

SCHEDULE

ליל שבת קדש

Mincha & Shabbos Candles 4:30 PM

יום שבת קדש

Daf Yomi - *By Rabbi Teichman* 7:30 AM

Shacharis - *Followed by Kiddush* 8:30 AM

-Sof Zman K'S- א" 8:42 א"ג 9:24

Mincha - 2:15 PM

Mincha - *Followed by Shalosh Seudos* 4:20 PM

Maariv 5:38 PM

CANDLES NEXT SHABBOS - 4:26 PM

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On your Bar Mitzvah this week!
Mazal To your parents, Azi & Riki and
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Weekday Minyanim

Sunday & Thursday

Shacharis I- 6:50 AM

Daf Yomi - *By Rabbi Teichman* 7:30 AM

Shacharis II - 8:30 AM

Mincha / Maariv 4:35 PM

Maariv (Su - Th) ***Now Sundays Too!*** 9:45 PM

Weekdays

Daf Yomi - *By Rabbi Teichman* 5:45 AM

Shacharis:

- *Mo* (Thursday—Thanksgiving Day Sunday Schedule) 6:35 AM

- *Tu, Wed, Fr* 6:45 AM

Mincha (Mo-Th) 1:45 PM

Mincha/Maariv (Mo-Th) 4:35 PM

Daf Yomi (Take II) 9:00 PM

Daf Hayomi Behalacha (Su-Th) 9:15 PM

Maariv (Su - Th) ***Now Sundays Too!*** 9:45 PM

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Shul Contacts

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Rabbi Teichman

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Issue # 407

RABBI'S MESSAGE:

Among the 'Hall of Famers' of biblical villains there is no doubt that Lavan the Deciever would vie for top billing.

Yet remarkably, Yaakov and his family flourished in Lavan's homestead for a total of twenty years!

After having 'paid' his dues for his two brides by serving as the paradigm loyal shepherd, giving seven years of devoted service for each of his wives, for a total of fourteen arduous years, Yaakov is ready to go home empty-handed.

Lavan won't hear of it and 'generously' insists that Yaakov be given an opportunity to earn some profits from his future sheep tending. During the course of that time, Lavan, typically, renegotiates the terms of their agreement one hundred times. Despite Lavan implementing his most cunning business tactics in order to gain the advantage and edge out Yaakov from significant dividends, by the end of six years work, Yaakov is in possession of over a 'million' flock of sheep!

Why did Yaakov continue to raise sheep for all those years? Was he expecting to become that wealthy? Why didn't he call it quits much earlier?

The verse never stipulates any time frame for their business deal, it would seem as if it was an open ended deal. It seems quite odd that someone who six years earlier was ready to simply leave penniless, has now become entrenched in mining more profits from his successful endeavor. Could it possibly be that Yaakov was finally influenced by his Uncle Lavan and became greedy?

Certainly not! So what was Yaakov waiting for?

The Torah reports how Yaakov overhears Lavan's sons resentment of his success and their slandering him with usurping their father's wealth.

Yaakov noticed Lavan's face, and behold it was not toward him as in earlier days. (בראשית לא ב)

So here we have it. It wasn't Lavan's trying to swindle him out of his profits. It wasn't either the superhuman dedication during sleepless frigid nights and scorching hot days in the course of twenty years, of loyally tending to Lavan's sheep, that compelled Yaakov to finally leave.

It was merely the inability to deal with the 'sourpuss' face of Lavan that convinced Yaakov it was time to finally set sail!

The Midrash in fact reveals that the subsequent directive to Yaakov from G-d to 'return to the land of your fathers and to your native land', promising that He will accompany Yaakov there, was a direct result of this observation of Lavan's face.

The Holy One may He be blessed said to him, "Your father-in-law can't display a favorable countenance and you can remain here?!" (ב"ר עג יב)

The Midrash goes on to quote from the apocryphal writings of Ben Sira who taught that *'the heart changes one's face, either for good or for evil'.*

Apparently it is more difficult and distressing to live with someone who is incapable of displaying any favor or warmth on their face than to deal with a conniving thief who for twenty years demands unreasonable accountability and toil.

It is simply intolerable to live with the negativity and distress that radiates from someone you must face daily.

Until that moment Yaakov felt confident he was serving his noble mission in interacting with this devious criminal by promoting the values and morals of a living G-d, that might perhaps affect in extracting some 'positive sparks' of light in illuminating the world. As long as Lavan was capable of some level of humanity, decency and kindness that was merely manifested in the smile on his face, there was hope.

When it became evident that the cloud of self interest and self promotion that hovered over Lavan could no longer allow an iota of positivity towards others to penetrate through, it became clear it was high time to move on elsewhere and Yaakov's mission here was completed.

When Yaakov first notices that Lavan's facial expression is no longer favorable it describes

"In This Corner..."

it as, והנה אינו עמו, *and behold he is not with 'him'*, whereas when he reports this discovery to Rochel and Leah, Yaakov states more accurately, כי אינו אלי, that Lavan's disposition is *not toward 'me'*.

Perhaps the Torah seeks to reveal the underlying cause for man's inability to look positively towards others. What Yaakov was implying in his first observation is that Lavan wasn't with, עמו, 'himself', he was so frustrated and empty of any sense of self-worth. A person who has no wellspring of happiness with oneself is incapable of seeing, caring and appreciating others. The result of the vacuum that existed within Lavan disabled him from being 'toward me'.

Lavan was a tortured soul who exhibited an anti-social attitude that was fed by an artificially inflated ego. But he was one clever dude and ultimately understood his flaw although he never invested any effort to improve.

The last Menahel Ruchani of the famed Yeshiva of Grodna in Europe, who perished in the Holocaust, Rav Shlomo Harkavy, may his blood be avenged, offers a profound insight into Lavan's complicated personality.

When Lavan finally catches up with his fleeing son-in-law he castigates Yaakov for running away. First Lavan faults him for not letting him kiss his children goodbye. Lavan then goes on to blurt out and condemns Yaakov, והסכלת עשוי (שם שם כח), *you have acted foolishly*, by fleeing.

What foolishness is he referring to?

Lavan knew that G-d had told him not to harm Yaakov, but Yaakov wasn't aware of that. Lavan was intimating that Yaakov's running away which thereby revealed his awareness of Lavan's hatred for him was a foolish tactic. As long as a person doesn't reveal to the one he suspects of hating him that he is aware of the hatred, there is a chance the continued positive vibes that person will send, will prevent the hater from acting on his hatred, seeing as his object of his enmity exhibits positive feelings towards him. The moment the person retreats from any attempt to influence through kindness and acceptance it dooms the victim of the hatred to the evil intentions of the hater that will no longer be held back.

Yaakov doesn't deny that truth, but merely says he fled because he didn't trust Lavan would let his daughters ever leave.

Lavan understood his complex psychological profile, but as the Torah concludes, he returned 'to his place', he refused to invest the effort to 'relocate' his thinking and succumbed once again to the easy path of no resistance.

Rav Moshe Dovid Valli one of the primary students of the RaMChal, reveals that the first letters in the words describing Lavan's countenance, *אף פני לבן*, the *face of Lavan*, spell out the word אפל, murky gloom. This alludes to the extinguishing of any possible light that may emanate from this character. When the unbridled hatred became apparent, bereft of any redeeming sparks, that was the final signal to move on.

He then adds:

This serves as a sign for the Jewish nation in the days approaching the ultimate redemption, that His Name may it be blessed, will initiate the birth pangs of Moshiach with the enraged faces of the foreign nations, to compel us to repent and hurriedly leave the lands of our enemies...

We are living in momentous times facing enemies and entities that are intolerant of our success and all that we stand for. Whether it is high time to pick up and return home is an open question that must be resolved. In the interim it is certainly incumbent upon us to strengthen our own ranks by exhibiting radiant kindness and concern to our brothers and sisters, improving our relationships in bringing a unity amongst us that will bring to the world an awareness of the Holy One.

Even when facing those among us who may display disdain and negativity we can capture their hearts with a pervasive friendship and concern for them restoring their self-worth, transforming them into loving allies.

May we overcome the flaw of our ancestor Lavan and brighten the world with sparks of positivity!

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MESSAGE FROM THE GABOIM: The Cholim list is being updated, please submit any names to gabbal@ohelmoshebaltimore.com or to one of us in person. - Naftali Miller & Chaim Mordechai Meister

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