

RED ALERT!

PhiloTorah welcomes its latest contributor, Rabbi Eddie Davis (RED) of the Young Israel of Hollywood - Ft. Lauderdale (Florida)

DIVREI TORAH

- When Yaakov left home, he slept at Beit El and had a dream about angels ascending and descending a ladder.

Obviously it was a completely spiritual dream. The primary interpretation was that the angels of Eretz Yisrael were departing, and the angels of Outside Eretz Yisrael were descending to accompany Yaakov on his journey to Charan.

We see the parallel situation at the end of this Sidrah when Yaakov returns to Eretz Yisrael. [In the Shalom Aleichem song that we sing every Friday night, we greet angels in the opening stanza and send departing greetings to angels in the fourth stanza. The Shabbat angels arrive with the onset of Shabbat, and the departing angels are those of the weekday variety. Therefore we conclude that we share this world with a great many angels!]

- At the end of the Parsha, Yaakov and Lavan reached an agreement and created a pact. They built a monument and declared that Yaakov not mistreat Lavan's daughters and that neither party would pass this designated

landmark with hostile intentions (31:51-53). Later in Parshat Balak, Targum Yonatan identified Bilaam as Lavan, basically stating that the soul of Lavan now appears in the person of Bilaam.

This leads us to an interesting aspect of the Bilaam story.

When the donkey missteps carrying Bilaam and rubs Bilaam's leg against the confining fence, the resulting intent is telling us that Bilaam (Lavan) is passing and hitting the landmark that represents this treaty between Yaakov and Lavan. Bilaam (Lavan) was violating the treaty, by passing the landmark with intention to harm the descendants of Yaakov!

- Yaakov meets Rachel at the well and immediately falls in love with her. Again, just as he had no animals for sacrifices, he had no gifts for Rachel or for her father Lavan. He was at their mercy and received kindness from Lavan. A deal was worked out: Yaakov would work for Lavan for seven years to marry Rachel at the end of that time. Why seven years?

It would seem logical that Yaakov offered that deal to sell himself as a Hebrew slave to Lavan. And then an additional seven years after Lavan substituted Leah for Rachel. This part is more difficult to understand. Halachically Yaakov should not have

required to serve an additional seven years.

He did not want to marry Leah. The only explanation is that Yaakov was accepting Lavan's statement that "we

don't give the younger one before the older one in our place." Yaakov probably felt the slap in the face because he posed as the older one in place of Eisav to obtain his father's blessing of the Avraham Birthright.

Questions for Parshat VAYEITZEI 5783 - by RED

From the Text

1. Where did Yaakov have the special dream of angels on the ladder? (28:19)
2. What answer did Lavan give Yaakov to explain why Lavan substituted Leah for Rachel at the wedding? (29:26)
3. Why did Rachel give her handmaiden Bilha to Yaakov as a wife? (30:3)
4. Which wife gave birth to Dina, the one daughter of Yaakov? (30:21)
5. After Hashem told Yaakov to return home to Canaan, what did Yaakov do? (31:4)

From Rashi

6. The Midrash writes that Yaakov dreaming of angels on the ladder occurred 14 years after leaving home. Where did Yaakov go? (28:11)
7. How old was Yaakov when he married Rachel (and Leah)? (29:21)
8. What did Rachel do to deserve Hashem finally remembering her and allowing her to conceive? (30:22)
9. Why did Rachel steal her father's Teraphim, idols? (31:14)
10. Whom did Yaakov tell to gather stones and build the monument for the peace treaty with Lavan? (31:46)

From the Rabbis

11. Why was Rachel tending her father's sheep by herself? Where was Leah and her brothers? (Ramban)
12. Why did Lavan give to Leah the maidservant Zilpa? (Megila 13b, see Rashi there)
13. How did Yaakov explain to his family the angels that came to greet Yaakov when he returned to Canaan? (Targum Yonatan)

From the Midrash

14. Lavan gave the two handmaidens to his daughters Leah and Rachel. But weren't they also daughters of Lavan?

From the Haftara

15. To which tribe did Hoshei'a concentrate his words in the Haftara?

Relationships

16. a) Lavan - Nachor; b) Lavan - Rivka; c) Naftali - Guni; d) Sered - Dina;
e) Sheila - Peretz

Answers for Parshat Vayeitzei 5783

1. Beit El (the future place of the Beit HaMikdash)
2. That in his country it is customary to marry off the older daughter before the younger one.
3. That through Bilha, Rachel will also be a participant in building the family.
4. Leah
5. He consulted with his wives, Rachel and Leah.
6. To learn at the Yeshiva of (Shem and) Eiver.
7. 84 years old.
8. Rachel gave the signs to Leah, enabling Leah to trick Yaakov into thinking he was sleeping with Rachel.
9. To keep her father from idol worship.
10. His sons.
11. Leah was older and might draw the forward interest of the shepherds. Rachel was much younger. Lavan had no sons at that time.
12. Zilpa was to go to Rachel. By giving her to Leah, it would make Yaakov believe that he was with Rachel under the Chupa.
13. These are holy angels that Hashem has sent to protect them from their enemies.
14. The custom of the land was to refer to the daughters of one's concubines (and not his wives) as handmaidens.
15. To Efrayim, the leader of the Ten Tribes.
16. a) Grandson - grandfather; b) Brother - sister; c) Father - son; d) nephew - aunt e) Brothers (sons of Yehuda)