



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 2010.*

This week's Torah portion of Toldos highlights the eternal rivalry and struggle between the forces of good – Jacob – and the forces of evil – Eisav, his brother. The catalyst for this historical confrontation is Eisav's sale of his spiritual birthright as the first born of Isaac and Rebecca. Famished and weary, he comes home to find his father, Isaac, sitting shiva for his grandfather, Abraham. Jacob, preparing the traditional mourning meal of lentils for his father, is asked by his brother, Eisav, to partake of the lentils. A deal is struck. Eisav, who had no interest in the spirituality and privilege of being the first born, is more than agreeable to part with his birthright and sell it to Jacob for the bowl of lentils.

What is most perplexing is that after the deal is consummated, the Torah records in chapter 25, verse 34, "And Eisav detested the birthright." Eisav had no need whatsoever to detest the birthright. It would have sufficed to be of the mindset that it had no value to him. Why was it necessary to denigrate it? The answer is classic human psychology, especially as it relates to spiritual and religious matters. In truth, the birthright was of supreme universal value. However, as with all matters of great value and achievement, it requires great sacrifice to bring forth its formidable fruit. Eisav was a "man of the field," as recorded in Torah, and was consumed with desire and passion for all that was material and sensual. Consequently, he chose to relinquish his spiritual privilege and inheritance. Notwithstanding, in the recesses of his mind he knows he failed himself and his life's mission. To assuage these terribly powerful feelings and emotions, he sets forth to create an elaborate rationalization to justify the sale of the birthright. He fabricates a new ideology, theologically freeing himself to live a life that is unencumbered with spiritual content and Torah values. To pursue his libertine lifestyle, he is compelled, by design, to despise his birthright. Ponder well – our Torah is eternal, its message is eternal, and speaks to the heart and soul of each and every one of us.

Have a wonderful Shabbos!

Rabbi Menachem Winter

TABLE TALK

POINTS TO PONDER

The first one emerged red, entirely like a hairy mantle; so they named him Esav (25:25).

When Yitzchak saw the red coloring of Esav, he thought that Esav's blood had not been absorbed properly in his body, and it would be dangerous to give him a bris at eight days. Once Esav was a couple of years old, and his coloring remained, Yitzchak realized that this was his natural coloring and not on account of a blood issue. So Yitzchak said, "Since I did not circumcise him at eight days, I will wait and circumcise him at the age of thirteen, just as Yishmael was circumcised (Da'as Zekainim)."

Yishmael was circumcised at the age of thirteen since that is when he was commanded. There is nothing auspicious about the age of thirteen for bris milah. So why would Yitzchak choose to wait until Esav was thirteen?

PARSHA RIDDLE

Where in the Parsha do we see that the day of burial, and not the day of passing, is considered to be the day of sorrow?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

How does [last week's] Parsha prove the lack of scholarship of Shimshon's father?

Answer: Manoach (according to one opinion in the gemara) did not learn Chumash. Eliezer rode in front of Rivka, in order not to travel behind a woman. Yet Manoach traveled behind his wife (Berachos 61a).

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *Parshas Toldos*, Esav, in contradistinction to his brother Yaakov, is described as "a cunning hunter, a man of the field" (*Bereshis* 25:25), and the *parsha's* narrative hinges in several points on Esav's character as hunter and outdoorsman.

R. Yechezkel Landau was asked by a wealthy man, whose estates included forests teeming with wildlife, whether hunting (with firearms) is permitted for Jews. He replied that even insofar as there would be no technical *halachic* objection, the practice is unethical: the only individuals the Torah describes as hunters are Nimrod and Esav, "and this is not the way of the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yisroel." He continues with the assertion that there is, in fact, a *halachic* problem: the activity involves great danger, and the Torah prohibits unnecessary self-endangerment. Even Esav himself, the consummate hunter, pessimistically expected his vocation to bring about his demise, as he declared to Yaakov "Look, I am going to die" (*Bereshis* 25:32). R. Landau concedes that hunting to earn one's livelihood would be permitted (at least for a pauper), as the Torah allows the assumption of at least some risk in the course of earning a living, but insists that dangerous activity for primarily recreational purposes is prohibited (*Shut. Noda Be'Yehudah* 2:YD:10). Various other authorities also subscribe to the principle that the Torah grants a special dispensation for the assumption of risk in the course of earning a living, applying it to careers such as medicine (*Shut. Tzitz Eliezer* 9:17:5:9) and ball-playing (*Shut. Igros Moshe* CM 1:104). There is, however, a dissenting opinion that prohibits an employee from deliberately accepting a job involving a significant chance of danger, as well as an employer from offering such a job (based on the prohibition against "put[ting] a stumbling block before the blind" - *Shut. Yad Eliyahu* (Lublin) #28).

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

WHO AM I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. We were at 9, but they were at 7.
2. Our 'twin' is lacking, but theirs is full.
3. They were double righteous, but we weren't.
4. For us 'the red' came out first; for them it was second.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I was hairy.
2. I was made.
3. I caused the 'aleph' to be removed.
4. I was tricked.

Last Week's Answers:

#1 127 years of Sarah's life (I was used as an alarm; my breaks prove innocence; my years are triple; I am age-old information.)

#2 The word 'Bakol' (I am everything; I am a son; I am a daughter; I am fifty-two.)

Congratulations to Betzael Komarow for answering last week's questions correctly!

All children 13 and under who answer a "Who Am I?" correctly will be entered into a raffle to win a pair of two-way radios!



The next raffle is December 15th.

Visit gwckollel.org to submit your answers.

Answer as many as you can because each correct answer will entitle you to another raffle ticket and increase your chances of winning.

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

The Greater Washington Community Kollel, in conjunction with Young Israel Shomrai Emunah, invites men and women of the community to join us for a lecture by Rabbi Brahm Weinberg of KMS:

"Uber and Disruptive Technologies in Light of Jewish Law and Ethics."

This Jewish Ethics Lecture takes place Sunday, November 22, 9:30am
at Young Israel Shomrai Emunah, 1132 Arcola Avenue.