of character and strength was his "kavod ha-briyos" - his respect for all people. It would be unseemly to address them in grief while tears abound.

The encounters of the Torah are life models from which we are enjoined to draw upon our own strength and character. How aware and in touch we must be with our feelings. Our conflicts, stresses, loss, etc. are not to be transported into our relationships with people. At times we are short with family and friends. Our demeanor, conduct, and expressions reflect our difficulties and influence our behavior. Abraham teaches us - at the moment of his greatest loss, he "rose up" above his pain and addressed the people of Cheis in a manner of dignity, honor, and respect.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Then the servant took ten camels of his master's camels... (24:10)

They were noticeably different, and recognized as Avraham's camels. They were muzzled in order that they not eat from the property of other people (Rashi).

Rebbi Pinchos ben Yair's donkey would not eat food that was not tithed (Chulin 7b), because of the influence of Rebbi Pinchos ben Yair. Why would Avraham's camels be any different? Why would they eat from stolen goods that it was necessary to muzzle them?

Parsha Riddle

Which two people had water rise up for them?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

One who prays on behalf of someone else, and he needs that very same thing, will be answered first. (Bava Kama 92a)

Where do we see an application of this in this week's parsha?

Answer: When Avraham davened for Avimelech to be healed – he merited that his wife Sarah would be healed, and would be able to have a child.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Chayei Sarah* (24:50), Lavan and Besuel responded to Avraham's servant's proposal of marriage between Yitzchak and Rivka by saying "The matter stemmed from Hashem!" and the Talmud (*Moed Katan* 18b) adduces this as a source for the doctrine that matches are made in Heaven ("the decree that a specific woman is destined to be married to a specific man is from Hashem").

Earlier in its discussion, the Talmud cites a statement that "Every day a Divine Voice issues forth and says: The daughter of so-and-so is destined to be the wife of so-and-so; the field of so-and-so will belong to so-and-so." This is not merely an *aggadic* idea; the Talmud is discussing whether formal betrothal (*eirusin*) should be permitted on *chol ha-Moed*, "lest another come and betroth her first," and it objects that this would not seem to be a legitimate concern, since matches are preordained. It responds that despite the preordination, prayer still has an effect, and so *eirusin* is indeed permitted on *chol ha-moed*. It is likewise permitted on Tisha be-Av for the same reason (*Shulchan Aruch* 551:1).

(It should be noted that "eirusin" in traditional, rabbinic Hebrew means *kiddushin*, following which the couple is *halachically* married, although the spouses did not live together until *nisuin* [*chuppah*, which today occurs simultaneously with *kiddushin*]. This is very different from the term's meaning in modern Hebrew of "engagement.")

Despite these Talmudic statements, the Rambam insists that matches are not preordained. Human free will is a fundamental principle, and so if a particular match is permitted under Torah law, and is contracted with pure intentions, then it is a *mitzvah*, "and Hashem does not decree the performance of a *mitzvah*," and otherwise it is an *aveirah*, "and Hashem does not decree the performance of an *aveirah*" (*Shemoneh Perakim* 8). How can this be reconciled with the decree that "the daughter of so-and-so is destined to be the wife of so-and-so?" Rambam himself addresses this question in a letter (#345 in the 5694 edition), and explains that the Talmud is not stating a universal rule, but merely asserting that Hashem will provide certain righteous and sinful individuals with spouses appropriate for them, as a form of reward or punishment.

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I was for the candle.
2. I was for the dough.
3. I was for the cloud.
4. I was for the first and second.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I may be a son.
2. I may be wealth.
3. I may be a daughter.
4. I was a blessing.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Gemmorah (I am not Talmud Bavli, I was turned upside down, I was home to cruelty, I was one of five.)

#2 Yitzchak (My parents' reaction caused my name, I was the first for the eighth, Many celebrated my birth, I was the second of three.)

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