PHILOTORAH להיו

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה׳ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וֵאלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁתִּשְׁלַח מְהֵרָה רְפוּאָה שְׁלֵמָה מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם,
רְפוּאַת הַנֶּפֶשׁ וּרְפוּאַת הַגּוּף לְפְצוּעֵי הַמִּלְחָמוֹת, וּלְנִפְגָּעֵי מַעֲשֵׂי טֶרוֹר וְאַנְטִישֶׁמִיוּת
בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וּבְכָל מָקוֹם שֶׁהֵם – עִם שְׁאָר 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 end these wars with total success and peace for Medinat Yisrael and Klal Yisrael wherever we are.



YERUSHALAYIM in/out for Parshat VAYEITZEI

November 20-21, '26 • י״א כסלו ה׳תשפ״ז

4:03PM Plag **3:32PM** • **5:16PM** R' Tam **5:49PM**

Use the Z'MANIM link for other locales

PhiloTorah (333vytz) - 1 - all at once file



Kiddush L'vana

In any month, the last opportunity for saying Kiddush L'vana is half way between the month's molad and the next month's molad.

That point in time is called the NIGUD when the Sun and the Moon are opposite each other from the perspective on Earth.

Know that the timings we use when there is no Sanhedrin but rather a fixed calendar are based on the average time it takes the Moon to go through a cycle of phases and not the actual, astronomical time.

So the time from the molad until the nigud is half of 29d 12h 44m 1p, which is 14d 18h 22m.

The molad of Kislev 5787 was on Monday, November 16th at 10:06pm.

The nigud - the last time for KL is Tuesday, December 1st at 10:28am. This means that the last op for KL is Monday night, November 30th - all night.

He's a big truck driver

Does that mean that he is a big person who drives a truck or is he a person who drives a big truck? It depends on where you pause in the original statement. He is a big-truck driver tells you one thing. He is a big truck-driver tells you something else. And saying that he is a big truck driver leaves you too uninformed. And why am I telling you this? So you can have some fun discussion at your Shabbat-Chanuka table.

Friday, December 4th this year is Erev Shabbat-Chanuka. But it isn't Erev-Shabbat Chanuka. Second candle is Motza'ei-Shabbat-Chanuka.

Fri, Dec 11 is Erev-Shabbat-Chanuka, but the following night is Motza'ei Shabbat-Chanuka and not Motza'ei-Shabbat-Chanuka.

Years with two Shabbatot Chanuka occur about 18% of the time. The last one was 5770, sixteen years ago. The next one is scheduled for next year.

When Chanuka is Shabbat to Shabbat, we read Vayeishev on the first one and Mikeitz on the second one. In such years, there are always two days Rosh Chodesh Tevet - Thursday and Friday. And Vayeishev-Chanuka is M'vorchim.

Turns out that when Chanuka begins on Shabbat, the first day of Rosh HaShana and the first day of Sukkot and Sh'mini Atzeret (a.k.a. Simchat Torah in Israel) were also on Shabbat.

According to Minhag Yerushalayim, Mizmor Shir Chanukat HaBayit L'David is the Psalm of only four of the days of Chanuka. ANYK!

VAYEITZEI

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

Written on 235.3 lines, ranks 12th

Vayeitzei 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-l'dot story. It is the Torah's longest Parsha S'tuma; Mikeitz is a single P'tucha parsha

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

Vayeitzei 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.

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 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 encountered 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 TERAFIM 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: VAYEIRED 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, and other reasons. 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, as well. 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.



A Faithful Nation

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

As we closed last week's parasha of To-l'dot, we read of Ya'akov Avinu's departure from his parent's home, following the request of his father to find a wife from his mother's family but, even more crucially, following the advice of his mother to escape the wrath of his brother Eisav who planned to kill him. This week's parasha of Vayeitzei picks up on that journey, opening with the words VAYEITZEI YA'AKOV, that Ya'akov left Be'er Sheva on his way to Charan. Our haftara echoes the opening verse of the parasha with the words of Hoshe'a VAYIVRACH YISRA'EL S'DEI ARAM", describing how Ya'akov fled to the field of Aram.

Although we might see nothing unusual with that statement, Rav Moshe Lichtenstein reveals to us important insights that are uncovered in the prophetic words of Hoshe'a. To begin with, it is highly unusual to find a review of patriarchal stories in the books of the nevi'im.

Although we might find the mention of the personalities of our Avot or Imahot, we almost never read of the events or episodes that our patriarchs experienced. The fact that the final chapters of Sefer Hoshe'a (Hoshe'a 9-10; 12-13) DOES do that makes it quite unique. And WHY he does that requires a look at our haftara.

Rav Lichtenstein points out that the repetitive theme found in the haftara is that of NE'EMANUT, faithfulness, fidelity, or, more precisely, a LACK of faithfulness. The navi condemns Israel, that is, the Northern Kingdom, for their rebellious ways, specifically, their ongoing idolatry and pagan worship. Hoshe'a underscores that infidelity by comparing Israel to a wayward wife who leaves her husband to seek another partner. However, Rav Lichterstein suggests, there is yet another type of infidelity. It is not a search to attach to another who she regards as better, kinder, wealthier - one to whom she would be faithful. Rather, it was a search simply for "another" ... and then "another".

Yishayahu, Rav Lichtenstein suggests, often fought against idolatry when Israel chose another "deity", believing that the different "god" was more powerful and therefore, should be worshiped. But Hoshe'a battled against an idolatry that led Israel from one 'divinity' to another, causing the nation to constantly search for ... another to save them from one threat or another. It was a faithlessness that denied their past and ignored all that Hashem had done for them in exchange for ... anyone. It was pure disloyalty to G-d.

And this is how Hoshe'a gets to the story of Ya'akov. When closely analyzing the story, we will realize that Ya'akov was the model of NE'EMANUT. He loved Rachel and remained faithful to her, even when it meant working for seven more years to win her hand. He is deceived by Lavan, cheated and misled - but never leaves him, remaining faithful to his pledge. In both situations the sacrifice was great. Who would wait faithfully for seven years in order to marry his betrothed? Who would remain in the house of one who had cheated him and would remain faithful to a promise made to such a deceitful person - all the while longing to return home to see his elderly parents?

Faithfulness requires sacrifice, and the long history of our people has proven that we have internalized the lesson that Hoshe'a taught so long ago. Over our many years we have - and continue - to make that sacrifice. Sacrifice for the G-d of Israel, the Torah of Israel and the Land of Israel. It is a sacrifice and a faithfulness that

no other people have ever shown.

Indeed, we have the right to read this haftara of rebuke with pride and not with shame. We have learned what Hoshe'a's generation did not. These past years prove that we have learned well to sacrifice. Simply, because ... we are a faithful nation.

ParshaPix explanations

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

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 is mentioned in Targum Onkelos, 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 • A Teddy 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 SULAM YAAKOV, 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 • that’s the flag of

Trinidad and Tobago, TT as in TITI • 90-1, 30-20, 2-20, 300-2, 8-40-50-5. They stand for the 5 words in the sedra that VAYEI - 9-1 is TZADI-ALEF as in VAYEITZEI. 30-20 is LAMED-CHAF as in VAYEILECH, VAYEIVK (he cried), VAYEISHEV, and VAYEICHAM-NA • One Unexplained

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

Rabbi Sack's article and the Family edition can be accessed by the link on the main grid of philotorah.co

Message from the Haftara

Rabbi Katriel (Kenneth) Brander
President and Rosh HaYeshiva
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Rachel's Imperfect Journey Toward Faith

VAYEITZEI

Parshat Vayeitzei introduces us to the matriarch Rachel, whose spiritual path was very different from that of the matriarchs before her. Like Sara, Rivka, and Leah, she did not inherit her faith; she had to discover it for herself. But unlike them, Rachel's relationship with God developed mainly through doubt, uncertainty, obstacles, and setbacks. For those of us who struggle with faith, that makes her story very much our own.

Rav Amnon Bazak suggests that much can be learned about Rachel's spiritual development by comparing her with the earlier matriarchs. When Rivka first learned of the possibility of marrying Yitzchak, she ran to tell her mother (B'reishit 24:28), apparently the spiritual figure in the family. By contrast, upon first meeting Yaakov, Rachel "ran to tell her father" (29:12) – Lavan, hardly the most pious figure in the text. This early association offers a clue to the influences that shaped her.

When Rachel cannot have children, the Torah tells us that she "became envious of her sister" (30:1), a word never used to describe Sara, even with Hagar. In her pain, Rachel confronts Yaakov, she speaks fiercely: "Give me children! If not, let me die!" (ibid.). Unlike Sara, there is no NA, no "please". Her words are not a request or a prayer, but a demand. Hence Yaakov's reprimand: "Am I in place of God, who has kept you from having children?" (v. 2). His response reminds her that God is the only one with the power to grant children. When Sara faced hardship, she

turned to God; when Rivka's pregnancy troubled her, "she went to inquire of God" (25:22). Rachel's petitions, however, do not mention God at all.

In the only conversation the Torah recounts between Rachel and Leah, over the mandrakes [duda'im], Rachel is willing to give up a night with Yaakov in exchange for a plant-substance traditionally associated with fertility (v.15). Once again, she seeks a transactional solution rather than explicitly turning to God.

Still, we eventually read: "Then God remembered Rachel and listened to her and enabled her to conceive" (v.22). Perhaps Rachel had been praying all along, even if the Torah does not describe it; perhaps not with the proactive efforts of the earlier matriarchs, or Leah, who invokes God repeatedly in naming her children. When Yosef is born, Rachel acknowledges God's role, but with an eye to the future: "May the LORD grant me another son also" (v.24). But with Rachel, it is not about acknowledging the current gift of a child but about the future. Her words suggest a developing faith, shaped by years of experience and introspection. Like many of us, Rachel does not come to spirituality easily; she is her father's daughter.

Then comes the remarkable episode of the theft of Lavan's terafim, his household idols (31:19). Rashi's well-known explanation is that Rachel took them to prevent her father from worshiping them. Ibn Ezra challenges this position (ibid.), asking: if so, why not simply throw them away? Shadal (ibid.) offers a more troubling possibility: Rachel wanted to use them for herself – not for worship, for by now she was loyal to God, but for divination, to learn whether and when God would grant her more children.

As she dies giving birth to her youngest son, Rachel names him Ben Oni (35:18), traditionally understood as "the son of my sorrow". But the Hebrew word ONI can also denote iniquity, wickedness, trouble, or wrongdoing. Strikingly, one thousand years later, the prophet Zechariya links the word terafim to falsehood , a word that also echoes the name Ben Oni: "For the terafim spoke falsely" (Zechariya 10:2).

Perhaps, beyond its familiar meaning as an expression of sorrow, the name Ben Oni also reflects Rachel's recognition of the failures, mistakes and falsehoods in her life and in her relationship with God. In her final moments, she completes a process of teshuva.

And perhaps that is why, in Yirmiyahu's prophetic vision (31:14), it is Rachel who is heard "weeping for her children". She can plead for the Jewish people when they are

suffering precisely because she understands their struggles. She knows what it means to search for answers in the wrong places and to find a path back to God. She can say: They can do teshuva; they can grow. I am that person. Rachel is the matriarch whose own experience gives her the compassion to advocate for her children.

Her journey is the message of our haftara as well. Hoshei'a exposes the people's deceit and guile, their idolatry and superstition: "Now their sinning goes on and on; they cast graven images from their silver, mold idols as they understood, each entirely the craft of men" (Hoshei'a 13:2). Yet the prophet also insists powerfully that return is possible: "O Israel, return, go back to the Lord your God, for you have stumbled in your own sinfulness. Take words of remorse with you and return to the Lord" (14:2–3). God promises to forgive their rebellion: "I will mend their rebellion with gracious love, for I have turned My anger away from them" (v.5). True security lies not in household idols or other sources, but in God: "your help is to be found in Me" (13:9).

Rachel's story reminds us that faith does not always come easily or develop in a straight line. This message is especially relevant today, when so many of us are grappling with loss, uncertainty, and questions without easy answers. We may seek reassurance in places that cannot provide it, or mistake doubt for spiritual failure. But Rachel teaches us that the struggle itself can be part of our growth.

That is the promise of Hoshei'a's call to return, and of Rachel's tears for her children. However far we may have wandered, the possibility of finding our way back always remains open.

PTDT

PhiloTorah D'var Torah

Not Yet... Not Yet... Not Yet... NOW!

I'll tell you in advance that I don't have a good explanation for what I'm about to write, but it is a significant observation.

Note: Read "according to some commentaries" before anything I write - so I don't have to write it repeatedly.

Avraham Avinu and Sara Imeinu were married way back before their names were changed. It wasn't until Avraham was 70 years old that G-d told him that he would indeed have descendants. It is as if G-d had said

Not yet. From that moment, it took another 16 years before Avraham was a father. But HaShem still said, Not yet. And then, 13 years later, HaShem sent angels to Avraham to tell him that Sara will bear a son from him and that the baby should be called Yitz-chak. A year later, Yitzchak was born. And still HaShem said, Not yet.

Then when Yitzchak was 40 years old he married Rivka. It took 20 more years until Yitzchak became a father of twins. He was 60 years old. Why do I state the obvious, that 40+20=60? Because the Torah makes a point of the timeline. Avraham is 160 when he became a grandfather. G-d continues to say, Not yet.

At age 15, Yaakov acquires the B'CHORA from his twin, Eisav. It wasn't until Yaakov and Eisav were 63 years old, that Yaakov received the B'RACHA from Yitzchak that Yitz-chak had intended to give to Eisav. And then, shortly thereafter, Yitzchak confirmed the B'RACHA to Yaakov and gave him another B'RACHA - BIRKAT AVRAHAM.

Yitzchak and Rivka send Yaakov to Charan, Rivka's hometown, to find a suitable wife (and to get him out of Eisav's reach). Remember, Yaakov was 63 years old. Meanwhile, Eisav had married at least three times years earlier. But for us - the descendants and heirs of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, G-d still said, Not yet.

Yaakov leaves his parents' home on his way to Charan and - according to one tradition, Yaakov spends 14 years - 14 years, at the Yeshiva of Sheim VaEiver, before continuing on to Charan. He meets Rachel and the Not yet is soon to be done.

And then came NOW.

In the span of seven and a half years, Yaakov has four wives, eleven sons, a daughter, and possibly a whole bunch of more daughters, twins to his sons.

Basically, I'm giving you something to ponder and discuss. **PTDT**

מַפְתֵּחַ מִתְכַּוְנֵן

μULPAN

MAFTEI'ACH is the Hebrew term for wrench. MAFTEI'ACH MITKAVNEIN is an adjustable wrench, like a monkey wrench or a crescent wrench. The fixed sized wrench is called a MAFTEI'ACH SH'VEDI (Swedish wrench)



Walk through the Parsha with Rabbi David Walk

NOT RECEIVED THIS WEEK

Rav Kook Torah



by Rabbi Chanan Morrison -
www.ravkooktorah.com

The Hellenist Challenge

Summary: The sealed jar of pure oil is a metaphor for the kernel of pure faith in the depths of the Jewish soul, protecting the nation against corrupting foreign influences.

When the Greeks entered the Temple, they defiled all of the oils. After the Chashmona'im defeated them, they searched and found but one cruse of oil, untouched and sealed with the seal of the Kohen Gadol. The cruse had only enough oil for one day, but a miracle occurred and they were able to light from it for eight days. The following year they established these days as a holiday for praise and thanksgiving. (Shabbat 21b)

We may ask a number of questions on the Talmudic account of Chanuka:

The Jewish people have fought many battles in their long history. Some of these battles were accompanied by miracles, such as the walls of Yericho that fell and the Sun that stood still during the battle at Givon. Why was only the Hasmonean victory chosen to be commemorated as a holiday for future generations?

Why celebrate a military conflict in which the Temple was defiled and many Jews were lost to a foreign culture?

Why is there no mitzva to celebrate Chanuka with a festive meal, unlike other holidays? Why only 'a holiday of praise and thanksgiving'?

What is the significance of the miracle of the undefiled cruse of oil?

Culture Clash

The military victories of the Greek empire brought about the spread of Greek culture and philosophy, and the superficial charm of Hellenism captured the hearts of many Jews. These new ideas undermined fundamental teachings of the Torah and central mitzvot. The danger was so great that this clash of cultures could have caused permanent damage to the spiritual state of the Jewish people.

The Talmud emphasizes the significance of the small cruse of oil in the rescue of the Jewish people. The sealed jar of pure oil is a metaphor for the kernel of pure faith that resides in the depths of the Jewish soul. It was this inner resource of pure holiness that guarded the Jewish people in their struggle against Hellenism.

The Sages understood that Chanuka needed to be established as a permanent holiday. They realized that the

battle against an overwhelming foreign culture was not just the one-time struggle of the Chashmona'im. All generations require the strength and purity of inner faith to protect the Torah from the corrupting influences of foreign beliefs and values.

The Contribution of Hellenism

The Sages also realized that this conflict with Hellenism, despite its disastrous short-term effects, would ultimately bestow great benefits. This is a basic rule of life: those challenges that confront us and threaten our beliefs and way of life will in the end invigorate the sources of truth. Greek wisdom, after it has acknowledged the Divine nature of Torah, will serve to further honor and strengthen the Torah and its ideals. Therefore it is fitting to celebrate these days, despite the trauma of the Hasmonean period.

Significantly, the festival of Chanuka is celebrated without feasting and wine. There were two sides to Hellenism: its intellectual aspects – Greek philosophy, literature, and so on – and its popular culture of physical pleasures and crass entertainment. One might mistakenly think that Hellenism's positive contribution also includes its hedonistic delight in wine, parties, and naked wrestling matches. Therefore we specifically celebrate Chanuka with spiritual rituals – lights and Hallel, praise and thanksgiving. For the true contribution of Hellenism is its intellectual side, that which posed such a grave challenge to the Torah in the times of the Chashmona'im. It is this aspect of Greek culture that will defend and enhance the Torah in the future.

Silver from the Land of Israel, pp. 109-111.
Adapted from Ein Eyah
vol. III on Shabbat 21b (2:13)

Rav Kook on T'hilim

from an unpublished work
*by **Rabbi Chanan Morrison***

T'hilim 30 - Melody and Song

Summary: As we enter a house of prayer, we should aspire to the ideal of Mizmor Shir: to fully utilize both our emotional and intellectual capacities for praise and joy.

P'sukei d'Zimra, the preliminary selection of psalms which introduces the morning prayers, opens with the words, Mizmor Shir:

A melody (MIZMOR), a song (SHIR), for the Temple inauguration, to David. (Psalm 30:1)

What is the difference between a MIZMOR and a SHIR? Why is this phrase appropriate for our daily

initiation into prayer? And what is the connection to the Temple dedication?

Emotion and Intellect

Heartfelt emotion, emanating from the depths of the soul, lies hidden in the crevices of life. When these feelings burst forth, we do not immediately render them into words and speech. Without thinking, we may find ourselves humming a lively tune. We give voice to our emotions through ZEMER, in the notes of a melody or wordless tune. This is MIZMOR, the musical outpouring of the soul.

As our feelings expand and reveal themselves, they engage the world of reflection and thought, gaining access to the treasures of language and speech. This is the level of SHIR, of song and poetry. We can now articulate this outburst of emotion using our cognitive faculties of reason and language.

When we join MIZMOR and SHIR together, we link our emotional and intellectual sides. First appears MIZMOR, a musical outpouring from the emotional depths of the soul. This is joined by SHIR, poetic expression based on holy meditation and reflection.

As we enter our house of prayer, we need to aspire to the sublime ideal of MIZMOR SHIR. We should fully utilize both our emotional and intellectual capacities for praise and joy.

These two faculties achieved their highest expression when the place most suitable for spiritual elevation was completed – at the dedication of the Beit HaMikdash in Jerusalem. "A melody! A song! For the Temple inauguration!"

Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. I, p. 186

The Daily Portion - Sivan Rahav Meir

Living by Our Values

Translation by Yehoshua Siskin

For our forefather Yaakov, God was not only present in the synagogue, and not standing over him only when he dreamed of angels on a ladder, but within his home, in everyday life.

Yaakov conducted himself in accordance with divine values in every detail of his daily routine.

In establishing his family, in his devoted and faithful work as a shepherd, and in conducting himself with integrity even in his dealings with Lavan the deceiver, Yaakov was with God, side by side.

Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch expresses this beautifully in his commentary on Yaakov's home and on our homes as well:

"There are those who say: Let us visit God in His home, but let Him not visit us in ours!

That was not the case in the first Jewish home; Yaakov brought God inside to be a constant presence in the life of his family.

Each of our homes can become a House of God, a place where the Divine Presence dwells at all times and serves as a gateway to Heaven."

May we merit to have such homes.

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by Rabbi Dr Raymond Apple z"l

VAYEITZEI

Looking for Angels

Yaakov has won a hollow victory.

He has the birthright. He has the blessing. But the price is that he has to leave home.

A refugee from all that he loves, he has no pillow but a stone, no bed but the ground, no tent but the heavens.

Lonely, penniless, depressed and afraid, he wonders what the future will bring, or even whether he will survive.

Yet somehow he succeeds in sleeping, and that is when he dreams his famous dream: "Behold a ladder set up on earth, its top reaching to heaven, and behold angels of God ascending and descending upon it" (B'reishit 28:12).

The imagery of the ladder has taken hold of the imagination of every commentator.

Some say the ladder is symbolic of prayer, others that it links earth and heaven and denotes that the soul is from above and the body from beneath.

All very interesting, but the angels and the ladder have to be seen in context.

Surely the message is that no-one is ever completely alone, no-one is utterly friendless, no cloud lacks its thin silver lining. There is a protecting Presence whose agents are the angels.

But not only this. No matter how lowly one feels, one can still look up and find angels, symbols of the inspiration to continue and to determine to rise above the moment.

In English history that's "Turn again, Whittington, Lord Mayor of London!"

In Jewish tradition it is, "There's hope

for your latter end" (Yirmiyahu 31:16).

Above & Within

One view of Yaakov's ladder is that it represents Divine polarity.

There are two aspects of the Almighty: "I dwell above in holiness, but also with the contrite and lowly in spirit, reviving the spirits of the lowly, reviving the hearts of the contrite" (Yishayahu 57:18).

Rabbi Yochanan said, "Wherever in Scripture you find God's loftiness, there you also find His lowliness" (Megila 31a).

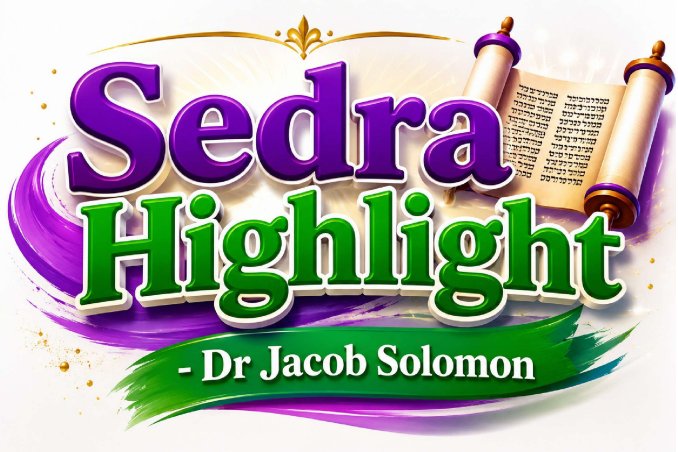
God is great, mighty and awesome, but He also concerns Himself with the orphan, widow and stranger (D'varim 10:17-18).

God is at the summit of the ladder, majestic and sublime, and also at the foot of the ladder, comforting those who suffer.

He is transcendent - above and beyond - and immanent, nearby and within.

He is AVINU MALKEINU, Father and King. If He were only MALKEINU, His creatures would be afraid to approach Him; if He were only AVINU, they might exploit His love and say with Voltaire, "Of course God will forgive; that's His job!" **-OZ**

Y'HI ZICHRO BARUCH



VAYEITZEI

"I worked for 20 years in your household; 14 years for your two daughters and 6 years for your flocks, and you changed the terms of my wages 10 times over! Had G-d not been with me... you would have sent me away penniless" (31:41-42).

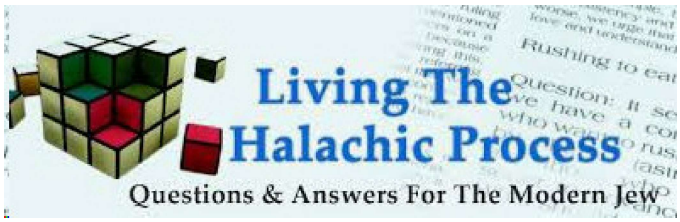
Business Studies 101. Parashat Vayeitzei, Ya'akov and Lavan. All smiles and promises at the start. Welcome to your uncle's home and household. But over the next few weeks, the lavish hospitality would slowly decay into servitude and exploitation. Agreements would turn out to be riddled with hidden loopholes that deceitfully exploit the weak bargaining power of the newcomer dependent on his powerful relative. The terms of service and wage agreements drawn up would be deceitfully massaged, bit by bit. The employer, finding himself in - er - 'unforeseen adverse circumstances', would subtly manipulate the clauses to favour himself at the worker's expense. All flowing from the imbal-

ance of power between employer and employee, exacerbated by the parties being related to one another. Familiar?

And when finally on the run with his wives and children and his wages in kind - all of which Lavan claimed were his sole property - G-d intervenes and redresses the balance. He protects Ya'akov as he warns the hotly-pursuing Lavan to say nothing to Ya'akov; nothing good, nothing bad. Those words did what they had to do - restrain Lavan, and protect Ya'akov.

We as Am Yisrael take our title from Ya'akov Avinu, whose name in due course G-d would change to Yisrael. Ya'akov's vulnerability in Lavan's household anticipates the vulnerability of his descendants under powers whose promises and protection cannot always be trusted. Ya'akov's distinction is that he was twice out of Eretz Yisrael and each was for a long period. Twice, on the run. First time on the run from Eisav, second time on the run from famine (though he had Yosef to look forward to). On both occasions, G-d gave him an unexpected word on his exit route out of the Land. With the ladder en route to Charan in Mesopotamia, He promised "I will take care of you wherever you go" (28:15). Many years later, in the depths of the night vision, He reassured his fears with "Do not fear going down to Egypt as it is there that I will make you into a great nation. I Myself will go down to Egypt with you" (46:3-4). The first time Ya'akov was startled: "Behold G-d is here in this place, and I never knew" (28:16). The second time we don't hear of him being startled at all. By that time, we could say, he knew that whether he was on holy territory or not, G-d was always with him. For he had seen that for himself when G-d stepped into Lavan's plans to cheat him out of all he had - and as the Pesach Hagada implies, very much worse: to save Ya'akov and his children from complete eradication.

Like Ya'akov Avinu, Am Yisrael had been away from Eretz Yisrael for long, long, periods. Yet as a people we did not disappear as other conquered and vanquished nations. Like Ya'akov Avinu, He is with us wherever we are. Many terrible things happened, we don't always know for certain why. Yet Am Yisrael Chai: our people continue to live, as did Ya'akov Avinu, though the darkest trials and tribulations.



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

Chanuka Lights – Inside or Outside?

Question: Should I light my chanukiya[1] inside or outside?

Answer: [We share this response with the public hesitantly because it is far from clear that one who strives to be machmir[2] 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 gemara[6] says that in a time of danger, one should light on his table. The Itur[7] notes that once the practice to light inside developed, although based on the danger to light outside, it continued. Many poskim assert[8] 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 Shternbach[10] strengthens the impact of the historical danger on the recommended practice. He suggests that when part of the populace is in a dangerous 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

1. Chanuka *menora*.
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 Kodesh* (Frank), *Chanuka* 16.
9. *Igrot Moshe*, *Orach Chayim* IV:125.
10. *Moadim U'Zemanim* II, 140.
11. *Orach Chayim* 671:24.

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, and so on? 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 of publicizing the miracle is performed properly (on lower floors), and the chumra[18] 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-

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.
18. Stringency.

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 .

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Dvar Torah

by Rabbi Chanoch Yeres

Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

Graciously shared with PhiloTorah



VAYEITZEI

Makom and Machanayim - The Transition

There is something intriguing if one is to look at these two episodes, found at opposite ends of our sedra:

One - Yaakov "leaves" his father's house and "goes" towards Charan. He arrives at the place of the Mikdash and makes a statement of discovery, defining what he had witnessed - it is the House of G-d and the gate of heaven. Then he gives the place a name, calling it the "House of G-d".

Two - Yaakov "leaves" Lavan's house and "goes" his own way. Angels of G-d arrive and meet Yaakov. He makes a statement of discovery, defining what he had witnessed - it is an encampment of G-d. Then he gives the place a name, calling it the "paired encampments".

The striking similarity of these two segments only serves to accentuate the differences between them. In both segments, Yaakov is leaving one place and going somewhere else, but in the first segment we are told explicitly that he is going to a specific location, namely Charan. In the second segment, we are only told that Yaakov was going on his own way, B'DARKO. The Torah does not speak here of his precise destination, which we already know. What the Torah wishes to tell us is that Yaakov is traveling on his own, unique path. It is this path which defines Yaakov's journeys in life regardless of his destination.

In the first segment, Yaakov is moving, and the place is stationary. Yaakov goes to the place. It is he who goes up to the Mikdash. In the second segment, at the end of the sedra, the order is reversed. Yaakov is encamped, wherever he is, and the angels of G-d come to him.

These two segments, so essentially

similar, yet so strikingly different, were meant to be compared. We are being offered two distinct perceptions of the "Divine Presence" - the Sh'china. When he left his father's house, Yaakov, the "dweller in the tents" of Torah, had known and understood that one must ride up and reach out to the Sh'china. There are places, loci of the Divine Presence, which one must enter in order to embrace G-d. Yaakov chances upon that special place, we call it Yerushalayim, which is totally suffused with G-d's presence. It is the House of G-d which is fixed and rooted in one place. After his travails with Lavan, Yaakov emerges unscathed. He has seen corruption and impurities and has remained true to G-d. IM LAVAN GARTI, V'TARYAG MITZVOT SHAMARTI - He has succeeded because he has internalized the Sh'china and offered It an abode in his own heart. Wherever Yaakov goes, the Sh'china goes with him. No longer do we hear of BAYIT, the House of G-d, but of MACHANEH, the encampment of G-d. The Divine Presence travels with Yaakov. This Yaakov calls MACHANAYIM.

Yaakov begins his great sojourn in the Galut of Charan with a vision of a fixed place for the Divine Presence, but he comes away with a vision of a Divine Presence that is forever with him, wherever he may go. Herein lies the key to our survival these thousands of years. G-d comes to us. Each one of us embarks on his own journey - B'DARKO. If one can internalize what one gains from his Torah studies and his religious experiences, then one can create a dwelling place for the Sh'china within us.

The Weekly 'Hi All' by Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld

VAYEITZEI 5786

We are all no doubt familiar with Rachel's extraordinary act of supreme kindness when, to avoid her sister Leah's humiliation, she divulges to her the secretive signs that she (Rachel) and Yaakov devised to prevent the devious Lavan from switching brides on the wedding night. Both on verses 29:25 and 30:22, Rashi references the Talmud (Bava Batra 123a) and Midrash (B'reishit Rabba 73:4) and states that it was this very act of exceptional sensitivity that merited Rachel's having her first child, Yosef. Moreover, what made Rachel's chesed that much more remarkable was that it was done in the hush privacy between two sisters with Rachel seeking no accolades or the

applause of a crowd to acknowledge her deed. A true act of Jewish heroism as Rav Soloveitchik has so defined it.

But even beyond these ethical features of Rachel's outstanding deed, the Midrash (Eicha Rabba, P'sichta 24) takes this act of Rachel's willingness to forego what was legitimately hers to an entirely new level. Here is the abridged quote. "When the Holy One blessed be He saw the Temple [in ruins] ... He was weeping and saying: Woe is Me for My Temple. My children, where are you? ... What could I do for you? I warned you but you did not repent. The Holy One blessed be He said to Jeremiah: '... Go and call Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, and Moshe from their graves, as they know how to weep.' [But neither the Forefathers nor Moshe were able to elicit HaShem's mercy] ...

"At that moment, Rachel Imeinu interjected before the Holy One blessed be He and said: 'Master of the universe, it is revealed before You that Your servant Yaakov loved me abundantly and worked for my father seven years for me. When those seven years were completed and the time for my marriage to my husband arrived, my father plotted to exchange me with my sister for my husband. The matter was extremely difficult for me when I became aware of that plot, and I informed my husband and gave him a signal to distinguish between my sister and me so that my father would be unable to exchange me. Afterward, I regretted what I had done and suppressed my desire. I had mercy on my sister, so that she would not be led to humiliation. In the evening, they exchanged me with my sister for my husband, and I transmitted to my sister all the signals that I had given to my husband, so that he would think that she is Rachel. Moreover, I entered beneath the bed on which he was lying with my sister. He would speak with her and she would be silent, and I would respond to each and every matter that he said, so that he would not identify my sister's voice. I performed an act of kindness for her, I was not jealous of her, and I did not lead her to humiliation.

"If I, who am flesh and blood, was not jealous of my rival, and I did not lead her to humiliation and shame, You who are a living and eternal merciful King, why were You jealous of idol worship that has no substance, and You exiled my descendants, and they were killed by sword, and the enemies did to them as they pleased?' Immediately, the mercy of the Holy One blessed be He was aroused and He said: 'For you, Rachel, I will restore Israel to its place.' That is what is written: "So said HaShem: A voice is heard in Rama, wailing, bitter

weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be consoled for her children, as they are not" (Yirmiyahu 31:14). And it is written: "So said HaShem: Restrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears, as there is reward for your actions ... And there is hope for your future, the utterance of HaShem, and your children will return to their borders" (ad loc. 15-16).

Just imagine: what our Forefathers and Moshe were unable to accomplish, the young Rachel, with her utterly selfless act of compassion for her sister, prevails upon the mercy of the Almighty to promise that, notwithstanding the devastation of the Churban, the Jewish people will return to their Land. In a word, we are in Israel today because of Rachel's phenomenal almost superhuman deed!

And there's more: taking note of all the invaluable and wonderful results of Rachel's virtuous behavior, there is one final and important observation to be made. For this, we turn to a profound insight by Rav Eliyahu Dessler (Michtav MeiEliyahu 1, p. 99). He states that "the past is KULO ZICHRONOT, all memories, the future is KULO DIMYONOT, all imagery, but the present is ZEH HACHAYIM KULO NISYONOT, this is life - all tests. We are enjoined to live in the here and now, and to determine a given course of action based upon what is happening now and not to allow the past or the future to influence our decision. If Rachel had considered the past seven years during which she had pined and waited for Yaakov, she surely would have not shared her signals with her sister. Had she allowed herself to think about the future and what she was risking by allowing her sister to marry Yaakov and possibly forfeiting her opportunity to have children with him, she certainly would have thought twice about Leah taking her place under the wedding canopy.

But Rachel chose a "road less traveled". She acted in a totally unexpected fashion. She realized that in her present HOVEH situation, her sister might suffer disgrace and mortification if she proceeded and not given the signs to Leah. And so, Rachel, recognizing the ethical imperative of the moment, dismisses the past and ignores the future although she had every right not to do so. Instead, Rachel heroically withdraws and cedes her wedding night to her sister. And for this, not only does she merit having children, but her reward is so incredibly enormous that the entire future of the Jewish people owes its destiny to this one deed by one very righteous woman.

The importance of living in the present cannot be gainsaid, especially when that present demands a

certain ethical action and, notwithstanding the difficulties involved, impels one to act courageously and do the right thing. This is a message sharply and eloquently made by the eminent literary scholar, C.S. Lewis, in his trenchant commentary to a scene in Shakespeare's King Lear (Act 3, Scene 7).

"It is our attempt to guess the plot of a drama in which we are the characters. But how can the characters in a play guess the plot? We are not the playwright, we are not the producer, we are not even the audience. We are on the stage. To play well the scenes in which we are "on" concerns us much more than to guess about the scenes that follow it.

"In King Lear, there is a man who is such a minor character that Shakespeare has not given him even a name: he is merely "First Servant". All the characters around him - Regan, Cornwall, and Edmund - have fine long-term plans. They think they know how the story is going to end, and they are quite wrong. The servant has no such delusions. He has no notion of how the play is going to go. But he understands the present scene. He sees an abomination (the blinding of old Gloucester) taking place. He will not stand it.

"His sword is out and pointed at his master's breast in a moment: then Regan stabs him dead from behind. That is his whole part: eight lines all told. But if it were real life and not a play, that is the part it would be best to have acted...

"But we think thus because we keep on assuming that we know the play. We do not know the play. We do not even know whether we are in Act I or Act V. We do not know who are the major and who the minor characters. The Author knows. The audience, if there is an audience may have an inkling. But we, never seeing the play from outside, never meeting any characters except the tiny minority who are "on" in the same scenes as ourselves, wholly ignorant of the future and very imperfectly informed about the past, cannot tell at what moment the end ought to come. That it will come when it ought, we may be sure; but we waste our time in guessing when that will be. That it has a meaning we may be sure, but we cannot see it. When it is over, we may be told. We are led to expect that the Author will have something to say to each of us on the part that each of us has played. The playing it well is what matters infinitely."

In our perspective on life - our hashkafa - we certainly subscribe to the belief that individuals can change the course of history. But, it's not only those great men and women about whom the historical chronicles extol. Those consequential and

momentous changes can be made by the common individual, by everyone. You see, "if all the world is a stage", not only do we not know which scene in the play we are in, we don't even know whether it's a comedy or tragedy or a combination of both. The one thing we can know is to choose and act the best we can in the times we find ourselves - in our own special and unique present!

Long ago, a beautiful young maiden acted in the "now" and did what was right. She contained her feelings, suppressed her legitimate rights, all so that her sister's dignity would not be compromised and shamed. And in so doing, her stature rose to the level of the heroic. We can also aspire to emulate Rachel's incomparable deed. For, like Rachel, who knows how our behavior will reverberate over time. It may save our family, redeem our life. It may even change the world!

Insights into Halacha

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Chanuka, O Chanuka...

Applies to one-year students, too.

Some footnotes are included in the PT version of the article; most are not. See website for full footnotes and sources.

Just thinking about the holiday of Chanuka should be enough to warm the cockles of anyone's heart. With Chanukiya lighting, dreidel spinning, latkes, sufganiyot, family time and plenty of L'HODOT ULHALLEL, not to mention extra Torah learning, Chanuka gives us eight memorable days and nights. But even once you decide which opinions to follow regarding where and when to light the Chanukiya, there still remains an annual halachic debate that has been simmering since the time of the Rishonim. I am referring to whether one should light the Chanukiya or make Havdala first on Motza'ei Shabbat Chanuka.

HAVDALA ↔ NER CHANUKA?

IMPORTANT NOTE: This question is only relevant if one has already ended

Shabbat by reciting either ATA CHONANTANU in Maariv or HAMAVDIL BEIN KODESH L'CHOL (and Shabbat-out time has passed). Otherwise one would not be allowed to light Chanuka candles while it is still Shabbat for him. (nor say Havdala)

Light the Chanukiya

Motza'ei Shabbat Chanuka is unique as it presents a situation of competing halachic principles. This has been the basis of the centuries-old debate regarding which mitzva should be performed first. The Shulchan Aruch rules that on Motza'ei Shabbat one should light the Chanukiya in Shul before making Havdala. The Rama adds that certainly at home one must do so as well, as lighting the Chanukiya precedes making Havdala. This is based on the T'rumat HaDeshen's applying the Talmudic dictum of AFUKEI YOMA M'ACHRINAN - delaying the leaving of Shabbat (see Gemara Pesachim 105b). Meaning, if one can delay ending Shabbat, he should do whatever is necessary to keep the holiness of Shabbat a bit longer. Therefore, they rule that it would be preferable to light the Chanukiya before making Havdala, especially as it will augment the PIRSUMEI NISA by at least a few precious minutes.

Taz: Tadir Tonight

However, the Taz counters that the famous Talmudic adage of TADIR KODEM takes precedence. When one is faced with doing two different Mitzvot, he should begin with the one that is performed more frequently. A prime Biblical example is that even on Shabbat, Yom Tov, and Rosh Chodesh, the Korban Tamid, the communal daily sacrifice, was offered before the Korban Musaf, the special sacrifice exclusive for those particular days. [See Bamidbar (Parshat Pinchas) Ch.28 and Gemara Zevachim 89a].

The Taz applies this TADIR principle to Motza'ei Shabbat Chanuka. He maintains that since Havdala is made every Saturday night, whereas Chanuka candles are only kindled eight nights a year, making Havdala takes precedence. Additionally, he argues, once one lights Chanuka candles on Motza'ei Shabbat, he is showing that he intrinsically already ended Shabbat; if so, what further gain can there be by delaying Havdalah further?

The Elya Rabba (Orach Chaim 681, 1) "answers up" this rhetorical question of the Taz and Pri Chodosh, explaining that until one actually makes Havdala, even though he already ended Shabbat and started doing Melacha, remnants of the holiness of Shabbat remain.

He adds that the great Maharal MiPrague (this author's namesake) also ruled to make Havdala before lighting the Chanukiya.

Taking Sides

As mentioned previously, this halachic debate has been ongoing for centuries, with many Poskim taking opposing sides. Those who sided with the Rama to light the Chanukiya first at home include such luminaries as the Levush, Magen Avraham, Vilna Gaon, Elya Rabba, and Chayei Adam, while other renowned decisors, including the Pri Chodosh, Chida, Ben Ish Chai, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, and Aruch Hashulchan conclude that the Taz was correct and one should make Havdala first.

Many decisors offer additional rationales and reasons to explain why they feel that the other opinion is incorrect. For example, the famed Avnei Nezer wrote a point-by-point refutation of the Taz's proofs, while the Chedvas Yaakov later did the same to his arguments. And, interestingly, although Rav Yaakov Emden cites that his father, the renowned Chacham Tzvi, scorned those who would light Chanuka candles first, he nevertheless personally concluded that that is the correct course of action.

Contemporary Kindling

Contemporary authorities also have taken sides on this issue. The Chazon Ish zt"l, Rav Yosef Elyahu Henkin zt"l, Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l, Rav Shmuel Halevi Wosner zt"l, and Rav Ovadia Yosef zt"l, all personally made Havdala first, while the Tukachinsky Luach Eretz Yisrael, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l, and Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv zt"l ruled that Neirot Chanuka should be kindled first.

In fact, Rav Shlomo Zalman and Rav Elyashiv were such ardent supporters of lighting the Chanukiya immediately after Shabbat that they ruled that even those who normally wait 72 minutes for Shabbat to end ("Zman Rabbeinu Tam") should not do so on Motza'ei Shabbat Chanuka; rather they should end Shabbat at an earlier zman and immediately light Chanuka candles, followed by Havdala. This is also how the Chazon Ish and Steipler Gaon zt"l personally were noheg on Motza'ei Shabbat Chanuka. (Although they personally made Havdala first, they still would perform both before "Zman Rabbeinu Tam" on Motza'ei Shabbat Chanuka.)

Interestingly, there are those who opine (see Rav Eliyahu Schlessinger of Gilo's classic sefer Mitzvat Ner Ish U'Beito, vol. 1, Ch. 10, footnote 20) that this difference of opinion is dependent on the locale. In Yerushalayim, where

the common custom is to light Neirot Chanuka outdoors, the inyan of Pirsumei Nisa of passersby still exists. Ergo, the delay in lighting while making Havdala might somewhat lessen the potential Pirsumei Nisa. That is why many Yerushalayim-based poskim maintained preference for lighting before Havdala, while other poskim, from Bnei Brak and Chutz La'aretz, where the custom is to light indoors, did not feel this pressing need to mandate lighting Chanuka licht at the earliest possible moment, while there still is the Mitzva of Havdala to perform. Certainly an interesting theory.

On the other hand, Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l, Rav Moshe Sternbuch, and Rav Ovadia Yosef zt"l do not agree, maintaining that those who normally wait 72 minutes should do so as well on Motza'ei Shabbat Chanuka, and only then light the Chanukiya.

However, a further qualification is made by Rav Moshe Sternbuch and the Karlsberger Rav, Rav Yechezkal Roth, that even according to those who hold to make Havdala first, nevertheless, if the setup and making Havdala would delay the Chanuka lighting more than a half hour after nightfall, then it would be preferable to light the Chanukiya first, to ensure that one does not miss an opportunity for the optimal time of the Mitzva of kindling the Chanukiya.

Lighting It Up

So, knowing that there is such a huge difference of opinion as to the proper halacha, what is one to do? The Mishna Berura, asking that very same question, famously concludes that in shul one should light Chanuka candles before making Havdalah (if applicable; many, if not most, shuls nowadays do not make a communal Havdala), yet at home D'AVID K'MAR AVID, UD-AVID K'MAR AVID", whichever shita one decides to follow, he is acting correctly. Accordingly, even if you have a minhag to light the Chanukiya first while your neighbor is busy making Havdala first, both of you should realize that both are equally halachically valid opinions.

It is told that Rav Yosef Chaim Zonnenfeld zt"l used to ask his wife to prepare his Chanukiya for him on Motza'ei Shabbat Chanuka outside his house (observing Minhag Yerushalayim) while he was still in shul. This way, when he came home, he would not have to enter into this machloket haposkim and decide which opinion to follow, but rather immediately light the Chanukiya (before Havdala) before actually entering his house, in order not to "pass over a Mitzva".

It is reported that Rav Yisrael Yaakov Fischer zt"l had an interesting

custom as well. If Motza'ei Shabbat Chanuka fell out in the first half of Chanuka and he was therefore able to prepare the Chanukiya on Erev Shabbat for Motzai Shabbat (meaning set up the full amount needed for both days in his one Chanukiya), he would light the Chanukiya first, as soon as he would arrive home from shul. However, if Motza'ei Shabbat Chanuka fell out in the second half of Chanuka, and he would need to set up the Chanukiya on Motza'ei Shabbat itself, he would first make Havdala and only then prepare and light his Chanukiya.

Don't Mix and Match

The noted Melamed L'Hoyil, Rav Dovid Tzvi Hoffman zt"l (late 1800s), wrote an interesting responsum, relating a personal anecdote. Apparently, after following the Taz's approach of making Havdala first for twenty-five years in his role as the Rav of Berlin, one Motza'ei Shabbat Chanuka he decided that he was going to follow the Rama's opinion and light the Chanukiya first, as it was getting late. As he was about to light, he suddenly remembered that he had uncharacteristically forgotten to say "Ata Chonantanu" in Maariv, and technically had not yet ended Shabbat. He realized that according to the Magen Avraham, he was now required to make Havdala before lighting the Chanukiya.

Magen Avraham (681, 1). The Maharal MiPrague (Ner Mitzva ibid.) also ruled this way. However, the Mishna Berura (681:2) writes that according to those who hold that Neirot Chanuka precedes Havdala, if one realized as he was about to light his Chanukiya that he forgot to say "Ata Chonantanu" in Maariv, then he should say "Baruch Hamavdil Bein Kodesh l'Chol" - effectively ending Shabbat, then light Chanuka candles, and only afterwards make Havdala, and not like Magen Avraham's psak. The Tukachinsky Luach (ibid.) rules this way as well.

He understood that he was receiving a Heavenly sign from Above. Thus, he concluded, as should we all, that although both positions might be officially correct, with many great halachic authorities through the generations to rely upon for whichever opinion one chooses to follow, nonethe- less, it is improper for one to change his longstanding Minhag without strong reason.

There is a related story told of Rav Avrohom Pam zt"l, Rosh Yeshiva of Torah Vodaas, who was well known for his sensitivity and concern for others. He originally followed the shita of the Rama, and on Motza'ei Shabbat Chanuka would light the Chanukiya before making Havdala. One year one of his young children protested, claiming "I don't care what you do - I'm not lighting my

Chanukiya before Havdala". Rav Pam perceived right away what was troubling his son: how can one kindle a fire before properly reciting Havdala? Wasn't it still Shabbat? Rav Pam realized that no matter how well he could justify his actions, explaining that one may engage in activities forbidden on Shabbat after reciting the formulaic insert "Ata Chonantanu" in Maariv or "Hamavdil Bein Kodesh l'Chol", still, he was concerned that his son might come away with a lessened appreciation of the severity of Shabbat desecration. He therefore immediately agreed with his son, saying that "from now on, we will do it your way", and proceeded to recite Havdala before kindling the Chanukiya.

Whether we are contemplating the lights of Chanuka or the Havdala candle, regardless which we ended up lighting first, let us internalize their message that Hashem's hashgacha in this world, showing us the triumph of light over darkness, is eternal and everlasting.

Postscript: This final psak of D'AVID K'MAR AVID, UD-AVID K'MAR AVID, regarding the kindling of Chanuka candles or the Havdala candle first applies to Ashkenazic practice due to said dispute over the centuries. However, regarding Sefardic practice, it seems to be that they must make Havdala before lighting the Chanukiya at home (as opposed to in Shul, which would be the opposite, as explained above, which was the Shulchan Aruch's actual psak), as virtually all Sefardic Poskim, including the Pri Chodosh, Chida, Ben Ish Chai, Kaf HaChayim, Rav Ovadiah Yosef zt"l, Rav Mordechai Eliyahu zt"l, and the Yalkut Yosef, ruled this way.

Disclaimer: This is not a comprehensive guide, rather a brief summary to raise awareness of the issues. In any real case one should ask a competent Halachic authority.

For any questions, comments or for the full Mareh Mekomot / sources, please email the author: yspitz@ohr.edu

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ohr.edu/this_week/insights_into_halacha/

Rabbi Yehuda Spitz's English halacha sefer, "Food: A Halachic Analysis" (Mosaica/ Feldheim) containing over 500 pages featuring over 30 comprehensive chapters discussing the myriad halachic issues pertaining to food, is now available online and in bookstores everywhere.



VAYEITZEI

GM Here's a new GM for Vayeitzei which, at the moment, will not be in the book. That could change. We'll see.

The second pasuk in Vayeitzei finds Yaakov arriving at, or encountering the Place, sleeping there because night has come. B'reishit 28:11 -

וַיִּפְגַּע בַּמָּקוֹם וַיָּלֶן שָׁם כִּי־בָא
הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וַיִּקַּח מֵאַבְנֵי הַמָּקוֹם וַיָּשֶׂם
מְרַאֲשֹׁתָיו וַיִּשְׁכַּב בַּמָּקוֹם הַהוּא׃

And he arrived at the place and lodged there because the sun had set, and he took some of the stones of the place and placed [them] at his head, and he lay down in that place.

The Gemara teaches us that our Maariv (a.k.a. Arvit) prayer was instituted by Yaakov Avinu. It links the word VAYIFGA to P'GI'A also having the connotation of Prayer. And, exactly where it was that Yaakov spent the night is discussed by M'forshim. The plain understanding is that it was Beit El, formerly called Luz. Some say it was Har HaMoriaya, the site of the Akeida and the site of the future Beit HaMikdash. Some say that it was in Beit El but that Har HaMoriya miraculously went to Yaakov at Beit El. Some say that the foot of the ladder in his dream was on Har HaMoriya and the head of the ladder was above Beit El.

However you understand it, the pasuk is telling us that Yaakov had a spiritual experience.

The gimatriya of this pasuk is 3745. I found a match to the AT-BASH gimatriya of a pasuk, which got me excited because it gave me a contrast to Yaakov's brother Eisav. B'reishit 27:40 in To-l'dot -

וְעַל־חַרְבְּךָ תִחְיֶה וְאֶת־אָחִיךָ תַּעֲבֹד
וְהָיָה כַּאֲשֶׁר תָּרִיד
וּפָרַקְתָּ עֻלּוֹ מֵעַל צַוָּארֶךָ׃

And you shall live by your sword, and you shall serve your brother, and it will be, when you grieve, that you will break his yoke off your neck.

Yaakov encounters G-d. Yaakov prays. Yaakov has a spiritual dream.

Eisav shall live be his sword.

The contrast fits with a regular gimatriya and an AT-BASH gimatriya matching.



VAYEITZEI

DIVREI TORAH

• The Torah records that Yaakov left Be'er Sheva and went to Charan. (28:10). These two clauses are not necessary, and Rashi therefore comments from a Midrash, that when a righteous person leaves a city, it leaves a missing element in that city. But I wonder why Rashi doesn't stick with the simple P'shat, the literal text. Yaakov left Canaan for one reason: to flee from Eisav who wanted to kill him. The fact that he travelled to Charan was for an unrelated reason. He went there to find a wife. The push and pull in his journey were for unrelated factors that were upon Yaakov. And both were from his mother. Rivka told Yaakov that Eisav wanted to kill him, a fact that she did not tell Yitzchak. Then Rivka did discuss with her husband the subject of a wife for Yaakov, necessitating his departure from home. And she would never see Yaakov again in her life.

• He left Be'er Sheva, but he didn't live there; he lived in Chevron. Be'er Sheva is quite a distance from Chevron. Rabbeinu Bachya wrote that both Avraham and Yitzchak had built an Altar in Be'er Sheva, and Yaakov went there to offer sacrifices to Hashem. The Maharsha, the Rokeach, the Siftei Kohen, and the Alshich all say that the Yeshiva of Shem VaEiver was in Be'er Sheva, and this fits well with the Midrash that Yaakov went there to study before setting out to Charan. But what did Yaakov learn there that he did not receive from decades learning with his father? Other rabbis offer that Yaakov learned there various Halachot that dealt with the relationship between a Jew and the non-Jewish world.

• In Yaakov's dream, who were these angels who ascended and descended upon the ladder? These were the angels of Eretz Yisrael who ascended and were replaced by angels of Outside of Eretz Yisrael, whose job was to protect Yaakov on his journey elsewhere. This shows us that Hashem is active both in and outside of Eretz Yisrael. The sanctity of Eretz Yisrael is far superior to those lands not in Israel, but it is possible to plant the seeds of Torah anyplace in the World. We Jews have demonstrated this in our extensive travels in our current lengthy Exile. Jews today are located throughout the world, further expanding the existence of Torah across the entire globe.

• Beit El (Luz) became holy as a result of Yaakov's stay there overnight.

Targum Yonatan identified Beit El as the place in which the Beit HaMikdash was to be built. Today Beit El is located a few miles north of Yerushalayim. No matter which location is accurate, we have to confess that we are not sure where the Torah's Beit El is situated. This is common. Today, the town of Kiryat Sefer is located as part of Greater Modiin. The State of Israel did not allow the Chareidim society to officially call their city Kiryat Sefer because in our Scripture Kiryat Sefer is located near Chevron. So the outcome is that all the people who live there all call their hometown Kiryat Sefer while all the traffic signs call the place Modiin Ilite (Upper Modiin).

• All of a sudden Yaakov is alone... totally by himself. Hashem speaks to him and makes him a deal. Keep the Torah and Hashem will protect him. Was it a prophecy? But Hashem's words gave Yaakov tremendous confidence that he would succeed in his mission. The first task was to find Lavan, his relative, his mother's brother. No address. No streets. Just go to the local well and ask there. Wait for some shepherds and start a conversation, and lo and behold, Lavan's younger daughter shows up at that well at the exact time that Yaakov is there. Huge confidence builder. There is no such thing as coincidence in the Torah.

• When Eliezer came, he was loaded. He brought camels, and jewelry. Really loaded. The deal was consummated immediately. Yaakov came alone, really alone, no jewelry, no camels. Just by himself. "Hi. I am a relative, a truly DISTANT relative. Can I stay for a while? Can I marry four of the young ladies in your house?" No deal was so immediate because of Yaakov's condition upon arrival. One has to realize the stark contrast between Eliezer's mission and the different conditions upon Yaakov's arrival. Lavan was probably in disbelief at what and who arrived at his doorstep. I think we should give some credit to Lavan for being so accepting of his new guest.

• Lavan does deceive Yaakov on the wedding night. When Rivka and Yaakov deceived Yitzchak in last week's reading, they needed the right development to succeed, and that was provided by Hashem in making Yitzchak lose his eyesight. Here how did Lavan succeed? It must be the assistance of Rachel when she gave the secret signs to her sister to deceive Yaakov in the darkness of the wedding night. In Seder Olam, the author stated that Leah and Rachel were actually twins and very close to each other. Normal regular commentary has the two sisters quite distant in age, even as much as almost ten years different, with Leah being the

older daughter. Having them much closer in age helps us accept the fact that Rachel was that helpful and caring for her sister.

• MIDRASH. When Yaakov left home, he did carry jewelry and many gifts for his new wife and her family. Eisav sent his adult son to go after Yaakov and kill him. Elifaz caught up to his uncle but didn't want to kill him. Yaakov helped him by giving him all the gifts he had packed. And tell his father that he did kill him because a "poor person is considered dead." That part of the Midrash is well known. The Midrash though, continued. On the journey, Yaakov saw a man riding his horse attempting to cross a river. The man lost his balance and fell off his horse and drowned. Yaakov was able to retrieve the dead body and gained whatever the dead man was carrying, and this helped Yaakov continue on his journey.

Questions by RED

From the text

1. When Yaakov slept that night on the road, what vision did he have? (28:12)

2. How did Lavan deceive Yaakov at Yaakov's wedding? (29:23)

3. What reward did Leah receive for giving her Duda'im to Rachel? (30:17)

4. Why did Rachel name her son Yosef? (30:24)

5. Where did Rachel hide her father's Terafim (idols)? (31:34)

From Rashi

6. "He (Yaakov) prayed and spent the night there..." (28:11). What did he pray?

7. Who were the angels who ascended and descended on the ladder? (28:12)

8. What were the Duda'im that Reuven found and was bringing to his mother? (30:14)

9. Why did Rachel steal her father's Terafim (idols) (31:19)

10. Why was the place where Yaakov returned to Eretz Yisrael called Machanayim (two2 camps)? (32:3)

From the Rabbis

11. Yaakov was away from home for 36 years and thereby sinned for not honoring his parents. How was he punished?

12. What do we see that happened to Yaakov that showed him that it was time to return home?

13. Who eventually broke the treaty that Yaakov had made with Lavan, years later?

Midrash

14. What does the Midrash tell us about Hashem being on the ladder in the beginning of the Parsha?

Haftara - Hoshei'a

15. Hoshei'a delivers a "doom and gloom" vision for Israel. But what is Hashem ready to do at the end?

Relationships

a) Menashe - Mupim

b) Zevulun - Sered

c) Yehuda - Kehat

d) Cham - Canaan

e) Yefet - Ashkenaz

ANSWERS

1. A ladder extending from Earth to Heaven, and angels went up and down.

2. He replaced Rachel with Leah on the wedding night.

3. She became pregnant with her fifth son.

4. Yosef means to "add". That Hashem should give her another son.

5. In the camel's packsaddle.

6. He instituted the Ma'ariv service.

7. The angels of Eretz Yisrael were leaving Yaakov, being replaced by the angels of Outside of Eretz Yisrael, who were to protect Yaakov on his journey.

8. They were mandrakes, and supposedly had potency to help a woman become pregnant.

9. To keep her father from worshiping idols.

10. Two camps of angels. These were of Outside of Eretz Yisrael coming to escort Yaakov to Canaan and pass him over to angels of Eretz Yisrael who were to escort Yaakov back home.

11. Yaakov was to miss Yosef for over twenty years.

12. At the beginning of the Parsha, Yaakov dreamt about angels. Now he is dreaming about sheep (31:10).

13. Bil'am , who crossed the line and came to curse Bnei Yisrael.

14. That Hashem is close with Yaakov.

15. To forgive Bnei Yisrael who is ready to repent.

Relationships

a) First Cousins (sons of Yosef and Binyamin)

b) Father & Son

c) Uncle & Nephew

d) Father & Son

e) Grandfather & Grandson