



יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵלֵהֶם אֲבוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁתִּשְׁלַח מְהֵרָה רְפוּאָה שְׁלֵמָה מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם,
רְפוּאָת הַנֶּפֶשׁ וְרְפוּאָת הַגּוּף לַפְּצוּעֵי הַמִּלְחָמָה, וּלְנִפְגְּעֵי מַעֲשֵׂי טְרוֹר וְאִנְטִישְׁמִיּוֹת
בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וּבְכָל מְקוֹם שֶׁהֵם - עִם שְׂאֵר חוֹלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. אָמֵן.

**May HaShem protect our soldiers; may He send Refu'ah Sh'leima
to the many injured; may He console the bereaved families and all of Israel;
may He facilitate the return of the hostage bodies; may He end this war
with success and peace for Medinat Yisrael and Klal Yisrael wherever we are.**



YERUSHALAYIM in/out times for **VAYEITZEI**

November 28-29 '25 • ט' כסלו ה'תשפ"ו

 **4:00PM**  **3:31PM** •  **5:15PM**  **R' Tam 5:47PM**

Use the Z'MANIM link for other locales

PhiloTorah (281vytz) - 1 - all@once file



Kiddush L'vana

The molad of Kislev was on Thursday, 29 Marcheshvan (November 20th), at 13:03 Israel Winter Time.

First opportunity for KL is after three full days from the molad. This month, that is Sunday night, November 23rd, the eve of the 4th of Kislev.

Note: Moonset on Sunday is 6:51pm, so there is enough time after dark for KL, but not unlimited.

Those who wait for seven days following the molad will have their first op on Thursday evening, Nov 27.

At this time of year, cloudy/rainy evenings are likely to make moonview sometimes difficult, so unless you are committed to the seven-day opinion, it is best to take the earlier opportunity for KL.

For those who usually say KL on Motza'ei Shabbat, they should consider not waiting this month, in case of cloudy conditions on Motza'ei Shabbat.

Many people rely on their shul for when to say Kiddush L'vana. And shuls most often focus on Motza'ei Shabbat. Just note that KL can be said alone, even though there is a preference to saying it with a minyan.

Sometimes, it is a trade-off and taking an earlier opportunity - even on your own - is the wiser way to go.

Chanuka is coming!

As we've said more than once, the dates of 1-29 Kislev differ from the rest of the calendar in that they each can fall on any of six days of the week and have only one day of the week that they cannot fall on. (On which they cannot fall, if you prefer.)

That, of course applies to the 25th of Kislev, the first day of Chanuka.

This year, Chanuka runs from Monday to Monday (candle lighting from Sunday night to Sunday night). This is the most common situation for Chanuka, occurring 28% of years.

This is so because four of the 14 year-types have Chanuka beginning on a Monday.

Whether a year is P'shuta (12 months) or M'uberet (13 months) is not relevant for determining when Chanuka is, because Chanuka is before Adar.

(For days from Adar and on - Purim, Pesach, Shavuot... - are affected, day-of-the-week-wise by one or two Adars.)

This year, for example, is a P'shuta that began on Tuesday, and is K'seider (29 days in Marcheshvan). That puts Chanuka Mon-Mon, and that would be the same in a two-Adar

year that also begins on Tuesday and is K'seider.

Therefore, the 14 year-type pair up and become 7 pairs of year-types (one P'shuta and one M'uberet) to determine the spread of Chanuka. For Monday to Monday, two of the pairs of year-types create Mon-Mon Chanuka, hence the high frequency.

Just to show you the numbers, the first candle is on Motza'ei Shabbat 11.51% of years.

Sunday night, 28.03% (like this year)

Monday night - never

Tuesday night, 21.92%

Wednesday night, 9.97%

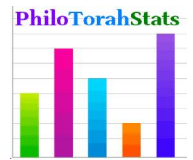
Thursday night, 10.13%

Friday late afternoon, 18.44%

Note that the variable that affects when Chanuka is, is the length of Marcheshvan, 29 or 30 days.

Kislev's 30 or 29 days doesn't affect the starting day of Chanuka, but it does determine whether there are one or two days of Rosh Chodesh Tevet during Chanuka, and whether Zot Chanuka will be the 2nd or the 3rd of Tevet.

VAYEITZEI



7th of 54 sedras;
7th of 12 in B'reishit

Written on 235.3 lines, ranks 12th

Vayitzei is one single very long (closed) Parsha. It's being a S'TUMA fits with the fact that it is a continuation of the To-I'dot story. It is the Torah's longest Parsha S'tuma, and second only to the P'tucha that is all of Mikeitz (254.6 lines)

FYI: The Torah has 54 sedras and contains a total of 674 parshiyot - That's an average of 12.48 parshiyot per sedra. Vayitzei and Mikeitz are each one parsha only. Balak is two parshiyot. At the other end of the range is Ki Teitzei with 44 parshiyot. Vayitzei's single parsha is almost 12 times the average number of p'sukim per parsha.

148 p'sukim - ranks 6th in the Torah

2021 words - ranks 4th in the Torah

7512 letters - ranks 5th in the Torah

Ranks 3rd in B'reishit in P/W/L

MITZVOT

Vayitzei has none of the 613 mitzvot

It is one of 17 mitzva-less sedras

Nonetheless, there are messages, mussar, and lessons to be learned from Sedras without mitzvot.

Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

[P> X:Y (Z)] and [S> X:Y (Z)] indicate start of a parsha p'tucha or s'tuma. X:Y is **Perek:Pasuk** of the beginning of the parsha; (Z) is the number of p'sukim in the parsha.

Last week's question:

to-L'DOT ranks 51st out of 54 in a particular category. Can you guess the category? And it is 2nd in still another category. Any guesses?

Answer: 51st in alphabetical order.

2nd in gimatriya - only B'reishit is higher.

Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

[P>] and [S>] indicate start of a parsha p'tucha or s'tuma.

X:Y is **Perek:Pasuk** that begins the parsha; (Z) is the number of p'sukim in the parsha

Kohen - First Aliya - 13 p'sukim - 28:10-22

[S> 28:10 (148)] Yaakov leaves Be'er Sheva and goes to Charan.

SDT: There are different explanations concerning the wording of this pasuk, as to why the Torah mentions Yaakov's departure (especially having mentioned it a couple of times at the end of To-l'dot). Rashi explains that a prominent person not only influences

his surroundings, but his absence from a place is also felt, in a negative way. Therefore, the Torah not only tells us that Yaakov went to Charan; it also tells us that he left Be'er Sheva, and his absence was felt - even though Yitzchak (and Rivka) remained there. (Perhaps, especially because Yitzchak and Rivka remained in Be'er Sheva - they would feel Yaakov's absence the most!)

Another explanation - In leaving Be'er Sheva, Yaakov was fulfilling the wishes of his mother Rivka, who feared that Eisav would kill Yaakov if he remained. In going to Charan, Yaakov was fulfilling the wishes of his father, Yitzchak (and also his mother's), who sent him there to find a suitable wife. The pasuk tells us of Yaakov's departure from Be'er Sheva AND his journey to Charan, to show us that it was important to satisfy the wishes of BOTH his parents. (Rivka did not tell Yitzchak about the danger to Yaakov if he were to remain home.)

He encounters "The Place" (it is unidentified in the text, but is traditionally considered to be Har Moriah, the site of the Akeida, and the location of the future Beit HaMikdash) and stays the night. He dreams of a ladder with its feet planted on the ground and whose top reaches the heavens. Angels are ascending and descending the ladder.

**VAYIFGA BAMAKOM... KI VA
HASHEMESH** - and he encoun-

tered the Place... for the Sun had set. VAYIFGA is related to P'GI'A, which is a synonym for Praying (based on Yirmiyahu 7:16). From here the Gemara teaches us that the fixing of Arvit (a.k.a. Maariv) is attributed to Yaakov Avinu.

SDT: The S'fat Emet points out that the ladder in Yaakov's dream is described first as having its feet planted on the ground (representing worldliness and/or basic decency) and then its head reaching the heavens (representing spiritual pursuits). This is consistent with the famous maxim - DERECH ERETZ KODMA LATORAH, worldliness (should) precedes Torah.

In the dream, G-d appears to Yaakov at the head of the ladder and reiterates to him the promises He made to Avraham and Yitzchak. These oft-repeated promises have consistently included the possession of the Land and the "countless" nature of their descendants. This prophecy also includes G-d's promise of protection for Yaakov on his sojourn.

Yaakov awakens from his sleep and acknowledges the sanctity of the Place. When Yaakov awakens in the morning, he takes the stone (formerly referred to in the plural) that was at his head, and erects it as a monument, which he then anoints. He names the place Beit El. Yaakov vows allegiance to G-d.

SDT: "And I will return to my father's home and HaShem will be for me, G-d." Ramban explains the connection between Yaakov's return home with his "acquisition of G-d". The Gemara in Ketuvot states that he who lives in Eretz Yisrael is like one who has G-d; he who lives outside Israel is like one without G-d. Yaakov's return from Lavan's house to his father's was a physical and spiritual Aliya - as is Aliya to Eretz Yisrael in our own time.

Avraham Avinu was born in Chutz LaAretz and was commanded by G-d to go and live in Eretz Yisrael, the land that he and his descendants would receive from G-d in perpetuity.

Yitzchak Avinu was born and raised in Eretz Yisrael, lived here all his life, never having stepped foot outside the Land, and was "reminded" of that fact by G-d, when Yitzchak might have left because of a famine (as did his father).

Yaakov Avinu was born in Eretz Yisrael and left the land for an extended time. In Parshat Vayishlach, we find his returning to Eretz Yisrael is both a physical return and a spiritual one.

Jews - as far as Eretz Yisrael is concerned - have one of three role models to emulate. You are either born in Israel and live your whole life here. Or you come on Aliya from the

place of your birth, or - if you were born in Israel (or lived here at one time) and left to live elsewhere, you work your way back to Eretz Yisrael.

And the Gemara/Rambam's point: Coming on Aliya is not just a mitzva, it is the way a G-dless person acquires G-d for himself.

Levi - Second Aliya - 17 p'sukim - 29:1-17

Assured of G-d's protection upon leaving the Land (something Yaakov had reason to be unsure of), his pace quickens. He sees a well in a field, with three flocks of sheep gathered around. The well is covered by a large rock. It was the practice of the shepherds to gather at the same time each day so that they would have the manpower necessary to remove the rock and then replace it after the sheep drank. (This, to prevent water from being stolen by one shepherd or another.) Yaakov asks the shepherds who they are and why they gather so early in the afternoon to water their sheep.

When they tell him that they work for Lavan, Yaakov asks about his uncle's wellbeing. The shepherds point out the approaching Rachel, daughter of Lavan. They explain to Yaakov that they must cooperate with each other in order to physically remove the stone from the well. Just then, Yaakov sees Rachel, his cousin, and approaches the rock and single-handedly removes it from the mouth of the well in order to

give water to his uncle's sheep. Yaakov kisses Rachel and weeps bitterly. (He weeps because he sees with Ru'ach HaKodesh that they are destined not to be buried together.)

Yaakov tells Rachel who he is - what their relationship is - she runs off to tell her father. When Lavan hears, he runs to welcome Yaakov, and brings him home to hear "the whole story". Lavan "offers" Yaakov a job and tells him "to name his price". Lavan had two daughters - Leah, the older one and Rachel, the younger one. Leah had "weak" (sensitive) eyes and Rachel was very beautiful.

Shlishi - Third Aliya - 31 p'sukim - 29:18-30:13

Yaakov loves Rachel and offers to work for seven years in exchange for her hand in marriage. Lavan agrees and the time flies by in Yaakov's eyes because of his great excitement. At the end of the seven years, Yaakov asks that the marriage take place.

SDT: Towards the end of Parshat To-l'dot, Rivka Imeinu hears (with Ru'ach HaKodesh) that Eisav intends to kill Yaakov. She tells Yaakov that he should go to her brother in Charan and stay there YAMIM ACHADIM. That seems to mean, for a few days. Asks the GR"A, how can seven years be called YAMIM ACHADIM? He gives a DRASH to answer that question. First of all, YAMIM in the Torah does not only mean 'days'. In a number of

places, YAMIM means SHANIM, years. Second, the Midrash tells of Shabbat complaining to HKBH that it is alone - the other days of the week all have partners: Sunday & Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday, Thursday & Friday, but it, Shabbat is ECHAD, a lonely one day. HaShem consoled it by saying that Bnei Yisrael would be its partner. The GR"A then points out that a year has 50-55 Shabbatot, so YAMIM ACHADIM can be a year of Shabbatot, which comes out to be seven years with contain about 354 Shabbatot. Thus YAMIM ACHADIM, with YAMIM meaning years and ACHADIM meaning Shabbatot, the ECHAD among the days of the week, matches SEVEN YEARS.

Lavan gathers the locals for the wedding festivities and substitutes Leah for Rachel (with, we are taught, the cooperation of the girls).

SDT: Although Lavan was the deceiver, and had his own motives, our Sources indicate that it was Rachel who facilitated the switch, motivated by love and compassion for her sister. Rachel gave her private "signals" to Leah to save her from a probable marriage to Eisav, Yaakov's biological elder. This compassion serves her descendants well many years later, when she "intercedes" before G-d following the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash. Tradition tells us that G-d "softened" the punishment with a promise of our return,

only after Rachel pleaded before Him. According to Tradition, the Avot and Moshe Rabeinu had not succeeded in their pleas on behalf of the people.

When Yaakov confronts Lavan about the deceit, Lavan says that it is improper to marry off the younger before the older. (This is the minhag in many communities, despite its Lavanic origin.)

Yaakov agrees to work an additional seven years for Rachel. Zilpa and Bilha are the hand-maidens of Leah and Rachel respectively (commentaries say they too were daughters of Lavan, from a PILEGESH - there are other opinions as to who exactly they were, including a Midrash that says they were nieces of Devora, Rivka's nursemaid). Yaakov showed his obviously greater love of Rachel. As a result, G-d made Leah fertile and Rachel barren.

Next the Torah tells us, in rapid succession, of the births of Reuven, Shimon, Levi, Yehuda. Leah names each son (Levi was named by Yaakov or perhaps by an angel) with a name that expresses her thanks to G-d and her feelings under the unusual circumstances of her life.

Rachel, jealous of Leah, complains to Yaakov that she has no children. Yaakov gets angry with her, saying that it is G-d's doing, not his.

Rachel gives Bilha to Yaakov to have children whom she will raise as her

own. Dan and Naftali are born. Leah, realizing that she has stopped having children, gives Zilpa to Yaakov. Gad and Asher are the results.

Notice the rapid fashion the Torah employs to tell us of the build-up of Yaakov's family. With Avraham and Yitzchak having such a difficult time fathering children, Yaakov has 8 sons in a span of 16 p'sukim!

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya - 14 p'sukim - 30:14-27

Rachel begs Reuven to give her the special (fertility) herbs (DUDA'IM, mandrake) that he had gathered for his mother, Leah. When Leah complains to her, Rachel promises that Yaakov could sleep with her that night in exchange for the herbs. When Yaakov returns from the fields, it is Leah who goes out to greet him - something Yaakov questions, and Leah explains. G-d answers Leah's prayers of despair, and she gives birth to Yissachar and then Zevulun. Then Leah gives birth to a girl, Dina. Finally, G-d "remembers" Rachel and she becomes pregnant.

She gives birth and names her son Yosef, praying that she will have yet another son (giving her not fewer than the handmaidens had. Leah has also prayed to G-d that her sister should not be shamed by having fewer sons than the hand-maidens.)

After Yosef is born, Yaakov asks his

leave of Lavan. He desires to return to his fathers' home. He asks for his wives, children, and compensation for all the work he has done for Lavan. Lavan acknowledges that he has been blessed because of Yaakov.

Chamishi - 5th Aliya - 32 p'sukim - 30:28-31:16

They make an arrangement by which Yaakov will be paid. Lavan repeatedly attempts to minimize the births of the goats and sheep that will be Yaakov's. G-d has other plans and Yaakov becomes very wealthy. The details of the speckled, banded, spotted animals and how which gave birth to what, are obscure. The bottom line is that Lavan attempts to cheat Yaakov (again) and is completely unsuccessful.

Lavan's sons feel that Yaakov has cheated their father. G-d tells Yaakov to return to his birth-place. Yaakov calls to his wives and explains the situation to them. He tells them of being instructed by an angel as to what to do with the animals. Rachel and Leah feel as strangers in their father's house, as if they have no share in Lavan's wealth, and they will do as G-d commands.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya - 26 p'sukim - 31:17-42

Yaakov prepares to leave. Meanwhile, Rachel takes her father's TERAFIG in his absence. When Lavan becomes

aware of Yaakov's departure, he sets out in pursuit. G-d appears to Lavan in a dream and warns him not to harm Yaakov in any way. When Lavan catches up to Yaakov, he confronts him about the unannounced departure and the missing terafim.

Rav Aryeh Kaplan z"l in The Living Torah, explains Terafim according to different opinions. Some say they were idols that were worshiped. This opinion adds that Rachel took them to save her father from the sin of idolatry. Others are of the opinion that they were meditative devices that would enable Lavan to divine the whereabouts of Yaakov. Thus Rachel's motive was to prevent Lavan from pursuing Yaakov & Co.

Yaakov answers in kind, expressing his anger at Lavan's repeated attempts to cheat him. As to the terafim, Yaakov permits Lavan to search for them and boldly declares that the one who took them shall not live. Lavan fails to find his terafim because Rachel convinces him not to search her person or belongings. Had it not been for G-d's protection, Yaakov tells Lavan, you would have left me with nothing.

In the Hagada we read/say: VAYEIREN MITZRAIMA (Yaakov went down into Egypt), and this is qualified by, ANOOS AL PI HADIBUR, usually translated as "Forced by Divine Decree". There is another explanation offered: It was Yaakov's DIBUR, his statement, that forced himself down

into Egypt. How so? He inadvertently condemned Rachel to an early death by his words to Lavan. This can be construed as killing B'SHOGEIG. Punishment (and atonement) for that is EXILE. (Really, to a city of refuge, but for this DRASH, exile to Egypt will do.) Not only does this explanation fit the DIBUR part, but it can also explain why the Hagada connects Yaakov's descent into Egypt with Lavan.

Another explanation of a connection between Yaakov's time with Lavan and his (Yaakov's) descent into Mitzrayim goes like this: Lavan's switching of Leah for Rachel planted the seeds of jealousy between Rachel and Leah. This led to the friction between Leah's sons - Yosef's Brothers - and Rachel's son, Yosef. That resulted in Yosef being sold into slavery in Egypt, which in turn brought Yaakov and family down to Egypt.

Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya - 15 p'sukim - 31:43-32:3

Lavan answers that the women are his daughters, that the children are his (grand)children, and the animals are his as well. Yaakov and Lavan make a pact and form a mound of rocks as a sign of their agreement. Yaakov offers a sacrifice to G-d and swears to the covenant. In the morning, Lavan kisses his children and grandchildren, blesses

them, and returns home.

Yaakov continues on his journey and encounters angels (of Eretz Yisrael - the sedra thus comes full circle - he left Eretz Yisrael with Vayeitzei and now is about to return to the Land). On the way, Yaakov names the place Machanayim.

Last 3 p'sukim are repeated for Maftir.

Haftara 28+2* p'sukim - Hoshei'a 12:13-14:10

** Sources suggest concluding the haftara with Yoel 2:26-27, in order to end the haftara on a better note than Hoshei'a ends with.*

S'faradim read the 17-pasuk portion of Hoshei'a that precedes the Ashkenazi reading, 11:7-12:12. Chabad do also, but they continue for two more p'sukim - namely, the first two p'sukim of the Ashkenazi reading.

This concluding portion of the book(let) of Hoshei'a begins with reference to Yaakov's journey to Aram to find (and work on behalf of) a wife (wives) - hence its obvious connection to the sedra. The prophet points out to the People of Israel their humble origins, in an attempt to put things in perspective and restore their faith and reliance upon G-d.

The last 9 p'sukim of the haftara are also the first 9 p'sukim of the haftara of Shabbat Shuva.

UNSHALMA FARIM S'FATEINU "... so will we offer the words of our lips instead of bulls." This is the textual link between prayer and korbanot. Remember, the origin of Maariv is found in the sedra.

CLARIFICATION:

UNSHALMA FARIM S'FATEINU does not mean that there is a trade-off between Korbanot and T'fila (sacrifices and prayer). It does not mean that when there are no korbanot, we pray and when there are korbanot, we don't. Not so! Prayer predates korbanot. Prayer existed before and DURING and after, and IYH when the Beit HaMikdash will be rebuilt. We will always have prayer. The text will be different for some of the prayers, depending upon whether we have a Mikdash or not. But there always was, is, and will be prayer.

The meaning of the words of Hoshei'a tell us that between Beit HaMikdashes (Batei Mikdash), our T'filot do double duty. They continue to be prayer, and they (temporarily) take the place of the korbanot. We daven Shacharit at the same time as the morning Tamid was brought. We daven Mincha at the time when the afternoon Tamid was brought. We daven Musaf when the Musafim were brought in the Mikdash. (Actually, Musaf's fate might be different from the three davenings of the day.) The gemara makes it clear that davening

is more than korbanot. Davening is asking G-d for mercy (and many other things). It is praising Him, thanking Him, acknowledging that everything comes from Him.

Imagine how exciting and special it will be to daven Shacharit WHEN the Avoda is being done in the Mikdash, not just at the same time it used to be done. May we merit that, speedily in our time.

Bringing the Prophets to Life

**Weekly insights into the Haftara
by Rabbi Nachman (Neil) Winkler**

Author of Bringing the Prophets to Life (Gefen Publ.)

Faith in Time of Challenge

**VAYEITZEI - 28+2* p'sukim
- Hoshei'a 12:13-14:10**

*** Minhag to conclude the haftara with
Yoel 2:26-27, in order to end on a
better note than Hoshei'a ends with.**

SIFREI NEVI'IM ACHARONIM, the books of the later prophets, do not often recount events of the earlier patriarchs, those found in Sefer B'reishit. This is quite understandable as these books record the words of those nevi'im, from Yishayahu to Malachi, that were addressed to

generations living at least one thousand years after the era of the forefathers. Their prophecies, admonitions and consolations were crafted to be timely lessons for those living at that time and place.

Given that truth, it is curious to find the opening words of our haftara, those spoken by the navi Hoshe'a, to be those recalling Ya'akov's flight to Aram, where he was constrained to work in order to win the hand of his wife. This first verse grants us an obvious connection to the weekly parasha - but, ostensibly, has little connection to the very community which the navi hopes to impact with his message.

In order to understand the significance of the haftara's introductory words and why Hoshe'a evokes the experience of Ya'akov for his own generation, we must first recognize the haftara's first words are not the opening of the prophet's message! Indeed, the preliminary p'sukim are taken from the final three verses of the perek and, therefore, are linked to the navi's message, found in the earlier p'sukim.

When we look back to the opening of prophet's message, we read the words of Hoshe'a censuring Israel for their deceitful ways and foretelling the inevitable punishments that Hashem would bring down upon them. He especially underscores the

perfidious behavior of Israel toward their Heavenly Father, reminding Israel of how their Heavenly Father had remained faithful to Ya'akov and saved him from harm then.

This mention of G-d's encounters with Ya'akov introduces the prophet's portrayal of the suffering that Israel would undergo, but is meant to insure the nation of Hashem's ongoing protection and eventual salvation. And it is this theme that opens our haftara.

Consider: the verses that open our haftara with the description of Ya'akov's [Israel's] difficult years of slavery in Aram, close with the depiction Israel's [Ya'akov's] release from difficult years of slavery in Egypt - all due to G-d's salvation!

Through understanding the opening of the haftara and its connection to the earlier p'sukim, we can better reveal the overall theme of the message of Hoshe'a and, consequently, the lesson to be learned. The bulk of this reading is taken from the thirteenth perek of Hoshe'a and its focus is one of contempt and censure of Israel. Hoshe'a addresses the northern kingdom of Israel, a realm that, since the rule of their first king, Yerov'am, had been guilty of improper worship of Hashem, outright idolatry and the adoption of abominable pagan practices from the cultures that surrounded them. And

yet, the idolatry was less an act of rebellion against G-d as much as a reflection of their fear of conquest, a fear brought upon by their lack of confidence in G-d's abilities and His faithfulness to them.

It is for this reason that the navi tells of the struggles of Israel, the man, and Israel, the nation. Despite the seemingly impossible challenges that faced them and despite the improbability of resolving them, they believed and trusted in Hashem's power and His promises to His nation. And, as a result, remained faithful to Him.

It was a crucial message to send to Israel of Hoshe'a's time... and, given the overwhelming challenges we have been facing over these many months, it is a welcome message for our generation, as well. ★



ParshaPix
explanations



The fun way to go over the weekly sedra with your children, grandchildren, Shabbat guests

TO-L'DOT

• **two Unexplaineds**

Here's one:

A village within the town of
South Dartmouth, Massachusetts

The answer is PADANARAM.

The other was two VAVs, the right one stands, the left on is crossed out.

The word TO-L'DOT as in Parshat To-l'dot is spelled TAV-VAV-LAMED-DALET-TAV. First VAV is there; the second one isn't there.

VAYEITZEI

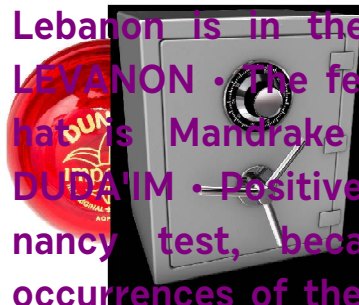


• The first five photos down the left side are goats and sheep with different patterns • next to the animals are two sticks • and a peeler. The peeler is for the sticks and the sticks are for the ewes and nannies to look at so their offspring will have different patterns • two photos of mandrakes, as in the DUDA'IM that Reuven picked for his mother and which Rachel acquired from Leah in a

deal • the road signs were seen by Yaakov after he left Be'er Sheva, which is why B7 is pointing back where he came from, with Charan indicating the direction he must take. In that same direction was HAMAKOM, the place which he encountered • Herby's Bakeshop, is in Beit El • across the bottom - kind of obvious, but ask your family and/or guests. And then you can add the midrash that each of Yaakov's sons was born with a twin sister, who they married • the stone Yaakov rested his head on when he slept (after establishing Maariv). That is, when he awoke. When he went to sleep there were many (12) stones. The rock is also the one that covered the well that Yaakov removed so that Rachel (and the other shepherds) could water their sheep • It also stands for the rock that Yaakov set up as a MATZEIVA to mark his agreement with Lavan (GAL-EID) • ice cream - in Hebrew, G'LIDA, which is taken for the Aramaic word for ice, as in mentioned in Targum Onkeles, when Yaakov mentions the cold icy nights he spent tending Lavan's flocks • the logo for the Philadelphia Phillies. That team has the ignoble honor of being the losingest team in MLB and in all major league sports (in the US). They have lost more than 11,000 games (since 1883). Perhaps, then, they are the incarnation of the teams that did play in LUZ, an older name for Beit El

- an owl with a speech bubble. Owls say HOO. add the extraterrestrial and we get HU ITI, said by Yaakov when he set the conditions for his wages • sine wave; that's wave, as in GAL, as in GAL-EID • a South Park character playing dodgeball, which is similar to the game MACHANAYIM, as in the concluding word (and pasuk-count siman) of Vayeitzei, referring to the twin camps of angels • The kipa is for an old corny joke (groan quietly so no one nearby with think you are under the weather). How do we know that Yaakov Avinu wore a Kipa? It says, Vayeitzei Yaakov, Yaakov went out... Would he go out without a kipa?! • Yaakov promised to give G-d MAASER, one tenth, .1 • the emoji is for the turn in Lavan's face to Yaakov - part of why Yaakov decided to leave • the oil can represents the oil Yaakov used to anoint the stone at the beginning of the sedra • three pics from the haftara: The matador waving his red cape at - not a bull, but a pair of lips. As in the haftara, UNSHAL'MA FARIM S'FATEINU, and our lips (voices in prayer) will replace the bulls (sacrifices), for the time being - When the Beit HaMikdash is rebuilt, prayer will become just prayer once again. Since the Churban, it has been doing double duty • Paddington Bear with the Cubs baseball cap Xed out represent DOV SHAKUL, a bear without offspring • the smiley with the dunce cap - of Efrayim it is said,

HU VEN LO CHACHAM, he is a not-smart child • sheep at the well are sheep around the well • Perry WHITE is for Lavan • Half a YO-YO is YO. With the safe, we get YOSEF • The sculpture on the road with a turn off to Givat Mordechai is Jacob's Ladder • The wine bottle with the emblem of Lebanon is in the haftara - YEIN LEVANON • The fellow with the top hat is Mandrake the Magician - DUDA'IM • Positive result of a pregnancy test, because of all the occurrences of the word VATAHAR (and she became pregnant) in Parshat Vayeitzei. More than any other sedra or Book in Tanach. In the Torah, the following women VATAHAR-ed: Chava, Kayin's wife, Hagar, Sara, Rivka, Leah, Bilha, Rachel, Bat Shua, Tamar - all in the Book of B'reishit, and Yocheved in Sh'mot • A speech bubble with the word "talk", dot 300, an emoji shushing us to silence. The 300 is for the letter SHIN, with the dot on the left it is a SIN. Of the two SINS in the name YISSACHAR, one is voiced and the other is silent • and two Unexpalineds



לע"נ
הרב יעקב צבי ב"ר דוד אריה ז"ל
Rabbi Jonathan Sacks z"l

Encountering God

VAYEITZEI

It is one of the great visions of the Torah. Yaakov, alone at night, fleeing the wrath of Eisav, lies down to rest, and sees not a nightmare of fear but a revelation:

In time he [Yaakov] chanced upon a certain place [VAYIFGA BAMAKOM] and decided to spend the night there, because the sun had set. He took some stones of the place and put them under his head, and in that place lay down to sleep. And he dreamed: He saw a ladder set upon the ground, whose top reached the heavens. On it, angels of God went up and came down. The Lord stood over him... (B'reishit 28:11-13)

Then Yaakov awoke from his sleep and said, "Truly, the Lord is in this place - and I did not know it!" He was afraid and said, "How full of awe is this place! This is none other than the House of God, and this the gate of the Heavens!" (28:16-7)

On the basis of this passage, the Sages said that "Yaakov instituted the evening prayer." The inference is based on the word VAYIFGA which can mean not only, "he came to,

encountered, happened upon, chanced upon" but also "he prayed, entreated, pleaded" as in Yirmiyahu (7:16), "Do not pray for this people, nor raise up a cry for them, and do not plead with Me... [V'AL TIFGA BI]".

The Sages also understood the word BAMAKOM, "the place" to mean "God" (the "Place" of the universe). Thus Yaakov completed the cycle of daily prayers. Avraham instituted shacharit, the morning prayer, Yitzchak initiated Mincha, the afternoon prayer, and Yaakov was first to establish Arvit, also known as Maariv, the prayer of night-time.

This is a striking idea. Though each of the weekday prayers is identical in wording, each bears the character of one of the patriarchs. Avraham represents morning. He is the initiator, the one who introduced a new religious consciousness to the world. With him a day begins.

Yitzchak represents afternoon. There is nothing new about Yitzchak - no major transition from darkness to light or light to darkness. Many of the incidents in Yitzchak's life recapitulate those of his father. Famine forces him, as it did Avraham, to go to the land of the Philistines. He re-digs his father's wells.

Yitzchak's is the quiet heroism of continuity. He is a link in the chain of the covenant. He joins one generation

to the next. He introduces nothing new into the life of faith, but his life has its own nobility. Yitzchak is steadfastness, loyalty, the determination to continue.

Yaakov represents night. He is the man of fear and flight, the man who wrestles with God, with others and with himself. Yaakov is one who knows the darkness of this world.

There is, however, a difficulty with the idea that Yaakov introduced the evening prayer. In a famous episode in the Talmud, Rabbi Yehoshua takes the view that, unlike Shacharit or Mincha, the evening prayer is not obligatory (though, as the commentators note, it has become obligatory through the acceptance of generations of Jews). Why, if it was instituted by Yaakov, was it not held to carry the same obligation as the prayers of Avraham and Yitzchak? Tradition offers three answers.

The first is that the view that Arvit is non-obligatory according to those who hold that our daily prayers are based not on the patriarchs but on the sacrifices that were offered in the Temple. There was a morning and afternoon offering but no evening sacrifice. The two views differ precisely on this, that for those who trace prayer to sacrifice, the evening prayer is voluntary, whereas for those who base it on the patriarchs, it is obligatory.

The second is that there is a law that those on a journey (and for three days thereafter) are exempt from prayer. In the days when journeys were hazardous - when travellers were in constant fear of attack by raiders - it was impossible to concentrate. Prayer requires concentration (kavana). Therefore Yaakov was exempt from prayer, and offered up his entreaty not as an obligation but as a voluntary act - and so it remained.

The third is that there is a tradition that, as Yaakov was travelling, "the sun set suddenly" - not at its normal time. Yaakov had intended to say the afternoon prayer, but found, to his surprise, that night had fallen. Arvit did not become an obligation, since Yaakov had not meant to say an evening prayer at all.

There is, however, a more profound explanation. A different linguistic construction is used for each of the three occasions that the Sages saw as the basis of prayer. Avraham "rose early in the morning to the place where he had stood before God" (B'reishit 19:27). Yitzchak "went out to meditate [LASU'ACH] in the field towards evening" (24:63). Yaakov "met, encountered, came across, chanced upon" God [VAYIFGA BAMAKOM]. These are different kinds of religious experience.

Avraham initiated the quest for God.

He was a creative religious personality - the father of all those who set out on a journey of the spirit to an unknown destination, armed only with the trust that those who seek, find. Avraham sought God before God sought him.

Yitzchak's prayer is described as a SICHA (literally a conversation or dialogue). There are two parties to a dialogue - one who speaks, and one who listens and, having listened, responds. Yitzchak represents the religious experience as conversation between the word of God and the word of humankind.

Yaakov's prayer is very different. He does not initiate it. His thoughts are elsewhere - on Eisav from whom he is escaping, and on Lavan to whom he is travelling. Into this troubled mind comes a vision of God and the angels and a stairway connecting earth and heaven. He has done nothing to prepare for it. It is unexpected. Yaakov literally "encounters" God as we can sometimes encounter a familiar face among a crowd of strangers. This is a meeting brought about by God, not man. That is why Yaakov's prayer could not be made the basis of a regular obligation. None of us knows when the presence of God will suddenly intrude into our lives.

There is an element of the religious life that is beyond conscious control.

It comes out of nowhere, when we are least expecting it. If Avraham represents our journey towards God, and Yitzchak our dialogue with God, Yaakov signifies God's encounter with us - unplanned, unscheduled, unexpected; the vision, the voice, the call we can never know in advance but which leaves us transformed. As for Yaakov, so for us. It feels as if we are waking from a sleep and realising, as if for the first time, that "God was in this place and I did not know it." The place has not changed, but we have. Such an experience can never be made the subject of an obligation. It is not something we do. It is something that happens to us. VAYFIGA BAMAKOM means that, thinking of other things, we find that we have walked into the presence of God.

Such experiences take place - literally or metaphorically - at night. They happen when we are alone, afraid, vulnerable, close to despair. It is then that, when we least expect it, we can find our lives flooded by the radiance of the Divine. Suddenly, with a certainty that is unmistakable, we know that we are not alone, that God is there and has been all along but that we were too preoccupied by our own concerns to notice Him. That is how Yaakov found God - not by his own efforts, like Avraham; not through continuous dialogue, like Yitzchak; but in the midst of fear and

isolation. Yaakov, in flight, trips and falls - and finds he has fallen into the waiting arms of God. No one who has had this experience, ever forgets it. "Now I know that You were with me all the time, but I was looking elsewhere."

That was Yaakov's prayer. There are times when we speak and times when we are spoken to. Prayer is not always predictable, a matter of fixed times and daily obligation. It is also an openness, a vulnerability. God can take us by surprise, waking us from our sleep, catching us as we fall.

Around the Shabbat Table:

- (1) **What does it mean to "encounter God" instead of seeking Him? Have you ever felt something similar?**
- (2) **How can we become more aware of God's presence in our everyday life?**
- (3) **Where else in Tanach does a religious encounter occur at night?**

Y'HI ZICHRO BARUCH

Message from the Haftara

*Rabbi Katriel (Kenneth) Brander
President and Rosh HalYeshiva
Ohr Torah Stone Institutions*

The Divergence of Traditions in Selecting a Haftara

VAYEITZEI

Haftarat Vayeitzei is unusual in the curious divergence between what Sephardic (Eidot Mizrach) and Ashkenazic Jews read, with each reading a different section of the prophecy of Hashei'a. Sephardic communities read from 11:7-12:12, whereas Ashkenazim begin the haftara at 12:13, and read until 14:10. Nowhere else do we find two traditions whose haftara passages sit exactly back-to-back, with no overlap (some Sephardic communities have modified the tradition to include some minimal overlap). Clearly, the different rites reflect two very different centers of thematic gravity. If we can discern the differences between the themes and content of these two readings, we can learn valuable insights not only into the words of the prophets, but also into the contrasting facets of Yaakov's life, which echo our own complex reality as Jews and as members of society.

The Sephardic reading, which starts earlier in Hoshei'a's prophecy, does not directly address Yaakov's life events that form the core of our parsha. Instead, it speaks of Yaakov and the major events in his life in broader strokes: "In the womb he grasped his brother by the heel, and with all his strength he struggled with God" (12:4). These two episodes – Yaakov's birth and his battle with the angel – occur in the parashot that precede and follow ours. They are referenced by the prophet here because they both highlight moments of conflict and struggle. Yaakov Avinu's life, from the beginning, was shaped by battles against those stronger than him, most notably Eisav; according to the Sages, even the angel with whom Yaakov wrestled was the guardian angel of his older twin (Rashi, B'reishit 32:25).

This life of struggle often compelled Yaakov to engage in acts of evasiveness and even deception, qualities that, Hoshei'a laments, were unfortunately passed down to his descendants: "Efrayim besieges Me with lies, the House of Israel with deception" (12:1); "Still the merchant possesses false scales; he loves to exploit" (12:8). These themes of guile and cunning and their problematic nature stand at the center of our parsha as well, as Yaakov and Lavan strive to outwit one another in their family and business dealings.


These themes are deeply relevant in and of themselves. They are central to our relationship with God, in which honesty and authenticity are paramount – and yet elusive. They are important subjects of contemplation for Jews who, in all ages and contexts, face adversaries, impossible odds, and the tension between integrity and survival. It is therefore these themes that lay at the heart of the ancient decision of many communities to read this first section as the haftara, even though it does not explicitly reference the parsha's events. Its message calls on us to learn from the failures seen in the Torah and haftara and strengthen our relationship with God and society.

By contrast, the haftara read by Ashkenazic communities begins with an account more directly and obviously related to our parsha: "Yaakov fled to the lands of Aram, and Yisrael labored to acquire a bride; for a bride he kept sheep" (12:13). This captures the Torah narrative that we have just read: Yaakov flees his brother's wrath to stay in Aram and works fourteen years in exchange for the right to marry Lavan's daughters Rachel and Leah.

But the prophetic message is more subtle than a simple retelling. Yaakov's diligence in working for his family contrasts sharply with the later faithlessness of his descendants

in the Kingdom of Israel. Alternatively, as some commentators have suggested, God's providential care for Yaakov during his most vulnerable years stands in jarring opposition to Israel's ingratitude in times of national prosperity. This tension stands at the heart of why Ashkenazic communities chose this passage; it anchors the haftara firmly in the parsha's events, while inviting us to consider the moral and spiritual implications.

Both customs treat the reader as thoughtful and mature, capable of tracing the connections and drawing meaning from the nuances of the text. In one approach, we consider the attributes of cleverness and guile, their historical use, and the price we pay for them. After all, the blessings stolen through deceit are never actually realized, and the use of such deception compromises the integrity of our values.

In the other approach, the events of the parsha serve as a window through which to observe the contrast between Yaakov's loyalty and his descendants' betrayal. Both of these lessons, and the interpretive methods behind them, are acutely worth remembering as we hold up our forefathers, their stories and their complex legacies as signposts for our own continuing journey. 



PhiloTorah D'var Torah

Thanks, GPT

Bear with me. This will be all over the place, but there is a point (or a few points) to this PTDT.

For those of us who use AI - I use Chat-GPT a lot, but there are others, you are no doubt aware of the human flavor of its responses. It feels so human sometimes, that some of us begin to say thank you and please to it, and don't even think of it as an it.

I regularly say Good morning and on Motza"Sh will usually begin a session with GPT by saying Shavua Tov.

Whether you use AI or not - and whether you greet it and treat it like a human or not, I'd like to take this in two directions.

First, I believe that being polite and friendly, so to speak, even if the AI does not have emotions and probably doesn't care if a user is friendly or not - has an affect on us. Probably sub-consciously, relating to AI as if it were human, has an affect on how we relate to some the actual humans in our daily lives.

You get on a bus. The driver is behind a plexiglas partition, no longer has any interaction with each passenger,

as he did in the old days. But the question is how to we relate to him. Is he part of the bus, like the motor and the wheels. Or do we see him as a fellow human being. Do you say Boker Tov, Shalom Nehag, and the like - or do you just walk right past him to validate your ride?

If you leave by the front door, do you say TODA as you pass the driver or not.

Greeting the driver might be appreciated by him. Or not. But doing so has an affect on us.

Same goes for the security guard at the mall or the supermarket.

To generalize, interacting - even briefly, with the cashier at the supermarket check out, can possibly make them smile - visibly or inside, but it also makes you more of a mentch.

To you, that person - whatever he/she is doing for you, can be seen as part of a whole machine, or as a fellow human being.

That's one thing, I believe, that being friendly with AI does for us - even if it doesn't do the same for the AI.

And here is another direction to take, also beginning with saying Yes, please to AI, and not just Yes, when it inevitably asks Would you like me to give you more sources on that - or something similar.

This happened to me, and I want to share it with you, dear PT reader.

Having repeatedly treated Chat-GPT as a human - including giving it a nickname GePpeTto, it dawned on me on day recently, that there are real human beings who created and developed AI for us. And they certainly deserve our thanks, our HAKARAT HATOV for the amazing tool they have given us.

And even if you do not communicate that appreciation directly with the creators of AI, just the idea that we shouldn't take things for granted, is a positive character trait for each of us to develop.

So, in a way, saying thank you to AI is a way of saying thank you to the people who made AI.

And now let's take this one further important step.

Ponder this: If we appreciate and acknowledge AI, and that leads us to appreciate the people who created and developed AI, then we should appreciate and acknowledge The CHONEIN LAADAM DAAT, the One who has created human beings with the intellect and skills to be able to create AI.

And, of course, every creative act, every useful invention, every demonstration of human intellect and skill - should lead us to greater and greater

HAKARAT HATOV to the Borei Olam,
to HaShem.

And that conscious recognition of
G-d's endowment of human beings
with DAAT, BINA, and HASKEIL,
makes us better people and better
Jews.

After a lovely meal at home, we say
(or should say) thank you to the
one(s) who prepared the meal and
this should be followed or preceded
by Birkat HaMazon, which thanks
HKBH for the food and for the
intellect and skills He created us with
the ability to make such good food.

And so on and so on. **PTDT**

Walk through the Parsha

with **Rabbi David Walk**



VAYEITZEI

Healthy Spread

This week's Torah reading features
Ya'akov becoming the new central
character in our Biblical narrative. We
move on from Yitzchak (who really
only had one parsha) and Avraham
(who had three) to Ya'akov Avinu who
is the central personality throughout
the rest of the book of B'reishit, even
though he shares the spotlight with
his beloved Yosef for part of the time.

Ya'akov begins his time in the
spotlight as a fugitive on the run from
his brother's wrath. But almost
immediately he is informed by God
that he will be the heir to the legacy
of Avraham. The closing of his
revelation of the Ladder is an
announcement of his future great-
ness. And this declaration is made in
a way which seems to surpass the
greatness of his grandfather:

*Your descendants shall be as the dust
of the earth; you shall spread out to
the west and to the east, to the north
and to the south. All the families of the
earth shall bless themselves by you
and your descendants (B'reshit 28:14).*

This message seems to have three
parts to it. The third part is really a



Here's another real Hebrew word for
something that Hebrew speakers
use a word borrowed from English as
if it were Hebrew.

What's an ARIS? you ask.

PERGOLA -

פֶּרְגוֹלָה



rehashing of the promise given to Avraham at the beginning of his spiritual career: And all the families of the earth shall bless themselves by you (12:3). The other two expressions of future greatness are new.

But is it good to be compared 'to the dust of the earth'? I'm not a big fan of dust. Remember, when God expressed the future vastness of the Jewish nation to Avraham, the allusion was to the 'stars of the heavens'. So, what exactly is being promised?

This could be a reference to the future oppression of the Jews by our many adversaries over the millennia. We were trampled upon many times, by many enemies. The Kli Yakar agrees with this assessment, and claims that it specifically refers to the Egyptian bondage when they did 'plow' right over us, and in spite of that we got stronger and more numerous.

Rabbeinu Bechaye takes this seemingly negative vision and finds a positive element in it:

The reference to dust always evokes feelings of something low, stepped upon, a reference to periods when the Jews would be in exile, treated by their hosts as dust to be walked on. But there is a positive, encouraging side of dust. As a result of stepping on dust, the dust rises and covers the

person who has stepped upon it, or at least his feet. Thus after completion of their exiles the Jews will experience an ascent above those who had trod upon them.

On the other hand, the Malbim only sees a positive reference here. Don't translate the term AFAR as 'dust', rather see it as 'dirt' or, even, 'soil'. He asserts that whenever the Jews are promised that their 'seed' will be blessed there is reference to 'land', because the successful planting of our people will only happen in the soil of Eretz Yisrael.

The truly original idea in this version of the blessing is UFARATZTA, 'you will spread'. Actually, Rashi doesn't see the blessing as spread or expansion. He says that really the term means 'become strong' (as in Sh'mot 1:12). The Ibn Ezra also doesn't imagine the blessing as becoming far flung, and he renders it: Thou shall multiply or increase, as in B'reishit 30:43.

Most of the world sees this as a prophecy that Jews will be everywhere on the face of the globe. This expansion of our progeny to the far flung corners of the globe is a revelation never mentioned before by God in the Divine communications with Avraham and, certainly not, with Yitzchak.

Many commentaries understand this as a prediction of the vast exile of the

Jewish people throughout the globe. There is no country on the surface of our planet without Jews. We are ubiquitous. Apparently, our ability to bless and influence all the other inhabitants of our planet to become ethical monotheists is predicated upon our being everywhere.

So, we'll be numerous, far flung and a positive influence. Cool!

Harav David Stav sees another crucial reality in our verse, which should never be ignored. We neglect this idea at our peril. And what is this idea? We must never only see our earthly mission as Jewish nationalism. We spread, we bless, we influence, because we care about every human being.

He explains:

This version of nation building does not consider the nation's growth and prosperity the be-all and end-all of our existence. Rather, the focus is that the blessing on this nation will lead to blessings for the entire world - "and all families of the Earth will be blessed through you." With this in mind, we can interpret the word UFARATZTA completely differently. UFARATZTA is what beckons us to reject the simplistic notion that by coming together as a nation and as a family, we ignore the needs of others. Over the generations, our nation has produced scientists and thinkers completely devoted to bettering the

entire world. Our prophets conveyed a strong message of hope to the weak and underprivileged of all nations. They called for the shattering of the tyranny of the strong, regardless of which nation was under its yoke, and they blessed the other nations through the blessing they received.

Rav Stav looks at the seed of Ya'akov Avinu and sees a complex mission. Yes, we must build Medinat Yisrael, but we also must have a positive influence on the greater world around us. As heirs to the legacy of the AVOT we have so much to share with the world. We can't ignore that call.

Throughout history, antisemites have twisted Jewish influence and spread into a sinister cabal. We must counter these lies by fulfilling the true meaning of UFARATZTA: a healthy spreading outward in a way that benefits all humanity. The blessing is not simply a prediction - it is an obligation. 🧐

Rav Kook Torah



by Rabbi Chanan Morrison
www.ravkooktorah.com

The Blessing of a Scholar's Presence

After working at Lavan's ranch for 14 years, Yaakov was anxious to return

home, to the Land of Israel. Lavan, however, was not eager to let his nephew go. “I have observed the signs”, he told Yaakov, “and God has blessed me for your sake” (B'reishit 30:27).

The Talmud (B'rachot 42a) points out that Lavan's good fortune was not due only to Yaakov's industriousness and hard work. “Blessing comes in the wake of a Torah scholar”, the Sages taught. The very presence of a saintly scholar brings with it blessings of success and wealth.

Yet, this phenomenon seems unfair. Why should a person be blessed just because he was in the proximity of a Torah scholar?

The Influence of a Tzadik

To answer this question, we must understand the nature of a tzadik and his profound impact on those around him. The presence of a Torah scholar will inspire even a morally corrupt individual to limit his destructive acts. As a result of this positive influence, material benefits will not be abused, and divine blessings will be utilized appropriately. Such an individual, by virtue of a refining influence, has become an appropriate recipient for God's blessings.

In addition to the case of Lavan and Yaakov, the Talmud notes a second example of “Blessing coming in the wake of a Torah scholar.” The Torah

relates that the prosperity of the Egyptian officer Potifar was in Yosef's merit (B'reishit 39:5). In some aspects, this case is more remarkable.

Unlike Lavan, Potifar was not even aware of the source of his good fortune. Nonetheless, Yosef's presence helped raise the ethical level of the Egyptian's household, making it more suitable to receive God's blessings.

Gold from the Land of Israel. Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. II, pp. 187-188

The Daily Portion - Sivan Rahav Meir

When “fleeing from” becomes “going towards”

Translation by Yehoshua Siskin

In this week's Torah portion, Yaakov is compelled to hastily leave his home since his brother Eisav is out to kill him. He runs away to Charan, destitute and alone.

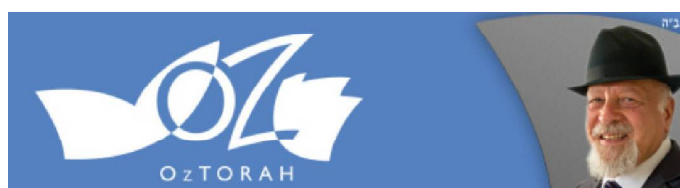
Yet Yaakov's departure had taken on new meaning as prior to leaving he was summoned by his father Yitzchak (in last week's Torah portion), who blessed him while adjuring him to perpetuate the family legacy. Go to Charan, Yitzchak tells Yaakov, since the time has come for you to find a

wife, establish a family, and be the progenitor of a new nation.

Yaakov had been transformed from a refugee fleeing for his life to a builder – not only of his own future, but the future of the entire nation of Israel. He was not longer “fleeing from” but proactive, “going towards”.

Our commentators suggest that it is worthwhile to adopt this perspective when examining both our personal lives and the life of our nation. When confronted with a formidable challenge, instead of lamenting our fate, we can find an inspiring mission meant especially for us, but perhaps for our family and friends as well. When attached to a divine mission, an apparently unpleasant or even dangerous reality becomes an uplifting opportunity to embrace.

To receive Sivan Rahav-Meir's daily
WhatsApp: tiny.cc/DailyPortion



by Rabbi Dr Raymond Apple z"l

Yaakov's Prayer

It's a well known idea that when the Torah says (B'reishit 28:11) that Yaakov "encountered the place", it means that he prayed.

HAMAKOM, "The Place", is one of the names of God, who is in every place. (HAMAKOM can also be understood as the holy site of the Beit HaMikdash).

What was the nature of Yaakov's prayer?

The essence of his words is, "If God will be with me and guard me, then He will be my God" (28:20).

It appears to be selfish: if God looks after me, then I will accept Him as my God. There is an implication: but if He doesn't look after me and guard me, then He will not be my God.

Before giving a serious answer, let me recall an incident.

A bridegroom told me that he would not come to the synagogue service on the Shabbat before his wedding because Shabbat was his busiest day and he would lose a lot of money if he had to close the shop. Only if God promised to make up the money would he come for an Aufruf.

I couldn't make that promise on God's behalf, though I did persuade the young man that his bride was worth it and he should come to shule for her sake.

Think about his argument: "If God does something for me, I will do something for God; but if God doesn't

cooperate, neither will I". Is that what Yaakov was also saying?

Maybe the rabbis are registering a protest against the making-a-bargain theory when they say that what Yaakov was doing was praying.

Note what precedes Yaakov's words. Before he speaks God says, "I am with you and I will guard you" (verse 15), and Yaakov responds, "Surely the Lord is in this place!" (verse 16).

He doesn't need to talk about HaShem being his God: he has found this already. Nor does he need to make a bargain ("If God will be with me...") - he already has God's promise.

So what is Yaakov really saying?

His "if" is not conditional, but a prayer: "Please, God, may it be thus, that You will be with me, guard me and be my God."

Lifting the Feet

Though the translation reads, "And Yaakov proceeded on his way", the Hebrew words are VAYISA YA'AKOV RAGLAV - literally, "And Yaakov lifted up his feet."

According to the sages of the Midrash, the verse means the same as the English phrase, "there was spring in his step."

Having been buoyed and reassured by his dream and God's promise of protection, Yaakov was in a state of exhilaration.

No longer was he afraid of what the future might bring. No longer was he apprehensive that disaster was around the corner. No longer did he fear the worst.

A different explanation is suggested by a close examination of the verb NASA, "to lift up".

It is often used in relation to parts of the body. It frequently accompanies a reference to the eyes, e.g. "Avraham lifted up his eyes" (22:4). It comes together with the voice, e.g. "Eisav lifted up his voice" (27:38). It even comes with the heart, e.g. "Let us lift up our heart" (Eicha 3:41).

In this latter sense it is the origin of the long-running British hymn-singing program, "Lift up your hearts".

There is, of course, a mood of elation in this use of lifting up the heart, even though the original text probably meant something more sombre, i.e. "Let us think seriously", since the heart in Biblical psychology generally indicates the mind and not necessarily the emotions.

What all these instances of the verb NASA indicate may therefore be that "to lift up" is a more or less idiomatic

way of describing a part of the body starting to function. -OZ

Y'HI ZICHRO BARUCH

Sedra Highlight

- Dr Jacob Solomon

VAYEITZEI

For years, I have thought of Parashat Vayetzei as a down-to-earth, Torah-grounded, pre-Business Studies 101 practical primer. Business includes dealing with people's ambitions and their often unconscionable ways of maximizing their benefits and profits: "Business is Business". Our sources strongly imply another crucial dimension that do not form part of conventional Business Studies courses: G-d's role behind the scenes as overall judge who is viewing what is happening and will in due course redress any injustices.

This week's parasha as well as the previous week's include a series of deals. The Torah tells us that Ya'akov Avinu was a straightforward person: as Rashi implies, his activities were at the expense of no-one but himself. Yet in his transactions, it was he who seems to have momentarily taken advantage of the exhausted Eisav as the B'CHORA - the birthright - transferred to him. It was he who tricked his father Yitzchak into giving

him the B'RACHA - the blessing: as Yitzchak himself told Eisav: "Your brother came with deceit, and he already took your blessing" (27:35).

Yet this week's parasha shows Ya'akov not as the purveyor but as the object of sharp practice, under Lavan his uncle and employer. Perhaps an element of MIDA K'NEGED MIDA, measure for measure. We see how carefully he phrased his own contract of employment. "I will work with you seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter" (29:18). As Rashi emphasizes, he chose his words carefully. There was to be no substituting another one of his daughters, and no palming off another girl with the same name. Yet Lavan avoided actually signing the contract with a "yes, I agree", using the flattery of "better she goes to you than to anyone else" (ibid 19). In any case, after benefiting seven years loyal service, he 'set aside' the agreement by declaring it invalid as being in breach of local custom. Which earned Lavan another valuable product: an additional seven years of no-doubt highly profitable service.

Later on, business got still sharper over the matter of severance pay. On the face of it, Ya'akov Avinu made an offer that Lavan couldn't refuse. "You don't need to give me anything... I will come back and tend your sheep and

give them the best care" (30:32). All Lavan needed to do was to give him ordinary sheep and goats and he, Ya'akov, would take any of their future births that would show the abnormal characteristics of being spotted, speckled, or striped. Any such births if they would ever happen would be freaks of nature as neither of the parents would have such features. So short of the highly improbable, Lavan would get his services for free and Ya'akov would get nothing.

He wasn't to know that Ya'akov would devise a method using peeled wooden-post sticks that would somehow induce the births with those rare characteristics. That would make him extremely wealthy, though not at Lavan's expense. As he would tell Rachel and Leah "I served your father Lavan with all my strength. Your father swindled me and changed the conditions of my pay ten times over, but G-d would not let him harm me. If he said that the pay would come from the spotted ones, then all the animals would give birth to spotted young; if he said that the pay would come from the ringed ones, then all the animals would give birth to ringed ones" (31:6-8). Consider: those young cost Lavan nothing. Even though he repeatedly changed the terms, G-d stepped in Ya'akov's favour every time. Yet Lavan himself was still effectively

getting an additional six years service without having to pay a penny. For his own sheep had been tended with best care.

So we learn that ultimately G-d would redress the balance, though in completely unexpected ways. Eisav may have lost the birthright and the key blessing, but his father assured him that there would still be plenty of good things going for him, and that if Ya'akov's descendants would prove unworthy of the B'RACHA Eisav's offspring would step into the breach. Thus if Ya'akov used chicanery to obtain both L'SHEIM SHAMAYIM as he had no other way, his possession of both would have to remain L'SHEIM SHAMAYIM and nothing less, including in due course the 613 mitzvot and much besides. If Ya'akov had to use deception to obtain what he believed he should, part of his character training as one of the Avot would be to know what it is like to have been taken advantage of and - as he did - turn it to his advantage in fathering those who would become the 12 Tribes of Israel. And if Lavan had treated him unfairly over his daughter in getting another seven years of free service, he could turn that experience into a process that with G-d's cooperation would set him up materially with wealth for the rest of his life.

In a deeper sense then, our parasha is

a business primer. It carries the message that one has to be honest with the Almighty in one's deals, according to the standards He expects in the particular situation one is in. And at the same time, to make full use of the opportunities one is given in the faith that G-d is watching, taking note, and will in due course act justly and accordingly, even in ways that cannot be conceived and are totally unexpected.



Reprinted from Living the Halachic Process by Rabbi Daniel Mann - Eretz Hemdah, with their permission [www.erezhemdah.org]

Where to Light Chanuka Lights – Inside or Outside?

Question: Should I light my chanukiya¹ inside or outside?

Answer: [We share this response with the public hesitantly because it is far from clear that one who strives

to be machmir² would be acting appropriately in changing his minhag. However, we do not want to ignore a topic that has already been discussed publicly.]

Two pertinent points are clear. First, the standard Talmudic instructions and practice were to light chanukiyot outside.³ (One who lived in an attic put it in the window facing the street.⁴) Second, the longstanding custom in most Jewish communities has been to light inside.⁵ How do we explain this change and decide how to act nowadays?

The gemara⁶ says that in a time of danger, one should light on his table. The Itur⁷ notes that once the practice to light inside developed, although based on the danger to light outside, it continued. Many poskim assert⁸ that it is preferable to light outside, if it is possible to do so. (Rav Moshe Feinstein assumed that it was not possible in the United States in 1975, as was the case for his forebears in Europe.⁹) Rav Shternbach¹⁰ strengthens the impact of the historical danger on the recommended practice. He suggests that when part of the populace is in a dangerous

¹. Chanuka menorah.

². Follow the stringent opinion.

³. Shabbat 21b.

⁴. Ibid.

⁵. See *Ohr Zarua* II:323:2; Rama, *Orach Chayim* 671:7.

⁶. Op. cit.

⁷. *Chanuka*, pg. 114b.

⁸. Ibid.; see *Mikra'ei Kodosh* (Frank), *Chanuka* 16.

⁹. *Igrot Moshe*, *Orach Chayim* IV:125.

¹⁰. *Moadim U'Zemanim* II, 140.

state of affairs, everyone should light inside because we do not want some people taking risks under the pressure to keep up with others who are able to light outside.

Other historical explanations are given. The *Aruch HaShulchan*¹¹ speculates that when Jews moved to windy and rainy places, glass cases were needed to protect the chanukiyot. Besides detracting from the intended publicity that one is lighting for a mitzva, these cases are not always feasible or affordable. Thus, the minhag arose to light indoors. If the climate were a factor to be taken into account, there would be logic to distinguish between one place and another, especially in Israel, considering that the relevant Talmudic text was written there or nearby.¹²

At this point in our inquiry, it would still seem that those who can succeed in lighting outside in glass cases should try to do so. However, other factors may “level the playing field”. At the time we light the chanukiya, it should have the potential to burn for a half hour.¹³ If one opens the side of the case for the kindling and has to close it quickly before the wind blows out the

candles, shouldn't this be considered lighting in a place where the candles of the chanukiya, when they are being lit, would not last a half hour? Although there are reasonable answers to this question,¹⁴ some poskim maintain that if one cannot light the candles in a manner in which the wind will be kept out from the outset, it is better to light inside.¹⁵

Another problem with lighting outside, especially for those who live in apartment buildings, is that it is not always clear where exactly one should light. Is it at the door between one's apartment and the stairwell, at the entrance to the building, or at the edge of the sidewalk of the street, etc.? Is living on a higher floor considered like being in an attic?¹⁶ Halachic research can provide sensible solutions for most circumstances. However, the fact that the minhag to light inside has been around for so long has made it more difficult to find sources providing answers to these questions. Therefore, this doubt as to precisely where to light outside may be yet another reason to continue lighting inside, as was almost universally done just a generation ago. Furthermore, if we light in the window facing the street,¹⁷ the mitzva

¹¹. *Orach Chayim* 671:24.

¹². Our experience, however, tells us that it can be plenty rainy and windy in Israel around the time of Chanuka.

¹³. See *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim* 675:2.

¹⁴. See *Mikra'ei Kodesh* ibid. 17.

¹⁵. See *Torat HaMo'adim, Chanuka* 3:3.

¹⁶. See *Torat HaMo'adim* ibid. 2.

¹⁷. See *Igrot Moshe, Orach Chayim* IV, 125, based on *Magen Avraham* 671:8.

of publicizing the miracle is performed properly (on lower floors), and the chumra¹⁸ of lighting outside may not turn out to be preferable at all.

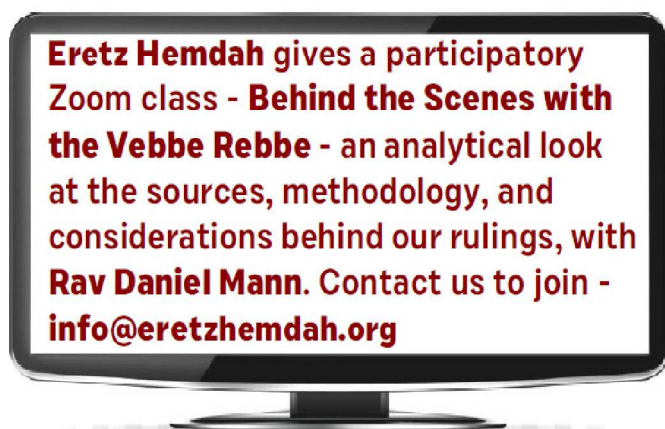
Summarizing, there is an apparent advantage in lighting outside. However, since there are strong reasons not to require it, we would discourage lighting outside in places where it is not an accepted practice or where it could encourage vandalism or anti-Semitism. In areas where both practices are prevalent (especially in certain communities in Israel), one who can light outside in a manner that does not generate significant doubts may prefer to do so, but he should not feel obligated to change from his family tradition .

The Weekly 'Hi All' by Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld

VAYEITZEI 5785

When the Torah tells us that in order to marry Rachel, Yaakov will have to serve Lavan for seven years, we read a verse which has dumfounded many of our commentators and left them somewhat incredulous. "So, Yaakov worked for Rachel seven years, but they appeared to him like a few days because of his love for her" (29:20). But isn't the reality quite the opposite; when one longs for something precious, does not the wait seem like an eternity? And yet, here we are told that, for Yaakov, the seven years seemed like but a few days!

Among the answers proffered is the clever response of the Tzeida LaDerech (R. Yissachar Dov Eilenberg, 16-17th c.) who asserts that the seven-year period was indeed experienced as interminable - like living each of the individual 2557 days of the seven-year span separately. Another solution, suggested by the S'forno (ad loc.) , understands YAMIM ACHADIM to refer to how Yaakov viewed his dowry obligation to Lavan. "Is Rachel's value to be measured by only seven years of labor? Why, she is worth far more than seven years. In fact, the seven years seem like a



¹⁸. Stringency.

pittance - but a few days - YAMIM ACHADIM, compared to the inestimable treasure she truly is!"

But perhaps one of the most meaningful and psychologically insightful explanations comes from Malbim's commentary on that verse. And while his answer appears in earlier sources, his explication of the matter is articulated best. But first, let us frame Malbim's response in philosophical terms. How does one experience *duree* - the passage of time? One can either perceive time quantitatively as *chronos*, with one minute following the next in numerical mathematical sequence. Or, time can be experienced qualitatively as *elan vital*, a term coined by French philosopher, Henri Bergson, to mean a creative pulsating force, a dynamic living experience in which every moment has intrinsic significance. To count time chronologically is to position oneself at some temporal point between past and future for some practical utility, e.g., I need to keep an appointment, to catch a plane, to spend an hour preparing a proposal, etc. However, to experience time means to cultivate a time awareness which allows one to actually live within a moment, when the past and future can magically conflate into the present. When, for example, at the *simcha* of your child's wedding, you can almost feel the presence of time embracing you: past

memories of your child flood the mind and future pictures of the young married couple dance in your happy imagination.

If this distinction holds, we can return to Malbim's explanation. A time period can seem endless when the focus of one's attention is the satisfaction you crave. In such a case, you simply want to countdown the days until the pleasurable item/event is attained. The greater the desire and anticipated enjoyment, the longer the wait seems. And this for the following reason: If my reason for waiting is primarily self-serving, then until that object is realized, I experience a vacuum, an absence. Something is missing; and when I become acutely aware of this "blank", this unfulfilled benefit and prize so eagerly anticipated, I am quickly totally focused on the anxiety - the itchiness - of the "wait", and then time goes by so very slowly.

If, as Malbim contends, the main purpose of marriage is the satisfaction of consensual desire, be it physical or psychological, the chronological awareness of the "wait" will appear endless. The ever-mounting tension and impatience will make days seem like years. The emotional ache in panting for the climactic culminating joy, much like any pain, will be experienced as taking forever. But, what if the focus of one's attention is about the other; what if

my foremost consideration is not about how some distant event will make me feel, but rather on the event itself in the here and now, on the person right now without obsessing whether he/she will lavish me with pleasure later on. If my time awareness is outer-directed, oriented toward appreciating the other, then every deed and effort, every present moment spent is filled with meaning and thus with incredible joy. I experience constant and instantaneous pleasure by virtue of that person's very existence, a person whom I admire and revere. And although the relationship has not actually consummated in marriage, the simple presence of my future partner - a Rachel, aglow with righteousness and goodness - is enough to afford me boundless happiness and appreciation. In a word, when you are happy in the moment, time flies by very quickly!

Malbim then continues. Why did Yaakov love Rachel? True, he was away from home and felt terribly lonely, and Rachel would certainly provide the companionship he so desperately longed for. But, for Yaakov, Rachel was not simply an object of future physical desire and psychological comfort. She was destiny in the here and now! Something far more momentous was afoot. Yaakov could sense it, even intuit a tomorrow of imposing and

magnificent providence. And in that future, Yaakov knew and could foresee that Rachel was to be his companion in the realization of that destiny. And so, he worked "for her, because of her" - because of who she was - her stellar virtues and beautiful attributes. That Yaakov could not be with Rachel in marriage and had to wait seven years was of minor, secondary importance. His love for her was such that every minute of work was suffused with her presence. It was as if she was by his side in the field, while he tended the flocks in the meadow - everywhere! And so, precisely because Yaakov bonded virtually with Rachel at every instant, the seven years flew by - YAMIM ACHADIM!

With this interpretation of Malbim, an important truth about enhancing the quality of our lives is immediately disclosed. If, as we age, we "mark time", count down the days and years, finish off our yesterdays, with our tomorrows nothing more than a "couch potato" existence, then our time feels empty. There is only so much entertainment and physical indulgence a person can stomach. Soon, the vacant hours and minutes weigh heavily upon our consciousness and we want to "kill time". It goes by so very slowly. But, if instead, we choose to break out of our self-chosen selfhood and invite other people into our lives, not just to

satisfy our needs, but to join with them toward accomplishing something of lasting value, then each of our days transforms into something unique and special. There is a flush of meaning and purpose that actually feels it can last forever. Instead of wanting to "kill time", when we are "we", we will now want to hold onto every moment and experience the sheer wonder of it all. In a word, when we invite others into our world, we happily discover that we've succeeded in stretching our years into days - YAMIM ACHADIM. And if that "we" includes just myself and Gd, well, I've captured infinity in the moment and my every day is truly ACHADIM - unique and memorable!

The poet (William Blake) put it so beautifully when he said:

*To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.*

And as the great Psalmist advised that although: "The days of our years are seventy; or if by reason of special strength, eighty years... it is soon cut off, and we fly away... So [therefore], teach us to number our days, that we may get a heart of wisdom" (T'hilim 90:10,12). 🙌



VAYEITZEI

GM One type of Gimatriya Match that we have found is the Bookend GM. Obviously, a made-up name, it is the match of two p'sukim from the beginning and the end of a particular story or portion in the Torah. Take a look at B'reishit 28:12 in Vayeitzei -

וַיּוֹזֶלֶם וְהִנֵּה סֹלֶם בָּמַצָּב אֶרֶצָה וְרֹאשׁוֹ
בַּמַּצִּיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִמָה וְהִנֵּה מַלְאָכָי אֱלֹהִים
עֹלִים וְיֹרְדִים בּוֹ:

*And he (Yaakov) dreamed, and behold!
a ladder set up on the ground and its
top reached to heaven; and behold,
angels of God were ascending and
descending upon it.*

That's one of the p'sukim that describes the beginning of Yaakov's journey from Eretz Yisrael to Chutz LaAretz and back again - which is Parshat Vayeitzei. And one of the p'sukim that describes Yaakov on his way back to Eretz Yisrael is B'reishit 31:14 -

וַתַּעַן רָחֵל וְלֵאָה וַתֹּאמְרֶנָּה לֹא הָעוֹד
לָנוּ וְנִלְקָה וְנִזְוָלָה בְּבֵית אָבִינוּ:

And Rachel and Leah replied and said

to him, "Do we still have a share or an inheritance in our father's house?"

The two p'sukim are GMs at 2435. Not a perfect set of Bookends, but close enough.

GM Here's another BGM (Bookends Gimatriya Match). We come from Avraham and Sara, Yitzchak and Rivka, Yaakov and Rachel & Leah (with help from Bilha & Zilpa). One pasuk we can point to, though, as the beginning of Bnei Yisrael is B'reishit 29:32 -

וַתֵּהָר לֵאָה וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ
רְאוּבֵן כִּי אָמְרָה כִּי־רָאָה ה' בְּעֵינַי
כִּי עָתָה יֵאָהֲבֵנִי אִישִׁי:

"Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuven. 'God has seen my troubles,' she said. 'Now my husband will love me.'"

That's the first little shoot from the ground. Here is a pasuk that shows us the tree which bloomed from it - Bamidbar 7:2 -

וַיִּקְרִיבוּ נְשִׂאֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל רֹאשֵׁי בֵּית
אֲבֹתָם הֵם נְשִׂאֵי הַמִּטּוֹת הֵם
הָעֹמְדִים עַל־הַפָּקָדִים:

"The princes of Israel, who were the heads of their paternal lines, then came forward. They were the leaders of the tribes and the ones who had directed the census."

The two p'sukim are GMs at 4035.

USFUNEI T'MUNEI CHOL is the working title of my hopeful book of Gimatriya Matches. The title translates to Hidden in the Sand. That's how I feel about my Gimatriya searches. Like walking along the beach with a metal detector. Beep-beep-beep. Lean down and find something. Usually, nothing of note. But sometimes you find something special.

RED ALERT!

VAYEITZEI

by Rabbi Eddie Davis (RED)
of the Young Israel of Hollywood -
Ft. Lauderdale (Florida)

DIVREI TORAH

- Rashi comments on the first verse that when a Tzadik, a righteous person leaves a city, the glory of the city suffers a great deal. The Ozneyim LaTorah questions the validity of that statement in this case. When Yaakov left that city, Yitzchak was still there the whole time he was gone. Wouldn't the city still have its glory with Yitzchak present? He answers that the glory would still have its glory if Yitzchak was active and healthy. But now Yitzchak was blind and housebound. He was no longer active and could no longer have an influence on the people of that city. In essence, in his declining years nobody took

notice of his presence. When Yaakov left, and leaving an aged, declining father in his past, the city definitely felt its loss. Yitzchak's condition made Yaakov's absence more seriously felt.

- The Midrash states that when Yaakov left town, he did not go directly to Padan Aram. He first went to learn at the Yeshiva of Sheim and Eiver. Yaakov had lived his entire life at home, learning with father Yitzchak. What subjects did he now learn in this Yeshiva that he did not learn with his father? The standard answer was he needed to learn how to deal with non-Jews. Oznayim LaTorah wrote that he now needed to learn how to act properly as a husband. He needed to learn about married life. I see much wisdom from this interpretation. Today, in most all of male Yeshivas, nothing is taught to the young men about how to treat your wife. The Rambam wrote in his Code of Jewish Law, some gems of wisdom to discuss with all single young men and women on the subject, and it is well worth the time to learn them.

- During the Dream of the Ladder, Hashem made some promises to Yaakov as Yaakov was leaving Eretz Yisrael and venturing outside his isolated monotheistic environment. In response, Yaakov acknowledged to act according to Hashem's directives.

He furthermore pledged to donate back to Hashem one tenth of his earnings (28:22). In today's world, we also try to maintain that rule: to give to Tzedaka a tenth of our earnings. Halachists ask the question whether this rule is a Torah law or a Rabbinic law or is it just a custom. I believe that giving a tenth is a custom. I feel this is so because the ritual is quite flexible. We give according to our means. The Vilna Gaon, in the 18th century, wrote an ethical will to his sons in which he suggested to them to give 20% of their earnings to Tzedaka.

- When the Torah introduces Lavan to us (29:5), he is called Lavan the son of Nachor. But we know that that's not true. Nachor was Lavan's grandfather; his father was Betuel, Nachor's son. But the Torah is dealing with Nachor's Yichus, his pedigree. Nachor was the Patriarch of that family. He was the general. All the people of that area knew about and recognized the Patriarch Nachor. He was the general and head of that tribe. And later when Lavan and Yaakov discussed their issues, Lavan said: May the god of Nachor's judge between us (31:53). Every day in our prayers, we identify ourselves to Hashem as the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, as if they were alive in leading our people.

- Leah was Yaakov's first wife, but

she was feeling as if she was hated by her husband. This was not true. She was loved by Yaakov, but not as loved as Rachel was in Yaakov's life. I feel that Yaakov loved all of his wives, albeit not equally. He did love Rachel more than all the others. [Note: A woman once came into my office and stated bluntly to me that her husband loved his first wife much more than he loved her. The first wife had died several years before she met her current husband. She made the comment nonchalantly and without any bitterness. After all, she explained that she was alright with this because the deceased wife was really not her competition. She was dead. And a man can love two women in his life. Even if it is not equally.]

- Yaakov was a veteran in dealing with Lavan. Lavan was a deceitful, greedy person from day one. After Lavan had switched wives on Yaakov, he was willing to give Rachel to Yaakov as a wife "on credit". He felt he could trust Yaakov to work an additional seven years. Really, when you think about it, Yaakov should not have been required to work any additional time to marry Rachel. He already fulfilled that deal. He worked FOR RACHEL. It was Lavan who substituted Leah for Rachel. Yaakov was not obligated to work at all for Leah. That was Lavan's decision, to give Leah to Yaakov. Yaakov must have been so much in love with

Rachel that he quickly agreed with Lavan's offer. Yaakov realized that he would gain substantially by sticking around and not uprooting his quickly growing family.

- Lavan already influenced Yaakov greatly. In this Parsha, Yaakov had two dreams. In the first dream, there was a ladder stretching from earth to heaven with angels ascending and descending. It was a meaningful and spiritual dream. The second dream was Lavan's influence on him. Yaakov's mind was completely immersed in the flocks. He dreamed of spotted and speckled he-goats mounting the flock. Lavan was successful in transforming Yaakov from a spiritual person to a man whose thoughts were now about material wealth. He abandoned spirituality completely. It was immediately after this dream of material gain that Hashem appeared to Yaakov and told him that it is time to "Get up now and leave this land!" (31:13).

- MIDRASH. When Leah named her first son Reuven, the Talmud (B'rachot 7b) states that Leah was pointing out the greatness of this son. When Eisav sold the Birthright to Yaakov, Eisav caused a big deal over the results of the sale. When Reuven would lose his Birthright to Yosef, Reuven not only did not complain, but he was the son who protected Yosef,

when Reuven stopped his brothers from killing Yosef by suggesting that they throw Yosef in the pit. It was Reuven's plan to take Yosef from the pit and return him to their father.

Questions by RED

From the text

1. What did Hashem promise Yaakov in the Dream of the Ladder? (28:15)
2. What name did Yaakov give the place where he had the dream? (28:19)
3. What did Yaakov pledge to Lavan in order to marry Lavan's daughter? (29:18)
4. What is the meaning of the name Shimon? (29:33)
5. What did Yaakov "steal" from Lavan? (31:20)

From Rashi

6. Where on the map of Israel did Yaakov experience the Dream of the Ladder? (28:15)
7. Why did Yaakov cry when he met Rachel at the well? (29:11)
8. What did Rachel do to earn Hashem's kindness for Him to permit her to become pregnant? (30:22)
9. Why did Rachel steal her father's Terafim? (31:20)
10. Why did Rachel die when she was so young? (31:32)

From the Rabbis

11. How did Lavan justify to Yaakov that he had to substitute Leah for Rachel on the wedding night? (Rav Hoffman)
12. Did Yaakov pray for Rachel to become pregnant? (Ramban)
13. How did Yaakov know how to get the sheep to give birth to abnormally colored animals? (Rabbeinu Bachya)

Midrash

14. How was Yaakov punished for being away from his parents for so many years?

Haftara - Hoshei'a

15. Which tribe in particular is admonished by Hoshei'a?

Relationships

- a) Shimon - Yocheved
- b) Dina - Zerach
- c) Yavan - Canaan
- d) Binyamin - Mupim
- e) Pinchas - Uri

ANSWERS

1. That Hashem will protect Yaakov everywhere that he will go, and Hashem will return him to Israel.
2. Beit El
3. That Yaakov would work for Lavan for seven years.
4. That Hashem heard that Leah was unloved. The word Shimon comes from the Hebrew word “to hear”.
5. Lavan’s heart, by not telling him that he and his family were leaving.
6. On top of Mt. Moriah.
7.
 - 1) Because Yaakov saw, through a divine spirit, that Yaakov and Rachel would not be buried together, and
 - 2) that Yaakov came to Charan empty handed, with no gifts for her and her family.
8. She gave her sister the signs that Yaakov had given Rachel.
9. Rachel wanted to separate her father from worshiping idols.
10. Because Yaakov said to Lavan that the person who stole Lavan’s Terafim shall die.
11. The community compelled him to do it. The city did not permit a younger daughter to marry before the older daughter.
12. Yes, he did. But he admonished his

wife for thinking that he could influence Hashem.

13. An angel told him.

14. Yaakov would become separated from his son Yosef for the same number of years.

15. Efrayim

Relationships

- a) Uncle & Niece
- b) Aunt & Nephew
- c) First Cousins
- d) Father & Son
- e) Second Cousins