



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

To Come Together

Presented by Rabbi Zacharia Schwartz, Kollel Adjunct

"Gather and I will tell you... gather and listen sons of Yaakov..." (49:1-2)

Parshas Vayechi features some of the Torah's more cryptic verses. First, Yaakov commands his sons to gather around to hear what the future has in store for them. Rather than telling them the future, however, he abruptly pivots to giving them their blessings instead, without ever returning to his original plan.

The Malbim explains that Yaakov actually did accomplish his original goal. Chazal tell us that Hashem removed His *Shechina*, His Divine presence, from Yaakov, thereby making Yaakov unable to reveal the future to them. While he was unable to reveal what the future held, he was nevertheless able to tell his sons how to deal with the future. When Yaakov commanded his sons to "gather and listen sons of Yaakov," he was advising his sons as to the means to merit redemption and end all of history's difficult suffering. Yaakov was telling them – and us – that the key to solving all of our future problems is to gather together as sons of Yaakov.

Chazal famously tell us that the underlying cause behind the exile in which we currently find ourselves is the insidious sin of *Sinas Chinam* – baseless hatred. Our father Yaakov implores us in this week's Parsha to come together, to love and respect each other, such that the Jewish Nation may be healthy and strong and, G-d willing, merit the ultimate redemption.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Yaakov lived in Egypt for seventeen years... (47: 28)

Why is there no space in the Sefer Torah between this parsha and the previous parsha? Because when Yaakov died, the hearts and eyes of Bnei Yisrael were sealed because of their servitude in Egypt. (Rashi)

The servitude did not begin until all of Yaakov's children died. (Shemos Rabba 1:8).

If the servitude did not start for many years after Yaakov died, how did the servitude cause the hearts and eyes of Bnei Yisrael to be sealed when Yaakov died?

Parsha Riddle

The scepter shall not pass from Yehuda... (49:10)

When in Jewish history was this instruction violated?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Who was the first of Yaakov's descendants to go down to Egypt?

Answer: Osnas bas Dina (Pirkei D'Rabi Eliezer Ch. 38)

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Vayechi*, the Torah relates that when Yaakov was about to die, he said to his sons "Assemble yourselves and I will tell you what will befall you in the End of Days (*acharis ha-yamim*). While some commentaries understand the phrase *acharis ha-yamim* to refer to the period following his descendants' entry to the Promised Land, our Sages (as reflected by ArtScroll's translation given above) understand it to refer to the "*keitz*" ("End") - the final redemption of Israel from exile. Various midrashim explain that Yaakov had indeed intended to reveal the date of the *keitz* to his descendants, but was prevented from doing so by Hashem, for unspecified reasons.

Elsewhere, the Sages cursed those "who calculate the end of days," explaining that "they would say once the end of days that they calculated arrived and the Messiah did not come, that he will no longer come at all." (*Sanhedrin* 97b)

The Ramban provides an alternative reason for the Sages' imprecation against those "who calculate the end of days," in the course of his justifications of his own speculations on the *keitz*. He notes the fact, already acknowledged by the Talmud itself, that several great Sages of the Mishnah and the Talmud had attempted to unravel the mystery of the *keitz* but had erred in their interpretations, and he explains that this was due to the Divine Will that the *keitz* remain hidden. The reason for this is that in that earlier era, the *keitz* was still far ahead in the future and the Exile would still extend for a lengthy duration. This is also why the Sages opposed the calculation of the *keitz*, since public awareness of the date would have been demoralizing.

The Ramban accordingly concludes that in his time, when the *keitz* was indubitably nearer than it was in the era of the Sages, and perhaps even relatively close, this concern no longer applies, and it is therefore legitimate to attempt to decipher the mystery of the *keitz*. As to the Talmudic concern that a failure of the Messiah to come by the predicted time would cause people to lose faith in his coming, this does not apply to his conjectures, which were not confident, authoritative assertions but mere tentative, speculative suggestions (*Sefer ha-Geulah sha'ar* 4).

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I was said to grandchildren.
2. I am said at night.
3. Some sing me.
4. I am angelic.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I gave my birthright to Yosef.
2. I gave the priesthood to Levi.
3. I gave the kingship to Yehuda.
4. I personify repentance.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Yocheved (I wasn't listed but I was counted, I was conceived in Canaan, I was born in the gate, My son was the leader.)

#2 Yehuda (I guaranteed my brother, Royalty comes from me, I founded the Yeshiva, I bear Hashem's name.)

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SAVE THE DATE!!!

**GWCK Shabbaton at Young Israel Shomrai Emunah
Shabbos Parsha Yisro – Feb. 10-11**

Stay tuned for details...