



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

Come What May

Presented by Rabbi Zacharia Schwartz, Kollel Adjunct

"And Yaakov settled..." (37:1)

At the beginning of our Parsha, Rashi tells us that the reason Yaakov had to endure the tragedy of the sale of Yosef is because he tried to settle down in "*shalva*" – tranquility, which is not meant to be the lot of the righteous in this world. This begs the obvious question – what was wrong with Yaakov settling down in peace?

I once heard Rabbi Fischel Schachter explain that *shalva* differs from *shalom* in that *shalva* refers to a state of complete tranquility where everything is good, all the time. It seems that, on some level, Yaakov felt that his years living with the devious Lavan, his perilous encounter with Eisav, and his various other trials and tribulations had earned him the right to live out the rest of his life free of adversity. There was only one problem – overcoming adversity is central to the very purpose of life itself. As long as Yaakov was alive, it meant that there must be another challenge to overcome and even more growth to be achieved.

We all face adversity throughout our lives. No day is perfect or without challenge. We may start to feel overwhelmed, to wonder "why me?", and to wish that we can simply cast away our problems. But while it is certainly easier said than done, it is important to always keep in mind that adversity exists for us to overcome. We must always remember that Hashem has put us in these situations for our ultimate benefit. Hopefully, this will give us the courage and sense of purpose to hurdle the obstacles placed before us and ultimately be the better for it.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

And he (Yaakov) said to him (Yosef), "Go now, look into the welfare of your brothers and the welfare of the flock, and bring me back word." So he sent him... and he arrived in Shechem... So Yosef went after his brothers and found them in Dosan (37:14 - 17).

He came to Shechem, a place prone for misfortune; there Dina was taken, there Yosef was sold and there the Davidic dynasty was divided (Tanchuma 2).

The Midrash references Shechem as the place where Yosef was sold. But Yosef did not find his brothers in Shechem. Rather, he found them in Dosan and it was from Dosan that he was sold. Why does the Midrash connect his sale to Shechem?

Parsha Riddle

Which two people acted inappropriately because of prophetic visions about their future which they misinterpreted?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Which Tanna is referenced in the parsha?

Answer: When Yaakov said "Maybe I will kill Acheirim," (Rashi 32:8), it refers to Rebbi Meir who was called Acheirim (Horayos 13b) and was a descendant of converts. (Zichron Shmuel - Rav Shmuel of Ostroba)

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Parashas Vayeishev recounts Potiphar's wife's false accusation that Yosef tried to force himself upon her. Upon hearing his wife's allegations, Potiphar became enraged and imprisoned Yosef, apparently in belief of the veracity of the accusation. A number of *midrashim* and medieval commentaries, however, argue that on the contrary, had Potiphar actually believed his wife, he would have executed Yosef outright. The fact that he merely imprisoned him suggests that he was at the very least unsure of Yosef's guilt, and perhaps even convinced of his innocence, and they offer a variety of reasons for this: his first-hand knowledge of Yosef's personal integrity and piety; third-party testimony that Potiphar's wife was lying; and the analysis of forensic evidence supporting Yosef's version of events and refuting Potiphar's wife's (*Bereishis Rabbah* 87; *Bechor Shor*; *Targum Yonasan*).

Determining the veracity of "he said, she said" accusations in these types of circumstances is a difficult problem for any legal system, criminal or civil, including *halachah*, since the alleged conduct typically does not occur in the presence of witnesses. Distinguishing between consensual and non-consensual activity is particularly difficult, since even where there is evidence that such activity has occurred, this will often be insufficient to resolve the question of consent.

Rambam (*Na'arah u-Besulah* 1:2) rules that if a woman does not cry out, we assume that the activity was consensual, unless there are witnesses to the contrary, "e.g., he pulled out a sword and told her, 'If you cry out, I will kill you.'" This assumption would not seem to be accepted by modern science, which asserts the existence of the phenomenon of tonic immobility, "a state of involuntary paralysis in which individuals cannot move or, in many cases, even speak." According to one study of nearly 300 women who visited a clinic in Stockholm:

70 percent experienced at least "significant" tonic immobility and 48 percent met the criteria for "extreme" tonic immobility... (The condition's severity was assessed using a scale that measured feelings of being frozen, mute, numb and so on.) (*Scientific American*. Aug. 4, 2017)

The classic *halachic* analysis of the general topic of "he said, she said" accusations is by Maharik (129), who considers it utterly self-evident that a woman's allegation unsupported by any evidence has no legal weight, regardless of whether the man simply denies the entire episode, or concedes the occurrence but claims that the activity was consensual.

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I had dreams.
2. I explained dreams.
3. My downfall was dreams.
4. I ruled on account of dreams.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I married brothers.
2. I married their father.
3. I pretended not to be married.
4. Moshiach comes from me.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Teivah/Box (Noach was in me, Sarah was in me, Dina was in me, The Sefer Torah is kept in me.)

#2 Neck turned to stone (I was for Moshe, I was for Yaakov, More than a stiff neck, I am not a candy but I was a lifesaver.)

THIS MONDAY!

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