



הַמִּזְרָחִי

HAMIZRACHI

PARSHA WEEKLY

PARSHAT VAYEITZEI 5783 • 2022



ISRAEL Parsha Picture








"Jacob's Ladder" sculpture
in Givat Mordechai, Jerusalem

וַיַּחֲלֵם וְהָיָה סֶלֶם מְצֹב אֶרֶץ
וְרָאֵשׁוּ מִגֵּיעַ הַשָּׁמַיְמָה וְהָיָה
מִלְאֲכֵי אֱלֹהִים עֲלֵים וְיִרְדִּים בּוֹ:









בראשית כח:יב

INSIDE






TORAT MIZRACHI

-  Rabbi Doron Perez 2
-  Rabbi Reuven Taragin 4
-  Rabbanit Shani Taragin 5
-  Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon 6
-  Rabbanit Sharon Rimon 7
-  Sivan Rahav Meir & Yedidya Meir 8
-  Rabbi Danny Mirvis 9



PARSHAT HASHAVUA

-  Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l 10
-  Rabbi Hershel Schachter shlit"a 12
-  Rabbi Yisroel Reisman shlit"a 13
-  Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis 14
-  Rabbi Shalom Rosner 16
-  Michal Horowitz 17
-  Rabbi Menachem Leibtag 18
-  Rabbi Eli Mansour 19

INSPIRATION

-  Rabbi Moshe Weinberger 21
-  Rabbi YY Jacobson 22
-  Rabbi Judah Mischel 23
-  Mrs. Shira Smiles 24
-  Rabbanit Yemima Mizrachi 25

ISRAEL CONTENT

-  Hebrew Language: David Curwin 26
-  Riddles: Reb Leor Broh 26

To dedicate an issue of HaMizrachi Parasha Weekly in this space in honor of someone, in memory of a loved one or in celebration of a simcha, please email hamizrachiweekly@mizrachi.org



MIZRACHI
120 YEARS OF RELIGIOUS ZIONISM

www.mizrachi.org
www.mizrachi.tv
office@mizrachi.org
+972 (0)2 620 9000
f t i g

PRESIDENT

Mr. Kurt Rothschild z"l

CO-PRESIDENT

Rabbi Yechiel Wasserman

CHAIRMAN

Mr. Harvey Blitz

CEO & EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN

Rabbi Doron Perez

DEPUTY CEO

Rabbi Danny Mirvis

EDUCATIONAL DIRECTORS

Rabbi Reuven Taragin

Rabbanit Shani Taragin

World Mizrachi is the global Religious Zionist movement, spreading *Torat Eretz Yisrael* across the world and strengthening the bond between the State of Israel and Jewish communities around the world.

Based in Jerusalem and with branches across the globe, Mizrachi – an acronym for *merkaz ruchani* (spiritual center) – was founded in 1902 by Rabbi Yitzchak Yaakov Reines, and is led today by Rabbi Doron Perez. Mizrachi's role was then and remains with vigor today, to be a proactive partner and to take personal responsibility in contributing to the collective destiny of *Klal Yisrael* through a commitment to Torah, the Land of Israel and the People of Israel.

HAMIZRACHI
PARSHA WEEKLY

EDITOR

Rabbi Reuven Taragin

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Esther Shafier

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Ari Levine

Josh Maurer

Yaakov Panitch

Ian Schwartz

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Leah Rubin

To dedicate an issue of HaMizrachi Parasha Weekly in memory of a loved one or in celebration of a simcha, or for other HaMizrachi enquiries, please email hamizrachiweekly@mizrachi.org
To sign up to receive HaMizrachi Parasha Weekly to your email or WhatsApp, visit mizrachi.org/hamizrachiweekly

A First Israeli Arab Ambassador

'A Middle East with no place for a Jewish State has no place for Humanity'



Rabbi Doron Perez

Executive Chairman, World Mizrachi

Wherever the Jews find themselves, they are always somehow the perpetual *other*.

Since time immemorial, the Jewish people have been different in some way and never fully accepted by others.

Abraham the 'Other'

This quality of being the perennial *other* is clearly highlighted by our sages at the very dawn of Jewish history. The Torah uses a strange word to identify Abraham:

וַיְבֹא הַפְּלִיט וַיִּגַּד לְאַבְרָם הָעִבְרִי...

"And the survivor came and told **Abraham the Ivri**..." (Bereishit 14:10)

Ivri is translated as Hebrew - Abraham the Hebrew. What does this mean?

The meaning of the word *Ivri* is unclear and hence there are multiple interpretations - all pointing to Abraham being different from the local Canaanites. It could mean that Abraham was a 7th generation descendant of עבר - Eiver, and hence "עברי" from עבר or perhaps this refers to the distinct language spoken by those descendants - עברית, Hebrew. Abraham's distinctness and otherness. Alternatively, the word "עבר" also means 'side' - Abraham came from the other side of the Euphrates river.¹ The Sages however point out that something much deeper is at play here - 'Rabbi Yehuda says: the entire world is on one side and Abraham is on the other side' (Midrash Bereishit Rabba, Parasha 42, Siman 8). What is being described here is an 'otherness' - that the beliefs and spiritual course of Abraham's

life are very different from the entire world around him. Somehow Abraham from the very outset, and his progeny the Jewish people thereafter, are destined to be this eternal other. There seems to be something different and distinguishing about the Jewish people - somehow apart from normative national and societal interactions.

The Perpetual Other

Jews have been victimized throughout history and never fully accepted as part and parcel of civic society throughout. Pharaoh's Egyptians persecuted the Children of Israel seeing them as a fifth column and as a threat to Egyptian society. Haman of Persia would later see them as outcasts and as a peculiar people, totally distinct in their own laws and customs from any other people and worthy of derision and destruction (Esther 3:8). The Greeks and Romans prejudiced them for not fully embracing Hellenistic and later Roman cultural norms and insisting on maintaining their distinct culture. Christianity and Islam could never fully accept them and hence Jews were either banished, persecuted or killed at worst or deemed to live as dhimmis and second-class citizens at best.

In the age of the Enlightenment, the Jews 'otherness' took on a different form. As Europe moved away from the religious rule of the Church so did prejudice against the Jews evolve. No longer was Judaism the problem, it was now the Jewish race. As Europe moved towards a secular and scientific age, so did a new 'enlightened' and

sanitized definition of Jew hatred emerge. At the height of the Enlightenment, in 1879, a German journalist Wilhelm Marr gave Jew-hatred a new name, coining a new phrase – anti-Semitism. No longer was the prejudice based on Judaism – the Jewish peoples’ nonacceptance of Christianity, but rather now on the new pseudo-scientific category of race. Jews were now not hated because of their beliefs but rather their racial belonging and ethnicity. They were aliens polluting the bloodstream of Europe. As Wistrich points out, “There was clearly a need to establish a new paradigm for anti-Jewishness which sounded more neutral, objective, ‘scientific’ and in keeping with the liberal, enlightened Zeitgeist.”² This new ‘enlightened’ nationalist racial anti-Semitism was to culminate in the horrific Holocaust – the systematic destruction of the polluted ‘lesser’ ethnic groups under Nazi rule.

In the recent era of the State of Israel, the one and only Jewish state is seen as the perennial *other*. Somehow different, always having to justify its very existence and held to an ethical double standard forever – never judged by the norms of others. The nonstop propaganda machine against the Jewish State aims to portray it as a peculiar pariah amongst the nations – worthy of derision and perhaps, G-d forbid, destruction.

Why the Jews?

What is at the root of this hatred, of the persistent evolving hatred of Jewish existence – Judaism, the Jewish people or the Jewish State?

The obstinate and almost inexplicable persistence of the phenomenon of anti-Semitism is difficult to fathom and much ink has been spilled in trying to make sense of it. Robert Wistrich, arguably the greatest and most prolific historian of anti-Semitism in the modern era reaches this conclusion that the very quality of *otherness* is a key to unlocking the mystery. In his seminal work, *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred*, he says that the historic roots of anti-Semitism can be found in **Jewish religious and social exceptionalism**. This is what both antagonized early pagans who demanded absolute allegiance which the Jews could not give and later spread to Christianity as

they embraced views of divinity and religious life which the Jews did not. Somehow this *otherness* and exceptionalism, being different, was seen as alien and peculiar, and with Jews always remaining committed to Judaism clinging to their distinct beliefs, legacy and lifestyle and therefore the target of prejudice and persecution.

The medieval commentator Rabbenu Bechaye points out that the requirement of the Torah to observe our distinctive Mitzvot and Jewish life is indeed at the root of this hatred.³

Since Jewish distinctiveness is the cause, many assumed that shedding this distinctiveness and assimilating and disappearing into host cultures may be the answer. Enlightenment Eastern European and Emancipated Western European attempts at assimilation came to tragic and grinding halts in the Russian pogroms and Nazi persecutions respectively.

Disappearing as Jews has been historically tragic and unsuccessful. While this is happening with many in the Western world today, the distinct and much necessary *otherness* of the ethical monotheism espoused by the Jewish people since Abraham’s Divinely inspired odyssey is critical now, more than ever.

The Voice of the Other

Indeed this *otherness* is not a sign of peculiarity or alienness but rather of a critical uniqueness and distinctiveness.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks writes in his book *Future Tense* that indeed the heart of Judaism is the belief in the reality of *otherness*. He writes:

“Hate is the inability to accept the other. Cain could not live with the otherness of Abel, and he killed him, the builders of Babel could not live with the politics of otherness – they insisted on ‘one language and one common speech’, rejecting the dignity of dissent, the Egyptians could not live with the otherness of the Hebrews so they enslaved them, German could not live with the otherness of the Jews and set about murdering them. Judaism is the voice of the other throughout history. The whole of Judaism is about making space for the other, about G-d making space for us, us

making space for G-d and about human beings making space for each other.”

‘A Stranger and Citizen Amongst You’

It is interesting to note that in spite of Abraham having spent much time in the land of Canaan, he presents himself to Efron the Hittite, with the unusual phrasing of being both “a stranger and a citizen.” (Bereishit 23:4) This is of course an unusual dichotomous pairing of words – a citizen implies permanence and rootedness, while a stranger implies alienness and temporariness. This pairing, indeed, seems to describe the very nature of the inherent Jewish ‘otherness.’ Not only did Abraham describe himself this way, but so did King David (Psalm 39).⁴ After all, Abraham was not born in Canaan and was not a Canaanite. He came from further east in Mesopotamia, either from the Ur of Chaldees or Charan. It was G-d who told him to leave his land, birthplace and father’s house, all the markers of familial, tribal and national belonging and embark on a journey to another land. Somehow, the birth of the Jewish people is, *ipso facto*, the birth of strangers in a strange land. They are the archetypal stranger.

It is unsurprising that even once Abraham finds his feet in the land which will eventually become the land, has to leave on a number of occasions, living as a stranger in Egypt and then in the land of the Plish-tim – both with great personal danger. Isaac also intends to move to Egypt as a result of famine but was stopped by G-d and told to remain in the land of Philistia. This week’s parsha begins with the very words “Vayetze – and he left”; Jacob has to leave the land of his fathers and of his birth as he is being pursued by his brother Esau. It will be 20 years in exile living as a stranger before he will return. And even once returning it won’t be long before he and his children will go down to Egypt, eventually becoming a long and painful 210-year exile, once again suffering the consequences of being a stranger in a foreign land.

Israel's First Arab Ambassador

George Deek was the first Israeli-Christian-Arab to be an Israeli ambassador. In 2018, he was selected as the representative

Continued on page 7

PIRKEI AVOT

The Cost and the Benefit



Rabbi Reuven Taragin
Educational Director, World Mizrahi
Dean of Overseas Students, Yeshivat Hakotel

Scan here to join
Rabbi Taragin's
daily Divrei Torah
WhatsApp group



רַבִּי אֹמֵר... וְהוּי זְהִיר בְּמִצְוֹה קְלָה כְּבַחְמוּרָה, שְׂאִין אַתָּה יוֹדֵעַ מִתּוֹן שְׂכָרְךָ שֶׁל מִצְוֹת.
וְהוּי מְחַשֵּׁב הַפְסֵד מִצְוֹה כְּנֶגֶד שְׂכָרָה, וְשֹׁכֵר עֲבֵרָה כְּנֶגֶד הַפְסֵדָה (אבות ב:א):
בְּן עֲזַי אֹמֵר, הוּי רַץ לְמִצְוֹה קְלָה כְּבַחְמוּרָה, וְבוֹרַח מִן הָעֲבֵרָה. שְׂמִצְוֹה גּוֹרְרֵת מִצְוֹה, וְעֲבֵרָה גּוֹרְרֵת עֲבֵרָה. שְׂשֹׁכֵר מִצְוֹה, מִצְוֹה. וְשֹׁכֵר עֲבֵרָה, עֲבֵרָה (אבות ד:ב):

Two *mishnayot* in *Pirkei Avot*, one that quotes Rebbi Yehudah HaNasi¹ and one that quotes Ben Azzai,² encourage us to value *mitzvah* fulfillment and avoid *aveirah* transgression. The *mishnayot* are similar in that both begin with the word “*havei*” and both encourage³ us to properly value *mitzvah* observance.

Cost/Benefit

Let’s begin our study of Rebbi’s *mishneh* with the second part of his teaching, which urges us to conduct a cost/benefit analysis of the performance of both *mitzvot* and *aveirot*.⁴ Though *mitzvah* observance can sometimes be cumbersome, we should compare the great reward⁵ we receive to the (relatively) small sacrifice we make by observing them.⁶ Conversely, when tempted to violate *aveirot*, we should remind ourselves that the long-term loss outweighs the short-term pleasure or gain.

The Gemara in *Avodah Zarah*⁷ elaborates on our *mishnah* and explains that the *yetzer hara* often lures us to sin by highlighting the pleasure we will receive from it. We need to “regain control” of ourselves by reflecting upon the long-term loss sin causes. The Gemara in *Sotah*⁸ teaches that people only sin if they are dominated by a *ruach shetut* (foolish spirit). One who carefully considers the true consequences of their actions⁹ will choose to fulfill *mitzvot* and avoid *aveirot*.

In addition to helping us avoid future sins, our accurate appraisal of sin is also critical to our *teshuvah* for sins committed in the past. We express this idea in the words we add to our *viduy* (confession of sin): “*Sarnu mi’mitzvotcha... v’lo shavah lanu* — We have veered from the path of your *mitzvot* and it was not worth it.”¹⁰ This admission and

honest evaluation of our past sins distances us from them and helps us avoid future mistakes.

The Long-Term

We have seen that Rebbi encourages us to consider the reward for *mitzvah* observance and the loss caused by sin. What kind of reward and loss is Rebbi referring to? Many commentaries¹¹ understand Rebbi as focusing upon the *sechar* (reward) and *onesh* (punishment) we receive in the next world. The loss involved in performing a *mitzvah* and the pleasure offered by sin pale in comparison to the next world’s eternal and more meaningful reward and punishment.

We can add that observing *mitzvah* and avoiding *aveirot* are beneficial to us in this world as well. Sin often offers instant gratification, but impacts us negatively later in life. This is why the Torah often uses the word “*yom*” to describe a person who chooses sin. For example, Yaakov asked Eisav to sell him the *bechor* (firstborn) rights “*hayom* — today.”¹² The *Seforno*¹³ explains that Yaakov used this word to highlight why Eisav was unworthy of the *bechor* rights. One who prefers the short-term pleasures of today over meaningful long-term goals cannot be a link in the chain of Jewish generations that is rooted in eternal values.¹⁴

What We Don’t Know

Though the cost/benefit analysis is helpful, it can also have a negative impact on the nature of our fulfillment. The focus on reward can cause people to pursue only the *mitzvot* they think offer the most reward. Rebbi preempts this at the start of the *mishneh* by noting that we do not actually know the exact reward given for each

mitzvah. We should therefore “care” about all *mitzvot* equally — those we assume to be less significant as much as those we assume to be more.¹⁵

For this reason, halachah mandates principles like “*Ha’osek b’mitzvah patur min ha’mitzvah*”¹⁶ and “*Ein ma’avirin al ha’mitzvot*”¹⁷ which reject the prioritization of *mitzvot* presumed to be of greater significance. We seek to fulfill all *mitzvot* with equal passion and commitment irrespective of the different amount of reward we associate with each.

Why We Don’t Know

*Chazal*¹⁸ take this idea a step further by explaining that Hashem intentionally concealed the amount of *sechar* awarded for each *mitzvah* in order to avoid selective fulfillment. As we do not know the reward associated with each *mitzvah*, we have no choice but to commit ourselves to all them equally. The *Midrash*¹⁹ conveys this idea by comparing Hashem to a king who asks his subjects to plant an orchard for him. He avoids revealing his favorite type of tree in order to ensure that all the necessary species are planted.

One question still remains: why does Hashem want us to fulfill all of the various *mitzvot* instead of focusing on the most important ones? Many *meforshim*²⁰ compare *mitzvot* to medicines or vitamins. Even if certain ones are more crucial to our health, all of them need to be included in our diet. Others²¹ link different *mitzvot* to various body parts. Our fingers may be less important than our heart, but they are still important; so too are the *mitzvot* meant to purify and sustain them.

The Chasid *Yavetz* makes an additional point. Though we benefit from *mitzvah*

Continued on page 11

HAFTARAH - PARSHANUT ON THE PARSHA

Vayetze: Yaakov and Am Yisrael's Story - Fleeing and Returning



Rabbanit Shani Taragin

Educational Director, World Mizrahi

This week's haftarah (Hoshea 12:13 - 14:10) begins with a clear connection to themes in Parshat Vayetze - "And Israel fled to the field of Aram, and Israel (Yaakov) served (worked) for a wife, and for a wife he guarded (sheep)" (12:13). The pasuk summarizes Yaakov's flight from Esav, his fourteen years of working for Lavan through guarding flock to "earn" a wife - Rachel.

Hoshea intentionally incorporates words from the parsha - "served" ("avad") and "guarded" ("shamar"): "I shall **serve** you seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter" (29:18), "I will again shepherd and **guard** your flocks" (30:31). "Service" is a general term of employment; "guarding" is the specification. This juxtaposition of verbs is first found by Adam's role in creation: "And He placed him in the Garden of Eden, to **work** it and **guard** it" (2:16). Here too, "working" refers to some type of activity, yet "guarding" indicates preservation and passivity. Similarly, Rashi interprets the pasuk regarding Yosef's dream, "but his father kept ("**shamar**") the matter (in mind)," (37:11), as: "He waited expectantly to see when it would come true." The verb "guarding" connotes an expectation beyond human activity; one works and simultaneously anticipates that dreams will be fulfilled even when man does not have the power to act and control. As such, regarding Yaakov - "and for a wife he guarded," i.e. he anticipated his marriage to Rachel - "And they were in his eyes like (just) a few days because of his love for her" (29:20). The knowledge that he was working towards a goal alleviated his harsh years of service. He worked with the sheep, but in his heart, he guarded the thoughts of Rachel (lit. ewe). This pasuk in Hoshea may also allude to both wives

of Yaakov: 'And Israel served for a wife' - i.e. Leah, 'and for a wife he guarded' - i.e. Rachel. Post-facto he worked hard and served for Leah for seven years, but his heart and his hopes were set on Rachel, for whom he "guarded."

In the second pasuk of the haftarah, Hoshea speaks of Hashem's mercy: "And with a prophet G-d brought Israel from Egypt, and by a prophet he was **guarded**." Hoshea draws a parallel between these two pesukim and two stages of history. Just as "Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he guarded," so did Hashem (so to speak) "serve" for a "wife," by bringing Am Yisrael out of Egypt as His betrothed, and as His "wife" He "guarded" them in the desert through Moshe. The parallel is meant to highlight the contrast - G-d's mercies and efforts are significantly greater than those of Yaakov. Yaakov shepherded and guarded the flocks with the anticipation of marriage to Rachel and establishing his household, while G-d served and guarded the flock for the sake of the salvation of the flock (i.e. the nation) itself, waiting for the nation to agree to a covenant.

Perhaps that's why the prophet expounds at great length concerning Hashem's bitter disappointment with the nation: "Efraim made Him very angry..." (12:15) - to the point where the devoted Shepherd who cared and guarded turned, as it were, into an animal of prey, attacking the flock: "Therefore I shall be to them like a lion, like a leopard on the road I shall watch them, I shall meet them like a bereaved bear... and I shall devour them like a lion, the wild beast will tear them apart" (13:7-8). Even then, despite all the disappointment following great expectations, the connection is not completely broken. The prophecy concludes with a heartfelt call:

"Return, O Israel, to the Lord your G-d!" (14:2)... "I will heal their backsliding, I shall love them freely, for My anger is turned away from him" (14:5).

Again the prophet alludes to the Yaakov story: Yaakov labored with great difficulty in order to marry Rachel, as his heart "guarded" with uplifting anticipation his dreams of establishing a home together. Finally, at the critical moment of the marriage ceremony, Rachel was switched with her older sister, and Yaakov remained loyal to Leah through marriage and did not send her away. Likewise, Hashem, despite His disappointments after so much investment, is already "betrothed" to Am Yisrael and therefore cannot banish them. He feels great love and closeness to them - like Yaakov does to Rachel, though at times they seem like a wife betrothed by responsibility, like Leah. But whether they are Rachel or Leah, G-d cannot part from them, and therefore Hoshea calls to them: "Take words with you and return to G-d" (14:3).

This directive at the end of the haftarah (also read on Shabbat Shuva) - "Return, O Israel" is also reminiscent of Hashem's call to Yaakov in the parsha: "And G-d said to Yaakov, 'Return to the land of your fathers and to your birthplace, and I shall be with you'" (31:3). Returning to the Land is always an expression of returning to a relationship with Hashem (See Devarim 30: 1-10, Ruth 1:6) as a fulfillment of the covenants of Brit ben-Habetarim and Brit Milah. The haftarah, just like the parsha, opens: "And Israel fled....," referring to the first flight into exile by a descendant of Avraham. The haftarah ends, just like the parsha, following difficulties and exile, with the call of "Return, O Israel..." to Hashem and to our Land.

Halachic Q&A



Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon

Head, Mizrahi Rabbinic Council | Rabbi of the Gush Etzion Regional Council
Rosh Yeshivah, Jerusalem College of Technology | Founder and Chairman, Sulamot and La'Ofek

Mitzvah of Bikur Cholim:

The Gemara in Nedarim (40a) relates a story of one of Rebbe Akiva's *talmidim* who became sick:

One of the students of Rabbi Akiva became sick. The Sages did not enter to visit him, and Rabbi Akiva entered to visit him [and instructed his students to care for him]. And since they swept and sprinkled water on the [dirt] floor before [the sick student], he recovered. [The student] said to [Rabbi Akiva]: My teacher, you revived me. Rabbi Akiva went out and taught: [With regard to] anyone who does not visit the ill, it is as though he is spilling blood. When Rav Dimi came from Eretz Yisrael to Babylonia he said: Anyone who visits the ill causes that he will live, and anyone who does not visit the ill...does not plead for mercy for him, neither that he will live nor that he will die.¹

Question: Do I fulfill the mitzvah if I do not accomplish all of the goals?

Answer: Many times we visit a *choleh* who has family members present that are taking care of all of his needs. Shu"t Tzitz Eliezer writes that even in a case like this, it is still a great *mitzvah* to visit because the other two elements are still relevant: You are still bringing the *choleh nachat ruach* by visiting, and additionally, it will inspire tefillah on behalf of the *choleh*.

The Ramban writes based on the Gemara that there are three goals in visiting the sick:

1. The first goal is to care for the sick person: Does he need somebody to cook him meals? Does he need somebody to pick up groceries? Does he need somebody to clean his house? This lesson is learned through the description of how Rabbi Akiva swept and washed the floor of the *choleh* and how this clearly had a positive effect. Accordingly, we should ensure that our visits fit the needs of the *choleh*. For example, we should be checking that we are visiting at a convenient time. Additionally, one should stay with the *choleh* for an appropriate amount of time: enough time to bring him joy and strength, but not to the point that he is a burden.



Question: Can I fulfill the mitzvah of bikur cholim over the phone?

Answer: Seemingly, one can fulfill all three goals when calling a *choleh*: We can ask if the *choleh* needs anything, we can speak with him and bring him joy, and we can also feel for his situation through speaking to him. If so, can one make phone calls instead of visiting in person?

Rav Moshe Feinstein writes in Igrot Moshe that if one cannot visit in person, then the obligation of *bikur cholim* remains and can be accomplished over the phone.

However, when one has the option to visit he must do so. It is clear that a visit can

2. The second goal is to bring joy to the *choleh*, keep him company, and uplift his spirits. The Rambam emphasizes this point in *sefer* "Hanhagot Habriyot," writing that one should tell the *choleh* stories that will bring him joy and uplift his spirits.
3. The third goal is that the visitor should daven on behalf of the *choleh*, as we see from the words of Rav Dimi. We often hear about people in unfortunate circumstances. However, it often takes seeing the sickness or difficulty with our own eyes to understand and internalize the serious degree of the matter. Therefore, through visiting the *choleh*, the visitor will turn to Hashem from the depths of his heart for the *choleh's* recovery.

raise the spirits of the *choleh* to a much greater degree than a phone call. Additionally, one is inspired to pray for the *choleh* to a much greater degree after a visit than after a phone call.

Therefore, if the option to visit exists, one should not settle with a phone call.

● Translated from Hebrew and abbreviated by Yaakov Panitch.

1. Translation by Sefaria

תקציר פרשת ויצא

הרבנית שרון רימון
Tanach teacher and author



במהלך הא-לוהי, ההשגחה הא-לוהית מסובבת את חייו של יעקב. לא רק הפחד מפני עשיו הוא הגורם ליעקב לברוח לחרון, אלא רצון ה' שיעקב ימצא אישה איתה ימשיך את דרכו של אברהם. הבריחה מפני עשיו היא רק האמצעי שנועד לסייע לרצון ה'. כך גם לא רמאותו של לבן גרמה לנישואי יעקב עם לאה, אלא רצון ה', ורמאותו של לבן הייתה רק האמצעי להגיע אל הנישואין הראויים בעיני ה'. מימד זה של חייו משתקף בשמו "ישראל". יעקב מודע למהלך הא-להי של חייו, המלווה בחזון הגדול של ברכת ה' לאברהם. עם החזון הזה הולך יעקב בצאתו אל הגלות, ובעזרתו יתמודד עם המציאות האנושית הקשה והמורכבת.

חייו של יעקב משקפים ומרמזים על עתידו של עם ישראל, העתיד להתמודד עם המציאות האנושית הסבוכה, יחד עם חזון גדול שמלווה אותו לאורך כל הדרך.

אולם, יציאתו של יעקב לחרון איננה רק מתוך בריחה מעשיו אלא מלווה בציווי לשאת אישה ראוייה, ובברכתו של יצחק: "וַיִּתֵּן לָךְ אֶת בְּרַכְתּוֹ אֲבָרְהָם לָךְ וּלְרַעְיָה אִתָּךְ לְרִשְׁתָּךְ אֶת אָרֶץ מִגְרִיד אֲשֶׁר נָתַן אֱלֹהִים לְאַבְרָהָם" (בראשית כח, ד). אמנם יעקב הולך לחרון בתחושה אנושית של בריחה מתוך פחד מעשיו, אך באופן עמוק ופנימי מלווה אותו כל הזמן ברכת אביו - הבטחת הארץ והבטחת הזרע. מתוך כך הוא מקבל הבטחה אלוקית נוספת ביציאתו מן הארץ (בחלום הסולם), ואף נישואיו עם רחל ולאה אינם תוצאה של מפגש מקרי או של רמאות אלא מכוונים מאת ה'.

אם כן, סיפור חייו יעקב מתרחש בשני תהליכים מקבילים, האנושי והא-לוהי. במהלך הטבעי והאנושי, יעקב מתמודד עם המציאות האנושית הקשה והמורכבת. הוא בורח מפני עשיו אחיו, מגיע לבית לבן ומתאהב ברחל, לבן מרמה אותו וגורם לו להינשא ללאה. יעקב נמצא במקומות בעייתיים ומורכבים של המציאות ומתמודד איתם בעצמו, באופן אנושי ועצמאי. מימד זה של חייו משתקף בשמו "יעקב".

”יצא יעקב מבאר שבע וילך חרנה” – הסיבות ליציאתו של יעקב לחרון מתוארות בסוף הפרשה הקודמת, פרשת תולדות. סיבה אחת היא בריחתו של יעקב מפני עשיו אחיו הרוצה להורגו, וסיבה נוספת היא ציוויו של יצחק ליעקב לשאת אישה מבנות לבן ולא מבנות כנען.

מהתבוננות ראשונית בפרשה, נראה כי הסיבה המרכזית להליכתו של יעקב היא הבריחה מעשיו. רבקה, שרוצה להציל את יעקב מפני עשיו, משכנעת את יצחק להסכים לבריחת יעקב בתואנה שההליכה נועדה לנשיאת אישה. גם תחושתו העיקרית של יעקב היא בריחה – הוא מבקש מה' שישמור עליו ויחזיר אותו הביתה בשלום. נוסף על כך, נישואיו של יעקב עם רחל נראים כהתנהלות אנושית – כתוצאה של מפגש טבעי בין השניים בעקבות בריחתו של יעקב לחרון (בשונה מנישואי יצחק ורבקה, שבהם מודגש הציווי והליווי האלקי לאורך כל הדרך). גם הנישואין עם לאה מתוארים כהסתככות בעקבות מעשיו של לבן.

Continued from page 3

of Israel in Azerbaijan. In a tribute to Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, Deek shared that the writings of Rabbi Sacks had a transformative impact on his thinking. He particularly pointed out being moved by the words of Rabbi Sacks who said that a Middle East that does not have a place for a Jewish State, does not have a place for humanity. For Deek it was clear, the ability to accept the 'otherness' of people in general and the Jewish people in particular, is the very sign of a tolerant, accepting and pluralistic society. This indeed, teaches Rabbi Sacks, is the essence of the Jewish People's 'otherness' and its message of blessing to the world. The Jewish People live in this world with a sense of alienness and 'otherness'. This is not destined to be a curse but rather

unique source of blessing – a deep lesson about the ability to accept the other and find space on G-d's earth for all those created in His image.

It is not by chance that the Sages point out that the consciousness of being strangers ought to lead the Jewish People to deep sensitivity toward the needs of others. Perhaps the very ability of society to embrace the 'otherness' of the Jew and to accept the dignity of difference is the very sign of a healthy, moral and spiritual society. Scapegoating and prejudicing Judaism, the Jewish People and the Jewish State is the very sign of an unhealthy, intolerant sickness at the heart of society.

May the Jewish People's uniqueness and insistence on the dignity of difference

and the sanctity of 'otherness', be a guiding light always, for ourselves and all in society.

1. See Joshua 24:2 - that our forefathers came from the eastern side of the river.
2. Robert S. Wistrich, Anti-Semitism: The Longest Hatred (London, 1991) pg. xv.
3. See his commentary to Vayikra 20:23.
4. This very wording is how G-d refers to the Jewish People collectively in the land, as "geirim and toshavim" (Vayikra 25,23) justifying why it is in the Jubilee year, the land will return to whomever G-d deems it return to .

I Have a Dream



Sivan Rahav Meir and Yedidya Meir
World Mizrahi Scholars-in-Residence

וַיִּפְגַּע בַּמָּקוֹם וַיִּלֶן שָׁם כִּי בָא הַשָּׁמֶשׁ
וַיִּקַּח מֵאֲבָנֵי הַמָּקוֹם וַיִּשֶׂם מְרֹאשְׁתָּיו
וַיִּשְׁכַּב בַּמָּקוֹם הַהוּא - וַיִּחְלֵם

And he arrived at the place and lay down to sleep 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. And he dreamed. (Genesis 28:11-12)

It's not by chance that the speech considered the greatest of the twentieth century, if not of all time, was the "I have a dream" speech delivered by Martin Luther King in 1963 at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., when he called for an end to racial discrimination. First you need a dream, a vision, to know where you are going and why. The verse says "and he placed (the stones) around his head." There is a famous midrash we hear in kindergarden about the stones shouting to each other: "Let the tzadik put his head on me!" And all the stones argue with each other because each wants that honor, until G-d unites all of them into a single stone.

But the Lubavitcher Rebbe adds here another: notice, he says, that Yaakov first puts the stones around his head. When he goes out into turbulent and hostile surroundings, he first of all keeps his head, holding on to his values and his perspective, making sure his dream and vision are intact. It's written in Psalms (128:2),

יִגִּיעַ כַּפִּידָךְ כִּי תֹאכַל, אֲשֶׁרִידָךְ וְטוֹב לָךְ

If you eat the toil of your hands, you are praiseworthy, and it is good for you.

"The toil of your hands" and not "the toil of your head." Regarding parnassa or making a living, it's all about your hands. Your head needs to concentrate and stay focused, not to get confused by your work and lower your level of holiness. Yaakov goes out to seek his fortune but first he

must guard his head and his thoughts, and not let himself become confused by the world out there. The world is a confusing place and that's why the word for world is "olam," which is derived from "he'elem," which means hidden. The world that our eyes see hides the truth. Therefore, we have to keep our heads and our dreams, to always remember the goal, which is spiritual.

Indeed, Yaakov closes his eyes and merits the famous "Jacob's ladder dream."

וַהֲנֵה סֵלֶם מֵצַב אַרְצָה וְרֹאשׁוֹ מֵגִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיְמָה
וַהֲנֵה מַלְאָכָי אֱלֹהִים עֲלֵים וַיֵּרְדוּ בּוֹ
וַהֲנֵה ה' נֹצֵב עָלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר
אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֶיךָ אֲבִירָה וְאַלֵּהֵי יִצְחָק
הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אָתָּה שֹׁכֵב עָלֶיהָ, לֶךְ אֲתַנְנָה וְלִזְרֹעַךְ
וְהָיָה זֶרְעֶךָ כְּעֶפְרַיִם הָאָרֶץ
וּפְרֻצֹת יָמָה וְקִדְמָה וְצַפְנָה וְנִגְבָּה
וְנִבְרָכּוּ בָךְ כָּל מְשֻׁפָּחַת הָאָדָמָה וּבְיֹרְעָה
וַהֲנֵה אֲנִי עִמָּךְ
וְשָׁמְרֹתִיךָ בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר תֵּלֵךְ
וְהִשְׁבַּתִּיךָ אֶל הָאָדָמָה הַזֹּאת
כִּי לֹא אֶעְזָבְךָ עַד אֲשֶׁר אִם עָשִׂיתִי
אֵת אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתִּי לָךְ

And behold! a ladder was set up on the ground and its top reached to heaven; and behold, angels of G-d were ascending and descending upon it. And behold, the Lord was standing over him, and He said, "I am the Lord, the G-d of Abraham your father, and the G-d of Isaac; the land upon which you are lying to you I will give it and to your seed. And your seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and you shall gain strength westward and eastward and northward and southward; and through you shall be blessed all the families of the earth and through your seed. And behold, I am with you, and I will guard you wherever you go, and I will restore you to this land, for I will not forsake you until I have done what I have spoken concerning you." (Genesis 28:12-15)

In the above verses, notice that "and behold," implying surprise, appears four times. This is an unexpected turn of events. Yaakov leaves his tent, the innocence of someone who learns Torah all day and, all of a sudden, something new happens.

This dream has both national and personal significance. Our sages say that divine angels, representing the nation of Israel, go up and down on the ladder. But divine angels also go up and down within Yaakov, within every human being.

Yaakov's dream represents continuous ascent and descent, the ups and downs which have constituted our history throughout the generations. Again and again we find an anti-Hollywood or anti-fairy tale script in the Torah, with no "and they lived happily ever after" ending. The stories told in the Torah are complex and drawn-out. Ups and downs. But this is the truth, this is our life. Am Yisrael goes into exile contending with powerful kingdoms and the individual goes into exile facing imposing challenges.

When will this transformation of a dream into reality occur? We are in the middle of this transformation. The ups and downs will continue and the blessings promised to Yaakov will persist - blessings also meant for us today. In "Akeidat Yitzchak," Rav Yitzchak Arama writes: "He (G-d) makes His promise for all time, and means to include the entire nation . . . and even if this promised end will be delayed and come late, do not fear or be dismayed 'for I will not forsake you until I have done what I have spoken concerning you.'"

This is an unmistakable divine promise regarding our redemption and any delay is only temporary, even if it hurts.



Continued on next page

For the Shabbat Table



Rabbi Danny Mirvis
Deputy CEO, World Mizrachi
Rabbi at Ohel Moshe Synagogue, Herzliya Pituach

“**A**nd Ya’akov worked seven years for Rachel, and they were in his eyes like but a few days (“yamim achadim”) because of his love for her” (Bereishit 29:20).

The description of these seven years of labour as “in his eyes like but a few days because of his love for her” is one of the most romantic reflections in the Torah, showing how time flies when you are in love. However, it does not seem to make sense – Surely, if Ya’akov really loved Rachel, then seven years of waiting would not have flown by at all! Each day of waiting would have been like a week to him, each week like a month, each month like a year and each year like a decade. So how can the verse state that these seven years “were like but a few days”?

Numerous commentators (Chezkuni, Ba’alei haTosafot, Mizrachi and others) explain that Ya’akov did not choose Rachel to be his life partner because he loved himself or wanted to gratify himself. It was “because of his love for her” – because he saw in her somebody very precious, somebody of great value and somebody of tremendous calibre. For somebody like Rachel he would have been willing to wait twenty years or thirty years or more. A wait of seven years for such a unique and



We should ensure that our relationships are not based on self gratification, but on unconditional love.

beautiful treasure was therefore “like but a few days” in his eyes.

The Sefat Emet suggests an alternative explanation, based on the only other time the term “yamim achadim” (a few days) is used in the Torah. In last week’s Parsha, Rivkah commanded Ya’akov to flee to her brother Lavan:

“And you shall dwell with him “yamim achadim” (for a few days) until your brother’s wrath will abate” (Bereishit 27:22).

Rivkah’s instruction is baffling. Did she really expect Esav to calm down after a mere few days? In next week’s Parsha we will see how Esav’s wrath and hatred for Ya’akov remained just as strong, even though twenty two years had passed. How should we understand Rivkah’s instruction to go “yamim achadim” – for a few days?

The Sefat Emet explains that Rivkah was not referring to “yamim achadim” as

meaning “a few days”, but rather days of the “achdut” (unity) of Hashem. Originating from Charan herself, Rivkah was fully aware of the spiritual challenges lying ahead for Ya’akov in her brother’s household. To ensure that Ya’akov’s faith would not slip away from home, in an alien, idolatrous environment, she instructed him to be in touch with Hashem every single day.

We can now explain the term “yamim achadim” in this week’s Parsha as well. After seven years in the home of Lavan, Ya’akov reflected with deep fulfilment on his spiritual attainment. His friendship with Rachel enhanced his connection with Hashem and he had lived up to his mother’s request admirably. For Ya’akov and Rachel to be deeply in love and in regular contact for seven years without falling to temptation or letting their spiritual standards drop is no simple feat. These were days dominated by the unity of Hashem.

Our relationships should be filled with “yamim achadim” in both meanings of the term. We should ensure that our relationships are not based on self gratification, but on unconditional love. We must also ensure that our relationships with fellow human beings only increase and enhance our relationships with Hashem.

Shabbat Shalom!

Continued from previous page

לימים אחדים. אם קודם כוח הכבידה כמעט התבטל, כעשיו גם מישור הזמן מאבד את משמעותו.

הקשר בין יעקב לרחל מזכיר מה הכוח של אהבה, של קשר אנושי. יש אנשים שמקצצים לנו את הכנפיים, ויש כאלה שפשוט נותנים לנו כנפיים.

הגדולה הופכת קלילה. המפגש העוצמתי עם רחל כמעט מבטל את כוח הכבידה.

אחר כך יעקב עובד שבע שנים כדי לזכות להתחתן עם רחל, והתקופה הזו מתוארת בפסוק המפורסם והיפה: וַיַּעֲבֹד יַעֲקֹב בְּרַחֵל שֶׁבַע שָׁנִים וַיְהִי בְּעֵינָיו כְּיָמִים אֶחָדִים בְּאֵהָבָתָּהּ אֵתָּה. שוב מתברר כמה הרובד הנפשי משפיע על המישור הפיזי: שבע שנים הופכות

כשיש לנו מטרה ותכלית, כשיש אישיות שנותנת לנו השראה – אתגרים קשים יכולים להפוך קלים יותר. בפרשה שקראנו בשבת, מסופר על אבן כבדה שהונחה על פי הבאר. אבל מה קרה כשיעקב רק ראה את רחל? וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר רָאָה יַעֲקֹב אֶת רַחֵל... וַיִּגַּשׁ יַעֲקֹב וַיִּגַּל אֶת הָאָבֶן מֵעַל פִּי הַבְּאֵר. פתאום האבן

How the Light Gets In



Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l

Why Jacob? That is the question we find ourselves asking repeatedly as we read the narratives of Genesis. Jacob is not what Noah was: righteous, perfect in his generations, one who walked with G-d. He did not, like Abraham, leave his land, his birthplace, and his father's house in response to a divine call. He did not, like Isaac, offer himself up as a sacrifice. Nor did he have the burning sense of justice and willingness to intervene that we see in the vignettes of Moses' early life. Yet we are defined for all time as the descendants of Jacob, the children of Israel. Hence the force of the question: Why Jacob?

The answer, it seems to me, is intimated in the beginning of this *parsha*. Jacob was in the middle of a journey from one danger to another. He had left home because Esau had vowed to kill him when Isaac died. He was about to enter the household of his uncle Laban, which would itself present other dangers. Far from home, alone, he was at a point of maximum vulnerability. The sun set. Night fell. Jacob lay down to sleep, and then saw this majestic vision:

He dreamed and, look, there was a ladder set on the earth, with its top reaching heaven; and look, angels of G-d were ascending and descending on it. And look, the Lord stood beside him and said, "I am the Lord, the G-d of Abraham your father and the G-d of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread forth to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed through you and through your offspring. And look, I am with you and will keep you

wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place – and I did not know it!" And he was afraid, and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of G-d, and this is the gate of heaven." (Gen. 28:12-17)

Note the fourfold "and look," in Hebrew *vehinei*, an expression of surprise. Nothing has prepared Jacob for this encounter, a point emphasised in his own words when he says, "the Lord is in this place – and I did not know it." The very verb used at the beginning of the passage, "He came upon a place," in Hebrew *vayifga bamakom*, also means an unexpected encounter. Later, in rabbinic Hebrew, the word *haMakom*, "the Place," came to mean "G-d." Hence in a poetic way the phrase *vayifga bamakom* could be read as, "Jacob happened on, had an unexpected encounter with, G-d."

Add to this Jacob's night-time wrestling match with the angel in the following *parsha* and we have an answer to our question. *Jacob is the man who has his deepest spiritual experiences alone, at night, in the face of danger and far from home.* He is the man who meets G-d when he least expects to, when his mind is on other things, when he is in a state of fear, and possibly on the brink of despair. Jacob is the man who, in liminal space, in the middle of the journey, discovers that "surely the Lord is in this place – and I did not know it!"

Jacob thus became the father of the people who had their closest encounter with G-d in what Moses was later to describe as "the howling wasteland of a wilderness" (Deut. 32:10). Uniquely, Jews survived a whole series of exiles, and though at first

they said, "How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" (Ps. 137:4) they discovered that the *Shechina*, the Divine Presence, was still with them. Though they had lost everything else, they had not lost contact with G-d. They could still discover that "the Lord is in this place – and I did not know it!" Abraham gave Jews the courage to challenge the idols of the age. Isaac gave them the capacity for self-sacrifice. Moses taught them to be passionate fighters for justice. But Jacob gave them the knowledge that precisely when you feel most alone, G-d is still with you, giving you the courage to hope and the strength to dream.

The man who gave the most profound poetic expression to this was undoubtedly David in the book of Psalms. Time and again he calls to G-d from the heart of darkness, afflicted, alone, pained, afraid:

Save me, O G-d,
for the floodwaters are up to my neck.
Deeper and deeper I sink into the mire;
I can't find a foothold.
I am in deep water,
and the floods overwhelm me. (Ps. 69:2-3)

From the depths, O Lord,
I call for Your help. (Ps. 130:1)

Sometimes our deepest spiritual experiences come when we least expect them, when we are closest to despair. It is then that the masks we wear are stripped away. We are at our point of maximum vulnerability – and it is when we are most fully open to G-d that G-d is most fully open to us. "The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit" (Ps. 34:18). "My sacrifice, O G-d, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart You, G-d, will not despise" (Ps.

51:17). G-d “heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds” (Ps. 147:3).

Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav used to say:

A person needs to cry to his Father in heaven with a powerful voice from the depths of his heart. Then G-d will listen to his voice and turn to his cry. And it may be that from this act itself, all doubts and obstacles that are keeping him back from true service of Hashem will fall from him and be completely nullified.¹

We find G-d not only in holy or familiar places but also in the midst of a journey, alone at night. “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for You are with me” (Ps. 23:4). The most profound of all spiritual experiences, the base of all others, is the knowledge that we are not alone. G-d is holding us by the hand, sheltering us, lifting us when we fall, forgiving us when we fail, healing the wounds in our soul through the power of His love.



The most profound of all spiritual experiences, the base of all others, is the knowledge that we are not alone.

My late father of blessed memory was not a learned Jew. He did not have the chance to become one. He came to Britain as a child and a refugee. He had to leave school young, and besides, the possibilities of Jewish education in those days were limited. Merely surviving took up most of the family’s time. But I saw him walk tall as a Jew, unafraid, even defiant at times, because when he prayed or read the Psalms he felt intensely that G-d was with him. That simple faith gave him immense dignity and strength of mind.

That was his heritage from Jacob, as it is ours. Though we may fall, we fall into the arms of G-d. Though others may lose faith in us, and though we may even lose

faith in ourselves, G-d never loses faith in us. And though we may feel utterly alone, we are not. G-d is there, beside us, within us, urging us to stand and move on, for there is a task to do that we have not yet done and that we were created to fulfil. A singer of our time² wrote, “There is a crack in everything. That’s how the light gets in.” The broken heart lets in the light of G-d, and becomes the gate of heaven.

AROUND THE SHABBAT TABLE:

- Have you ever felt the presence of G-d during a difficult experience?
- Why do you think it is important that we have several different forefathers and foremothers as role models?
- Out of all the forefathers and mothers, why do you think we became known as “Bnei Yisrael”, children of Yaacov?

1. Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav, *Likkutei Maharash* 2:46.
2. Leonard Cohen in “Anthem.”

Continued from page 4

observance, our main goal should be the fulfillment of Hashem’s will. *Avot’s* first *perek*²² made this point when it warned us not to serve Hashem in order to receive reward. In this sense, all *mitzvot* are equal, as they are all expressions of Hashem’s will.

In a similar vein, the Ramban²³ quotes our *mishnah* as the basis of his assertion that all *mitzvot* are precious because they are all our way of thanking Hashem for having created us. As each *mitzvah* is an equal expression of Hashem’s will, they are each an equally precious way of thanking Him.

Let’s make sure to heed Rabbi’s advice and constantly remind ourselves of how much we gain from *mitzvah* fulfillment and the price we pay for sin. May this inspire us to make wise decisions.

● Summarized by Rafi Davis.

1. Masechet Avot 2:1.
2. Masechet Avot 4:2.

3. The Maharal and Tosafot Yom Tov explain that this formulation implies that it is not just an *aitzah*; it is a directive, a *chiyuv*.
4. Though our *mitzvah* observance should be motivated by the mission to serve Hashem as opposed to the goal of receiving reward (See Avot 1:3), reminding ourselves of the reward can help motivate us.
5. Though Rabbi begins this *mishnah* by emphasizing that we do not know the exact reward received for each *mitzvah*, we do know that the reward received outweighs the “loss” incurred by performing it.
6. The *Sefat Emet* adds that even if a *mitzvah* involves a *hefsed*, based upon the *mishnah* later in Avot (*l’fjum tza’ara, agra* — Masechet Avot 5:23) we know that the *sechar* is even greater.
7. Masechet Bava Batra 78b.
8. Masechet Sotah 3a.
9. In line with Rabbi Shimon’s statement in Masechet Avot 2:9 that the *derech yeshara* is *ha’roeh et ha’nolad*.
10. The literal meaning of the words also implies that sin is beneath us.
11. See, for example, the commentary of the Rashbatz to the *mishnah*.
12. Sefer Bereishit 25:31.
13. Ibid. See also Ramban on Bereishit 25:34.
14. For another example, see Sefer Bereishit 39:11 in light of the Gemara in Sotah 36b.
15. See the commentaries of Rabbeinu Yonah and the Maharal to the *mishnah*, who explain that even regarding *lo taaseh’s* (prohibitions), the reward granted for avoiding the sin is not always proportional to the degree of punishment the Torah prescribes for their violation. The Rambam adds that even if we were able to gauge the *sechar* of one *mitzvah* relative to others, we would still not know how much reward we receive for a single *mitzvah*. Even small *mitzvot* earn a tremendous amount of reward. We should therefore be careful about them too.
16. See Masechet Sukkah 25a.
17. See Masechet Pesachim 64b.
18. See Talmud Yerushalmi, Masechet Peah 1:1, Devarim Rabbah 6:2, Midrash Tanchuma Eikev 2 and Midrash Tehillim 9.
19. Ibid.
20. Such as Sefer Ha’Ikarim 4:20.
21. See Tiferet Yisrael to Masechet Avot 2:1.
22. Masechet Avot 1:3.
23. Ramban to Sefer Shemot 13:16.

Jewish History



Rabbi Hershel Schachter

Rosh Yeshivah, Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University

And behold, a ladder was set earthward and its top reached heavenward; and behold, angels of Hashem were ascending and descending on it. (Bereishis 28:12)

Chazal find this description in Ya'akov's dream difficult, as we usually visualize the mal'achim as residing in shamayim, and as such, we would have expected Ya'akov to first see the mal'achim descend and then ascend.

The Midrash suggests that these mal'achim represent the guiding ministers appointed to attend to the affairs of their respective nations (as mentioned in Daniel 10:20), and the description "ascending and descending" refers to the rise and fall of the Four Kingdoms. Hashem showed this to Ya'akov as one of the Founding Fathers of the Jewish Nation, promising him that his nation's fate would not rest in the hands of the mal'achim; Klal Yisrael would be "the portion of Hashem." Hashem would always be with Ya'akov and with the Jewish People as He said, "Behold I am with you; and I will guard you wherever you go" (Bereishis 28:15).

The Ramban explains that if one analyzes the history of any civilization, he will find a predictable rise and fall, domination followed by utter demise. The Jewish Nation, however, is למעלה מן הטבע (above nature) and its history is solely dependent upon mitzvah observance. The Ramban considers this rule of מול לישׂראל (there is no constellation associated with Yisrael), the idea that Bnei Yisrael are not subservient to the dominion of the stars and constellations, as one of the ikarei ha'emunah (Principles of Faith). The fate of every other country is governed by the rules and regulations of history, but that of the Jewish Nation is not.

When Hashem brought Avraham outside, ויוצא אותו החוצה (Bereishis 15:5), Chazal explain that Hashem was telling him, "Go out from your astrology, through which you have seen, through the signs of the zodiac, that you are not destined to bear a son" (Rashi). Hashem was saying, "Abandon your astrological calculations, for your history will be 'above nature.'"

Rav Soloveitchik noted that if one were to draw a chart outlining Jewish history, it would be represented by multiple cycles of peaks and troughs, not by one predictable rise and fall, as in the case of the other nations. Indeed, it is not natural that, as spelled out in the Torah, we will continue to reside in Eretz Yisrael only if the shemittah is observed, or that we may expect rainfall in its season only if we properly perform the mitzvos.

The Netziv (Ha'amek Davar, Shemos 12:2) expands upon this concept. The Mishnah in Rosh Hashanah (1:1) teaches that for the purpose of dating documents, Jewish kings count their years starting from the month of Nissan, while non-Jewish kings date their reign from Tishrei. The Netziv explains that regarding non-Jews, who follow the natural rules of history, Tishrei is the appropriate month to use as their starting point, since all of Nature began in Tishrei with the act of Creation. In contrast, the Jewish Nation follows a supernatural pattern, exemplified by the miraculous events surrounding yetzi'as Mitzrayim in Nissan. This month, therefore, is the appropriate first month of the year for Klal Yisrael. This explains why only Jewish kings mark the beginning of their reign from Nissan.

On Rosh Hashanah, the krias haTorah containing the Akeidah concludes with five pessukim that present the genealogy of the family of Avraham's brother,

Nachor. The simple explanation for why we include these additional pessukim is that they are necessary to allow for the requisite fifth aliyah of this day. Rav Soloveitchik, however, suggested a deeper meaning behind the inclusion of these pessukim. Perhaps we want to contrast Jewish history with the history of non-Jews. These pessukim describe how Nachor's family established itself, with apparent ease, with marriages and births proceeding along a natural course of events. In contrast, Avraham's family development followed a different course. First, both he and Sarah were infertile, not having children until an advanced age. [Indeed, the Gemara in Yevamos (64a) tells us that all of the Avos were akurim (unable to bear children).] Then their only child was almost taken from them during the Akeidah. Every step in the emergence of Klal Yisrael was accomplished through its rising to the challenge of difficulty and nisayon, because the course of Klal Yisrael's history is למעלה מן הטבע. According to the rules of nature, Klal Yisrael should not exist.

This may well explain the mysterious phenomenon of anti-Semitism, which has existed throughout the ages but the cause of which has not been satisfactorily explained by sociologists. As can be seen in the case of organ transplantation, a body naturally rejects foreign objects. Klal Yisrael, which is a distinct מן למעלה מן הטבע creation of Hashem, is incongruous with the natural system by which the rest of the world operates. We can therefore understand why it would be natural for the nations of the world, which are part of טבע, to reject the "foreign body" of Klal Yisrael.

● Adapted from Rav Schachter on the Parsha.

Hakaras Hatov



Rabbi Yisroel Reisman
Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshiva Torah Vodaas

In this week's parsha, as Yehuda is born, Leah Imeinu gives thanks and declares 'הַפַּעַם אוֹדָה אֶת־ה' – "This time I will praise Hashem." (Berieishit 29:35) Therefore, she calls the child Yehudah. Why now more than any of the other births before? Rashi answers: שֶׁנִּשְׁבַּטְלָתִי יוֹתֵר מִחֻלְקִי – because I have assumed more than my share. Leah has given birth to more Shevatim than she deserves and because of that, she gives praise and thanks to Hashem.

In a beautiful explanation of Rashi's point, the Pachad Yitzchok on Chanuka, offers an understanding of the Midda of Hakaras Hatov in general and the Hakaras Hatov that we have to have for Hashem in particular. He explains that there are two components to Hakaras Hatov. One component is the past, the *avar*. A recognition that something that happened in the past is deserving of your thanks. The other component is the future, the present and the future.

That is to say, what is Hakaras Hatov. If someone was good to you in the past, a) you have to recognize that and b) you have to see it as a responsibility moving forward. In other words, you have to recognize in the past what happened, you have to recognize for the current time and the future what is it that obligates me to do. These two components together form Hakaras Hatov.

Obviously, someone who recognizes how someone else did something good for him in the past but doesn't see it as



It would seem to be two totally different things, to admit something and to praise, but the praise without the admission and the praise without the recognition of what happened in the past is not Hoda'a.

an obligation going forward is lacking in Hakaras Hatov. Similarly, if someone wants to do good in the future but doesn't recognize that he has an obligation for the past he is lacking in Hakaras Hatov. It is the two together.

According to Rav Hutner, that is why the word Modeh has two meanings. Modeh means to admit like Mode B'miktzas it is a reference to the past and Modeh as in Hallel V'hodaa means praise. It would seem to be two totally different things, to admit something and to praise, but the praise without the admission and the praise without the recognition of what happened in the past is not Hoda'a. Hoda'a is the recognition and the response.

Similarly, Rav Hutner explains Modim. Each day, in our Amidah, we say ...מוֹדִים אֲנִיחֵנוּ לָךְ שׁ. "We praise You that..." and just a moment later seems to be a redundancy: נוֹדָה לָךְ וְנִסְפָּר תְּהִלָּתְךָ עָלַי. "We

will give thanks to You and recount Your praise, for...." What is going on here? Rav Hutner explains that these are the two components of being Makir Tov (recognizing good): First, when it says לְמוֹדִים אֲנִיחֵנוּ לָךְ, it is referring to a future obligation – we recognize that you are Hashem our G-d, forever. Le'olam Va'ed, for the future. Whereas, נוֹדָה לָךְ עַל refers to something that happened in the past. Modim Al refers to the past and Modim Le refers to the future. It is not a redundancy. You need both.

And so too, when we talk about Kibbud Av V'aim, the obligation towards a parent. Kibbud Av

V'aim is a Mitzvah separate from Hakaras Hatov. But at the very least, you have to have both components of Hakaras Hatov. To be good to your parents because of the Mitzvah to be good to them is not adequate.

You need to have the recognition of what you owe them. At the very least you owe them your existence. You owe them your life. So, it is the two together. Hoda'a and the Modim. When Leah says 'הַפַּעַם אוֹדָה אֶת־ה', she is speaking to the future. Rashi says שְׁנִטְלָתִי יוֹתֵר מִחֻלְקִי, Leah is also recognizing that she took more than her part. One without the other is not a true Hoda'a.

● Edited by Yehuda Kaufold and Josh Harris.

Make the journey count as much as the destination



Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth

Why isn't there a parsha called 'Yaakov'?

We have six parshiot named after people: Noach, Chayei Sara, Yitro, Korach, Balak and Pinchas. This week's parsha of Vayeitsei actually commences, "Vayeitsei Yaakov". Next week's will be, "Vayishlach Yaakov," and the one after will be, "Vayeishev Yaakov". Here are three opportunities for a parsha to be called 'Yaakov' – yet instead, we opt for the verb that comes before his name?

In fact, these three parshiot form a group – Vayeitsei, Vayishlach, Vayeishev – and they teach us about the journey of life.

Vayeitsei – 'he departed from...' *Vayishlach* – 'He sent messengers to...' in order to discover what he would find when he arrived at his destination. And *Vayeishev* – 'He dwelled...' referring to the destination itself.

These three titles together present a powerful lesson about the journeys of our own lives. We shouldn't only depart



We shouldn't only depart from where we are and arrive at our destination. It's also important to prepare for where we're going and in doing so, derive meaning from the journey.

from where we are and arrive at our destination. It's also important to prepare for where we're going and in doing so, derive meaning from the journey.

Yaakov himself did this towards the end of his life when he discovered that Yosef was still alive in Egypt. He took the family, 70 souls in all, on a journey there, and sent Yehudah ahead of the family to set up places of learning in Goshen, in Egypt, to guarantee that while away from home

the Jewish people would remain true to our traditions and to Hashem.

In this context, we can appreciate how important the lesson of Chazal is in Pirkei Avot, the Ethics of the Fathers, where we are taught,

"Know where you're coming from, where you're going to, and before Whom you shall be accountable."

Here we are being presented with the story of our lives from the moment we are born until the moment we pass away. We need to be prepared for the time when we will stand before our Creator when our entire existence will be judged.

From the three sedras we're currently reading we should always remember: it's not just the vayeitsei and the vayeishev that count – where we're coming from and where we're going to – it's also the vayishlach, how we're conducting ourselves along the way.



World Orthodox Israel Congress

REGISTER TO REPRESENT YOUR ORGANIZATION

6 CONTINENTS • 50 COUNTRIES • 250 CITIES • 1,000 ORGANIZATIONS



Wednesday Evening April 26 –
Friday April 28, 2023
ו-ז אייר תשפ"ג

📍 Binyanei Ha'uma, Yerushalayim

- Opening Gala Dinner
- Plenary and breakout sessions
- Evening of inspirational learning together with yeshivot and seminaries
- Launching global forums and initiatives

FEATURED LEADERS INCLUDE



Rabbi
Hershel Schachter



Rabbanit
Shani Taragin



Chief Rabbi
David Lau



Sivan
Rahav-Meir



Chief Rabbi
Warren Goldstein



Rabbanit
Rachele Fraenkel



Rabbi
Yosef Zvi Rimon



Miriam
Peretz



Rabbi Dr.
Jacob J. Schacter

ORTHODOXISRAELCONGRESS.ORG

MARKING 120 YEARS SINCE THE FOUNDING OF MIZRACHI
USING OUR PAST TO INSPIRE OUR FUTURE

Written All Over His Face



Rabbi Shalom Rosner
Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh

וַיֵּרָא יַעֲקֹב, אֶת-פְּנֵי לָבָן;
וְהָיָה אֵינָבו עִמוֹ, כְּתַמּוּל שְׁלֹשׁוֹם. (לא:ב)

The *pasuk* tells us that Yaakov saw the face of Lavan and noticed that Lavan's general appearance differed from his usual appearance.

In *Growth through Torah*, Rabbi Pliskin writes about the power of facial expressions. Lavan reveals his true emotions without mentioning a word, just by his looks, and this teaches us a powerful lesson.

In fact, it is interesting to note that the word for face in Hebrew is *panim*, which means inward. The face is actually the only part of the body that is not covered; it should therefore be called *chutzim* – outward, rather than *panim* – inward. Perhaps the term *panim* is used since you can tell one's inner feelings based on their outer facial expression (a smile or a frown).

One's facial expressions reveal their inner feelings. This concept goes both ways

— we have to pick up on other people's feelings based on their facial expressions, and we also have to realize how our facial expressions can affect the people around us. As Rav Pam once said, **a person's face is a *reshut harabim* (public property), and you can't be *mazik* (cause damage) in a *reshut harabim*.** Just because we are having a bad day does not give us the right to adversely affect the mood of those around us.

The Mishnah in *Avot* states,

וְהוּי מְקַבֵּיל אֶת כָּל הָאָדָם,
בְּסֵבֶר פְּנִים יְפוֹת (אבות א:יג)

“And receive every man with a pleasant temperament.”

The word *b'sever* “*b'sever*” seems superfluous. It would have sufficed to simply state that one should receive others *b'panim yafot*. What does the word *b'sever* add? The Me'iri has a beautiful interpretation. He says the word *b'sever* is derived from the word *sevara* (*sevara*) which is a thought— at least make

the other person **think** you're happy, even if it is not so.

There is a Gemara in *Mesechet Taanit* 22 that relates a relevant story. Rav Bruka was in the marketplace and asked Eliyahu Hanavi if there was anyone in the *shuk* that was worthy of Olam Haba. Rav Eliyahu pointed to two individuals, who were dressed as clowns. These individuals spent their time bringing happiness to ill children. This is another instance that shows how important it is to do what we can to make others happy. At the very least, we need to take great care so as not to appear upset and to greet each individual with the proper respect and with a pleasant disposition “*besver panim yafot*.”

We learn from the looks of Lavan what he felt, and we should take care in how we greet, treat and address others. Just because we may be having a difficult day is no excuse to take it out on others. They are not to blame. They deserve a sincere smile and due respect, irrespective of our disposition.

DAILY DOSE
— ON THE —
DAF

Join the hundreds of people who receive a short insight on the Daf of the day from top Rabbanim and Educators in Israel and around the world.

JOIN TODAY! MIZRACHI.ORG/DAF

Parshas Vayeitzei: Developing a Personal Relationship with G-d



Michal Horowitz
Judaic Studies Teacher

As the *parsha* opens, Yaakov finds himself alone in the dark, and as he sleeps, G-d appears to him. וַיִּחְלֵם, וַהֲגֵה סֵלֶם מִצָּב אַרְצָה, וּרְאִשׁוּ, מַגִּיעַ הַשָּׁמַיְמָה; וַהֲגֵה מִלְאֲכֵי אֱלֹקִים, עֲלִים וְיִרְדִּים – *And he dreamt, and behold! a ladder set up on the ground and its top reached to heaven; and behold, angels of G-d were ascending and descending upon it* (Bereishis 28:12). And in his first communication with Yaakov, Hashem says: אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹקֵי אַבְרָהָם אָבִיךָ, וְאֱלֹקֵי יִצְחָק; הָאָרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה שֹׁכֵב עָלֶיהָ לְךָ אֶתְנַנָּה, וְלִצְרָעָךָ – *and behold G-d was standing over him, and He said, 'I am Hashem, the G-d of Avraham your father, and the G-d of Yitzchak, the land upon which you are lying to you I will give it and to your seed* (Bereishis 28:13).

Here, as Hashem first reveals himself to our third patriarch, the *bechir she'bavos* (the choicest of the patriarchs), His first words are: *I am the G-d of your father Avraham, and the G-d of Yitzchak*. Yaakov will carry on the legacy and community began by his father and grandfather, as he journeys forward to begin his own family.

It is noteworthy that in the context of Hashem's first communications with Yitzchak, He says: –אל- אֲנִי אֱלֹקֵי אַבְרָהָם אָבִיךָ; אֵל-תִּירָא, כִּי-אֶתָּה אֲנִי, וַיְבָרְכֶיךָ וַהֲרַבִּיתִי אֶת-זַרְעֲךָ, בְּעָבוּר אַבְרָהָם עִבְדִּי *I am the G-d of Avraham your father, do not be afraid, for I am with you, and I will bless you and increase your seed, for the sake of Avraham my servant* (26:24). Here, In the aftermath of Yitzchak re-digging the wells that his father Avraham had originally dug, Hashem refers to Himself as *the G-d of Avraham*, but not the G-d of Yitzchak himself. Furthermore, Hashem promises to bless Yitzchak only *in the merit of Avraham*.

Why there does Hashem refer to his relationship with Avraham, but in our *parsha*, in the context of Yaakov's dream, does Hashem communicate as the G-d of Avraham and the G-d of Yitzchak?

Rav Soloveitchik zt'l teaches, "When G-d appeared to Yitzchak (Bereishis 26), G-d identified himself as the G-d of Avraham, but not the G-d of Yitzchak. (This is because) Yitzchak had not yet developed his approach to G-d the way Avraham had done. "And Yitzchak again dug the wells of water which they had dug in the days of his father, Avraham, and the Philistines had stopped them up after Avraham's death; and he gave them names like the names that his father had given them" (Bereishis 26:18).

"This is more than a story about wells. The Torah is teaching us that Yitzchak only drew water from the wells that his father had dug: he had not dug his own wells, he had not yet developed a unique religious approach. At this point G-d promised to bless Yitzchak and multiply his seed, but only for the sake of Avraham (v.24).

"Yitzchak realized that it was insufficient to reopen Avraham's wells; he had to dig his own. At the moment that he built his own altar and called in the name of G-d – developing an edifice and approach of his own – then G-d was no longer merely the G-d of Avraham. Later, when G-d appears to Yaakov, he identified Himself as the G-d of Yitzchak as well as the G-d of Avraham (Vayeitzei, 28:13).

"The introduction to *Shemoneh Esrei* is phrased אֱלֹקֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹקֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹקֵי יַעֲקֹב *the G-d of Avraham, the G-d of Yitzchak and the G-d*

of Yaakov, and not simply אֱלֹקֵי יִצְחָק, the G-d of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. This wording is meant to convey that Yitzchak and Yaakov did not merely reflect Avraham's worldview: they broadened and deepened it. Though based on Avraham's trailblazing, Yitzchak's and Yaakov's *individual approaches* to G-d were distinct" (Chumash Masores HaRav, Bereishis, p.196-197).

From here we learn a powerful and important lesson. Every Jew must receive the *mesorah* from the previous generation, but at the same time, develop and cultivate a personal relationship with the RS"O, where He becomes *my G-d*, and not only the G-d of my fathers.

I once heard a beautiful *vort* told over by Rabbi Shay Schachter that illustrates this very idea. Every day, in *Az Yashir* (*Pesukei d'Zimrah of Shachris*), we say: זֶה קְלִי וְאֶנְהוּ, אֱלֹקֵי אָבִי וְאֶרְמְמְנֶהוּ *this is my G-d and I will glorify Him; my father's G-d, and I will exalt Him* (Shemos 15:2).

This *pasuk* encapsulates the two aspects of every Jew's essential relationship with Hashem. זֶה קְלִי וְאֶנְהוּ – *this is MY G-d and I will glorify him*. It is each person's *tafkid* (duty) to forge his own path, within the parameters of Torah and *halacha*, to G-d and to personally relate to Him as only each individual can. Our talents, capabilities, thoughts, feelings, experiences, intelligence and life story are unlike any other person, and so, each person is a world unto himself. It is this unique person that connects to G-d as his personal G-d.

However, a Jew must never forget that he is but a link on the chain of our glorious

Continued on page 19

Bet-El: A Spiritual Intersection & Bet Elokim



Rabbi Menachem Leibtag
Tanach Study Center | Yeshivat Har Etzion

In this week's Parsha we find the first biblical reference to the concept of 'Bet Elokim', a House of G-d. Though mentioned only once throughout Sefer Breishit, this concept constitutes one of the most fundamental religious principles in Chumash, as it presupposes the possibility of man's visiting the house as a means to improve his relationship with G-d.

Yaakov's description of this site as both 'sha'ar ha-shamayim' and 'Bet Elokim' can help us understand the nature and purpose of the Bet ha-Mikdash and how it represents the potential heights of our relationship with G-d.

The 'sha'ar ha-shamayim' aspect of the Mikdash, symbolized by the angels ascending and descending from Heaven, suggests the possibility of a 'vertical' relationship, a conceptual connecting point between Heaven and Earth. Despite G-d's transcendence, a connection, and thus a relationship, can be attained.

In contrast, the 'Bet Elokim' aspect, a HOUSE on earth where Man can encounter G-d, implies the potential for a 'lateral' relationship. In this sense, the Mikdash serves as both a center for congregation as well as the means of dissemination. From this site, G-d's word and the recognition of His authority can be spread to all mankind.

[See Yeshayahu 2:1-5! This centrality may be reflected by the unique phrase at Bet El - "*yama ve-keydma, tzafona, ve-negba*," which might symbolize this dissemination of G-d's word to all four corners of the earth.]

From G-d's perspective, so-to-speak, the 'shechina' descends to earth by way of 'sha'ar ha-shamayim' and radiates via 'Bet Elokim' (in the form of His Torah) to all of mankind. From man's perspective, we gather at the 'Bet Elokim' to serve G-d, and through the 'sha'ar ha-shamayim' we can climb the 'ladder' of holiness.



In G-d's first 'hitgalut' to Yaakov, we find some additional phrases that can help us appreciate why Yaakov decides that this site should become a Bet Elokim. Let's take another look at the second pasuk of this hitgalut: "And your offspring shall be like the AFAR HA-ARETZ, you shall spread out to the WEST, EAST, NORTH, and SOUTH (*yama ve-kedma, tzafona, ve-negba*), and through you all the nations of the earth shall be blessed" (28:14).

The first two phrases - "afar ha-aretz" and "east, west, north and south" - had been mentioned only ONCE before, i.e. when G-d affirmed Avraham's BECHIRA at BET-EL (after Lot's relocation in Sedom). Note the similarities: "And G-d said to Avram, after Lot had parted from him,

Raise your eyes and look out... to the NORTH, SOUTH, EAST, and WEST, for I give you all the LAND which you see... I will make your offspring like the AFAR HA-ARETZ..." (13:14-16).

Based on a comparison between this 'hitgalut' to Yaakov (28:14) and G-d's earlier 'hitgalut' to Avraham at BET EL (13:14-16), we may offer a deeper interpretation of these terms. The two common phrases, 'afar ha-aretz' and '*yama ve-kedma*...', suggest to Yaakov that he currently stands on the same site where Avraham Avinu built a MIZBEYACH and 'called out in G-d's Name'. This as well adds additional reason for Yaakov's resolve to make this site a BET ELOKIM.

[See also Devarim 12:5-12, and note the expression used numerous times in Sefer Devarim to describe the Mikdash - "*ha-MAKOM asher yivchar HASHEM leshakein SHMO sham*". Compare to the use of the word "*ha'makom*" in 28:10-22!]

However, G-d's hitgalut to Avraham in chapter 13, also took place in Bet-el (see 13:4, noting its context). Notice, how the Torah describes this site as Bet-el, even though Yaakov only named that city over a hundred years later. The reason why is simple, because the Torah realizes that Yaakov's dream took place near the same spot where Avraham built his mizbayach!

The Two Tests



Rabbi Eli Mansour

Edmond J Safra Synagogue, Brooklyn

The Midrash relates that when Yaakov left his parents' home to flee from his brother, Esav, who wanted to kill him in revenge for his "stealing" Yishak's blessings, Esav instructed his son, Elifaz, to run after Yaakov and murder him. Esav made Elifaz swear that he would fulfill this mission. Elifaz consulted with his mother, Timna, who advised him not to obey Esav's command. She warned him that Yaakov was very strong, and Elifaz could be killed if he tried launching an assault on Yaakov. Elifaz was in a quandary, as he wanted to fulfill his father's wish, to which he was bound by oath, but he also feared for his life. The solution was that Yaakov gave Elifaz all his money and everything he had with him. An impoverished person is considered as though he is "dead," and thus by taking Yaakov's money, Elifaz was considered as having fulfilled his father's command without actually killing Yaakov. And thus Yaakov arrived at Haran, where he would stay for twenty years, penniless, without any belongings at all. With Hashem's help, however, he was able to amass a huge fortune working for his wily uncle, Laban, and he returned to Eretz Yisrael a very wealthy man.

We might wonder why things needed to happen this way. Why did Yaakov have



Why did Yaakov have to become penniless before earning wealth? Why did G-d arrange that Yaakov would arrive in Haran without a dime to his name, if he was destined to become wealthy?

to become penniless before earning wealth? Why did G-d arrange that Yaakov would arrive in Haran without a dime to his name, if he was destined to become wealthy?

The Ketab Sofer (Rav Avraham Shemuel Binyamin Sofer, 1815-1871) explains that there are two basic spiritual tests that people face in life: the test of poverty, and the test of wealth. An impoverished man is tempted to lose faith, question G-d's justice, betray G-d out of anger and resentment over his plight, and steal to sustain himself. At the same time, however, wealth also poses difficult tests. Wealthy people can quickly become arrogant and conceited, and look down on other people. Also, while a poor person understands human fragility and how we are

all dependent on G-d's grace, the wealthy man is prone to feel self-sufficient and independently capable of caring for himself, without any sense of dependence on the Almighty's kindness and compassion. Yaakov Abinu passed both these tests at both stages of his life. After losing all his money to Elifaz, he still did not lose his faith, and when he returned to Eretz Yisrael as a wealthy man, he remained fully devoted and loyal to G-d.

This is why Yaakov had to endure poverty before being blessed with wealth. "Ma'aseh Abot Siman La'banim" – the actions of our patriarchs serve as a model and blueprint for us, their descendants. By successfully passing both tests – the test of poverty and the test of wealth – Yaakov paved the way for us to pass both these tests. He set for us the example and precedent that we need throughout our lives – both in good times, and in times of hardship. We look to Yaakov for inspiration during life's darker moments, as he reminds us to retain our faith and rely on G-d's kindness and assistance, as well as during periods of joy and success, as he reminds us to remain humble and ever cognizant of our dependence on the Almighty for everything.

Continued from page 17

mesorah, reaching all the way back to Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. We build our unique and personal relationship with Hashem based on the relationship of our fathers and the teachings of the past

generations: אֶלֶּי אָבִי וְאֶרְמְמֶנּוּ, *my father's G-d, and I will exalt Him.*

With this dual understanding, each of us can truly come to strive to the highest heights of *avodas Hashem*. May we

be courageous enough to forge our own path in the present, as we receive from the past, so that we may continue to build the future.



MIZRACHI
120 YEARS OF RELIGIOUS ZIONISM



Celebrate Israel 75

IN YERUSHALAYIM WITH MIZRACHI

April 24-26, 2023

ג-ה אייר תשפ"ג

Moving Yom HaZikaron Commemoration
Guided Har Herzl experience
Spectacular Yom HaAtzmaut Celebration
Tiyulim with Israel's top tour guides
And more

MORE INFO AT [MIZRACHI.ORG/ISRAEL75](https://mizrachi.org/israel75)

We are the Ladder



Rabbi Moshe Weinberger

Congregation Aish Kodesh, Woodmere

When Yaakov lays down to sleep, the pasuk says “and he dreamt and behold there was a ladder standing on the earth and its top was in the heavens and behold, angels of G-d were ascending and descending בּוֹ.” There is a dispute in Bereishis Raba (68:12) regarding the subject of the word “בוֹ,” which could be read to mean “on him” or “on it.” One opinion is that the angels were ascending and descending the ladder. But the Medresh offers the following explanation according to the opinion that the angels were ascending and descending on Yaakov Avinu:

The [interpretation of the fact that the] angels were ascending and descending on Yaakov is that they were praising him (ascending) and criticizing him (descending). As it says in Yeshaya 49:3, “Yisroel, in whom You are glorified.” “You are the one whose face is carved above.” They ascended and saw his face and they descended below and found him sleeping.

The angels wondered, “How could it be that this person who is so great that Hashem takes such pride in him and his face is carved above under the Throne of Glory is sleeping his life away?” Each of our faces, the children of Yaakov, living in exile just as Yaakov was, are also carved up above on Hashem’s Throne of Glory. We have such great potential that Hashem exults in our greatness and carved each and every one of our faces above in שמים, in heaven. We do not realize our own greatness and meaning, so we sleep our lives away.

In prior generations, it was hard for someone to imagine how one could be in one place and his face could be somewhere else. Even in the time of the Chofetz



We have such great potential that Hashem exults in our greatness and carved each and every one of our faces above in heaven.

Chaim, someone told him about the invention of the telephone, and he commented, “Listen to the power of speech; a Jew can say something in Radin, and someone will hear him in Vilna!” Today it is easy for us to imagine this concept. I do not know how it works exactly, but I have heard that on “Facebook,” people take pictures and other people can look at them anywhere in the world. And on Zoom, one can be in Eretz Yisroel, and he can talk to his grandchildren in New York and they can see each other’s faces as they talk.

This is the struggle that each of us faces when we go out into the world. We also struggle with the angels who say about us, “This is the person whose face is carved onto the Throne of Glory! Look, why is he sleeping?!” We learn from Yaakov that we cannot sleep through our lives, thinking, “Who am I? I’m just a סתם person, a regular guy.” We are not just “regular guys.” Angels, which deliver Hashem’s Divine influence to the whole world, pass through us to do their work.

When Yaakov wakes up, he says (Bereishis 28:16) “Indeed Hashem is in this place and I did not know it.” Tzadikim explain this pasuk in the following way: The letters of the word “אֶנְכִי,” “indeed” in that pasuk stand for the words נשר, כרוב, אריה, lion, angel, and eagle, the three animals whose images Yechezkel says are carved on the great chariot in heaven (10:14). In other

words, Yaakov started off knowing that in lofty places there are mystical creatures, the cherub, the angel, and the lion. But once he hears that the angels say that Yaakov’s own face is also carved above, he he says “and I did not know it.” The Hebrew word for “I” is “אֶנְכִי.” The letters of the word “אֶנְכִי” stand for the words אריה, נשר, כרוב, lion, cherub, eagle, and Yaakov! He was saying, “I knew there were great and spiritual things in Heaven, but I never knew that I was one of them!”

Yaakov was living the good life before he left Beer Sheva. He was able to sit and learn Torah. He had a mother who loved him dearly. Everything was good. But it was only after Yaakov left home and went into exile on the way to Charan that it was revealed to him that “ישראל אשר בך אתפאר,” that Hashem glorifies Himself in him and that his face is carved in the כסא הכבוד, the Throne of Glory. Only in exile did he realize that he was the ladder, the conduit through which Hashem sends his Divine influence into the world.

We too are carved into Hashem’s throne. We must realize that we are important, and not סתם, not simple, regular people. Everything in this world is dependent on us.

Our job is to wake up from our sleep, and realize that we are the ladder, our faces are carved in the Throne of Glory above, and Hashem takes pride in us. So it is up to us to wake up to take up the challenge of our potential and our importance in the world. “And Yaakov awoke from his slumber.” In contrast, with regard to Paroh, it says (Bereishis 41:4-5) “and Paroh woke up and went back to sleep.” We cannot be like Paroh and fall back asleep once we realize that we are great and that we really matter.

The Art of Gratitude



Rabbi YY Jacobson
TheYeshiva.net

“And she conceived and bore a son, and she said, ‘G-d has taken away my shame.’”

What type of shame was she referring to? What shame is there in infertility, which is not her fault? In the world of Torah, there is no room for shame for a condition you never caused. Pain, anguish, or jealousy are sentiments we can appreciate, but why shame?

Rashi presents the astounding and disturbing answer in the Midrash:

The Aggadah (Midrash Rabbah 73:5) explains it: As long as a woman has no child, she has no one to blame for her faults. As soon as she has a child, she blames him. “Who broke this dish? Your child!” “Who ate these figs? Your child!”

Rachel was previously ashamed because she had nobody to blame for any errors, oversights, or flaws. The food was burnt? Rachel must be a lousy cook. The keys to the car are lost? Rachel is irresponsible. Rachel is in a bad mood? She is impulsive and irrational.

Ah, but now, with the birth of Joseph, the shame is gone. The food burnt because the baby ran a fever, and she had to rush him to the doctor. The keys to the car lost? The baby got a hold of them and cast them in the dustbin.

So, if I am understanding this correctly, that is why Rachel who was childless for 7 years wanted a baby—not for the incredible experience of creating a life, not for the infinite joy of having a child, not for the happiness that comes with the singular mother-child relationship—all of this was not the motivating factor. Why did Rachel want a child? So that she has somebody to blame for getting the turkey and cranberry sauce all over the floor?!

Absurd or what? Our mother Rachel, barren and infertile, was yearning for a child—to the point of her telling Jacob: “If I don’t have children I am dead”—So that she blame all her mistakes on her child?

What is even more disturbing is that she names her baby “Yosef,” which means removed, to celebrate the fact that now her shame has been “removed” (asaf). You are giving your child whom you waited for so many years a name that represents your newfound ability now to blame him for your mistakes?!

In all our lives there is a gap between what we have, and what we want. No one gets everything. And even when we are given blessings, the “package” comes with “fine print” you may have not realized in the beginning. Human nature is to focus on that which we are missing, while forgetting that which we have. We take our blessings for granted and we obsess about the missing pieces.

Rachel knew about the human proclivity to focus on the negative instead of the positive, and that even after you experienced an extraordinary gift, after a while you take it for granted and begin kvetching about imperfections. To counterbalance this human recipe for misery, she exclaimed, “G-d has removed my shame,” to remind herself of the idea that she must attribute the things going wrong to her child. When your child breaks the dish or eats the figs, *remember that the only reason you have this problem is because you were blessed with a child.* When your child breaks something or eats up the fresh food you made for the guests, attribute the problem to your child, to the miracle and blessing of having a child.

It is the Jewish custom that when a glass breaks, we shout: Mazal Tov! When the

groom breaks the glass under the chupah, we exclaim Mazal Tov! Why don’t we say: Oy, 10 dollars down the drain? This is Rachel’s gift: When the plate breaks, be grateful. It means you have a home; you own dishes. When your husband breaks something, say: Mazal Tov! Thank goodness, I married a human being, not an angel.

With the hunch of a mother, Rachel decided to immortalize this message in the name of her child, Yosef, meaning “G-d removed my shame.” This became the secret of Joseph’s success.

Joseph endured enormous pain and suffering. His brothers despised him, they sold him into slavery, he was accused of promiscuity, and thrown into a dungeon for twelve years. And yet throughout his entire life, Joseph never lost his joy, grace, passion for life, love for people, ambition to succeed, and his ability to forgive. Joseph comes across as one of the most integrated, wholesome, cheerful, loveable persons in the entire Tanach. With a life story like his, we would expect him to be bitter, cynical, resentful, angry, stone-like, and harsh. “A rock feels no pain and an island never cries,” yet Joseph weeps more than everyone in the Bible.

How did he do this? This, perhaps, was his mother’s gift. Though she died when he was nine years of age, she infused him with perspective on how to live: Every challenge can only exist because it has a blessing as its backdrop. I feel pain? But that means I am alive, and I have feelings. It also means that there is something new I must discover about myself and the world. I am hurt, but that means that I am sensitive, and I can be here for people. I have a conflict with my spouse? That means that I am blessed to have a soul

Continued on page 24

Vayeitzei: Climb!



Rabbi Judah Mischel

Executive Director, Camp HASC; Mashpiah, OU-NCSY

The *avodas ha-tefillah* of Rebbe Yisrael, the holy Baal Shem Tov, was known to be a lofty prayer service, filled with intensity and often lasting for hours on end. Long after concluding their own davening, his disciples, known as the *Chevraya Kadisha*, the 'Holy Fellowship' of Medzhibozh, would return to the *beis medrash* and join their Rebbe. As they arrived, they would form a circle around the tzadik, witnessing and taking part in his *avodah*. One day, as the Rebbe's davening was particularly drawn out, the *chevreh* began to run out of steam. Assuming the Baal Shem Tov would be deep in *d'veykus* for many more hours, they began to slip out, one by one, for a coffee, a bite to eat or a few minutes of rest.

Much to their surprise and dismay, when they returned, they found that the Baal Shem Tov had already completed his davening. Embarrassed, they asked their Rebbe why he'd concluded his *avodah* so much earlier than usual. The Baal Shem Tov sighed and shared a *mashal*:

A group of travelers was passing through the forest, and their leader, a man with unusually keen vision, spotted an exquisite bird at the top of a tall tree. As the others couldn't see the bird, the leader tried to reach upward and catch it so they could enjoy its beauty as well.

Without a ladder, though, the beautiful bird remained out of reach until the men began to climb onto one another's shoulders. Constructing a human ladder, they hoisted their leader upward until he was able to reach the bird and bring it down for all to see...

The Baal Shem Tov explained to the chasidim, "When I meditate in *Amidah*, many hidden things are revealed to me, but my

consuming desire is to ascend to the level in the World Above which the *Zohar* calls 'the Palace of the Bird's Nest' — the abode of the Mashiach. But I cannot reach that height unless I first stand you, my disciples, on each others' shoulders.

"Imagine," continued the Baal Shem Tov, "what would happen if the person at the bottom supporting the ladder suddenly decided to leave. Everyone would fall, including the person with the keen vision, and he could be injured by falling from such a great height."

"But when you remain with me in the *beis medrash* — even without any knowledge of what is going on — I am able to place you on each other's shoulders, so to speak, reach the Chamber of Mashiach, and bring some of that beauty down for us to share and appreciate together. I cannot do it without you."



As a refugee running from a brother who sought to kill him, Yaakov Avinu's future is uncertain. With nowhere to go and no roof over his head, Yaakov experiences a Divine encounter on the Temple Mount: "And Yaakov encountered the Place — and he slept there."

וַיִּפְגַּע בַּמָּקוֹם וַיִּלֶן שָׁם כִּי-בָא הַשָּׁמֶשׁ

"And Yaakov encountered the Place — and he slept there, for the sun had set..."

וַיַּחְלֵם וְהִנֵּה סֹלֶם מֵצֶבֶד אֶרְצָה וְרָאָשׁוֹ מִגֵּיעַ הַשָּׁמַיְמָה
וְהִנֵּה מַלְאָכָי אֲלֹקִים עֹלִים וְיֹרְדִים בּוֹ

"And he had a dream: a *sulam*, a ladder, was set on the ground and its top reached to the heavens, and messengers of G-d were going up and down on it."

(28:12)

"How awesome is this place!" cries Yaakov Avinu as he awakens from this encounter with the Ribbono Shel Olam at the

location of the future Beis Hamikdash, the headquarters of *tefillah*. He is shocked to realize he had slept at the שַׁעַר הַשָּׁמַיִם, "gate of the Heavens", where all prayers ascend to the World Above.

During the previous evening, after the sun had set, Yaakov had davened. Based on this, our Sages (*Berachos*, 26b) instituted Arvit, the evening prayer:

וַיִּפְגַּע בַּמָּקוֹם: וַאֲיִן פְּגִיעָה אֵלֶּא תַפְלָה

"And Yaakov encountered the Place: the word 'encounter' always means prayer, as it is said when Hashem

spoke to Yirmiyahu Hanavi,

וַאֲתָה אַל תִּתְפַּלֵּל בְּעַד הָעַם הַזֶּה וְאַל תִּשָּׂא בְעַדָּם רְנָה וְתַפְלָה וְאַל תִּפְגַּע בִּי

'And you, do not pray on behalf of this nation and do not raise on their behalf song and prayer, and do not *tifga*, 'encounter' Me, for I do not hear you'" (*Yirmiyahu*, 7:16).

Jewish mystical tradition frames our formal 'encounter' with G-d in *tefillah* as one of ascent, climbing through spiritual dimensions to the Supernal World. Indeed, Rebbe Yaakov ben Asher, the *Baal haTurim*, writes that the word *sulam*, ladder, shares the same *gematria*, numerical value as קוֹל, 'voice' — "for the voice of the *tefillah* of the tzadikim is a ladder upon which the angels ascend."



Dr. Avraham (Alan) Rosen is a prolific author and editor of Holocaust literature, testimony, and history. He was a *talmid muvhak* of Prof. Elie Wiesel, zy'a, for almost forty years. As a doctoral student and project director for the Wiesel Living Archive at the 92Y, he maintained a monthly *chavrusashaft*, sharing and learning Torah with Prof. Weisel on Rosh Chodesh. During one such shmooze on Rosh Chodesh Kislev, Dr. Rosen pointed out

Continued on page 25

Long Lasting Luz

Mrs. Shira Smiles

International lecturer and curriculum developer

One of the most mysterious places on earth is the city of Luz. Chazal note that the Malach hamavet had no entry rights to this city and its inhabitants lived forever. What do we know of this city? And what was the significance of renaming the city Bet El? In truth, notes Rav Scheinerman in Ohel Moshe, it is a mistake to think that a person can live forever and escape the Angel of death. Chazal tell us that when a resident of Luz got tired of life he would leave the city and thus die. In renaming the city, Yaakov Avinu teaches us that the only way to achieve eternal life is through Torah; creating a 'Bet El' connects one to spiritual immortality.

Rav Weiss in Mishbetzot Zahav examines the link between 'Luz' and 'Bet El'. The midrash explains that one who entered the city of Luz was vibrant and fresh in their mitzvot like a luz tree. This symbolizes the need to connect with Torah through passion and excitement, as if it was given anew every day. The other quality of the luz (hazelnut) is that it has no opening to crack it. This is symbolic of the city's dwellers who were careful to guard their mouths. As such, negative forces had difficulty entering and causing harm. A person whose mouth is a channel for Torah and mitzvot, who is careful not



A person whose mouth is a channel for Torah and mitzvot, who is careful not to bring harm to others with their speech, is a true 'house of Hashem'.

to bring harm to others with their speech, is a true 'house of Hashem'.

Rav Eisenberger in Miselot Haneviim explains that everything in this world exists in three dimensions: time, place, and body. If there is a place which has this long-lasting quality, it must exist in the other dimensions as well. Indeed, within each of our bodies is a bone at the back of our necks with the same name -'luz'. The Kaf Hachayim explains that when Adam sinned and ate from the Eitz Hadaat, all of man's bones were affected with the exception of the luz bone. Since this bone was not tainted by the effects of the sin it is eternal. We are taught that the seudat melave malka nourishes this bone and it is from this bone that one will be resurrected in the future. Motzai Shabbat is a time when we sing about Eliyahu Hanavi

who himself never died. It is also a time of longing for Mashiach and the rebuilding of the Beit Hamikdash whose remnant, the Kotel, has housed the Shechinah for all time.

The Slonimer Rebbe in Netivot Shalom finds hints of these ideas at the beginning of our parashah. Yaakov Avinu leaves Be'er Sheva, the source of seven which is a reference to Shabbat. He journeys toward Charan, an allusion to the anger of the world, the regular work week. On his way he sees a sulam, a ladder, in his dream with angels ascending and descending upon it. Sulam can be an acronym for 'seudah levayah malka', the meal that transitions the Shabbat angels to heaven and the weekday angels coming to escort us into our new week. The seudat melave malka is the meal that allows us to take the kedushah of Shabbat and use it to infuse the coming week. It is at this auspicious time that Yaakov Avinu symbolically erected a stone and named this place 'Bet El'. In doing so, he transmitted the message that one day the third Beit Hamikdash will stand in this place, the place that the nations will say, "Let us go up to ... the house of the G-d of Yaakov" (Yeshayahu 2;3). Truly this Beit Hamikdash will last forever and Luz will be transformed into the ultimate 'House of Hashem.'

Continued from page 22

partner who cares for me, and that we have an opportunity to create a deeper relationship. My children challenge

me? That means I have children whom I love, and I am given an opportunity to

dig deeper and find the light beyond the darkness.

On Prayer and Sensitivity



Rabbanit Yemima Mizrachi
Popular Torah teacher and author

Parshat Vayeitzei tells unfiltered about all the difficulties of family life. It begins with the loneliness of those in search of a mate when they are no longer in their mother's house and not yet in their own house, like Yaakov. Those in search of a mate sometimes feel out of place, and this is indeed the key word of the parashah:

And Yaakov tried to mark some kind of territory when he surrounded his head with stones and raised his eyes to the mountains, "Where will my help come from?" and he made vows in his solitude.

Immediately after this, intrigues within the family are described: Trouble, insults, jealousy, competition and existential difficulties... How do you cope with all this?

First of all, the Torah says that you should not think that this happens only to you. It's natural. This is how a family is born, this is how the twelve tribes are born, and much more than that: this is exactly how the two Messiahs will be born: Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben David. Exactly from this family saga.

And secondly, and this is the main thing: the two fundamental elements that must accompany family life at every stage are prayer and sensitivity.

Yaakov, driven from his home and lonely, turns his injury (in Hebrew פגיעה) into an injury on the spot. "And he came (ויפגע) to a certain place." Rashi explains that Yaakov felt like the world was standing in front of him like some kind of wall! How many times have we experienced this feeling while waiting for something to change for the better! He turned the wall into a climbing wall. He dreamed of that ladder whose head is so low to the ground, but whose top rises to the sky. From the point of impact, he composes the most wonderful of prayers, the beloved Maariv prayer. The Maharal explains that this is the only optional prayer, unlike Shacharit and Mincha, which are obligatory because it must come from love.

"Their are four loves in the Shema reading: '[With] unbounded love... You have loved us, G-d... [May] Your love never be removed from us... Who chooses His people Yisrael with love.' These are parallel to the four loves in Shir HaShirim: "Have you seen the one I love?... I sought the one I love... Tell me, you whom I love so well... I found the one I love.'" (Rabbi Ben Zion Motzafi)

This is a prayer to find love, and until it arrives, we ask for a temporary love, so that all these years are "but a few days, because of his love for her".

And the sensitivity. Sensibility has no end. To find a place in the world, one must know that one must never contradict another's place. This is expressed not only in the famous story about Rachel giving up her place under the chuppah so that her sister would not be ashamed but especially in jealousy. Jealousy is not only a challenge to another's place in the family but above all a challenge to our own place. Suddenly we have no desire to live: "And Rachel was jealous of her sister," and then "Give me children or I shall die."

Here comes the perfect combination of prayer and sensitivity: Chazal describe how Leah sees that her children will be six tribes and Rachel only one, and then she gathers all the handmaids and together, in a united prayer, they ask: "Let it happen!" Give Rachel another child!

When was the last time we gathered with several people from one family for a big prayer for one or another of us who is stuck, who is searching, who is distant, who is depressed?!

We will gather one evening this week, some family members, and say a voluntary prayer. A prayer of sensitivity. Until the seekers in our family find the one they love.

Continued from page 23

that the upcoming *sedra* related Yaakov's dream vision of a ladder *mutzav artzah v'rosho magiah hashamayma*, "stretching from the ground toward Heaven." He commented: "Is there any greater episode, or more splendid image, than that of this ladder?"

Quoting the *pesukim* by heart, Prof. Wiesel shared his interpretation. "...We help each other rise by being one another's ladder." Chevreh, together we are creating a ladder for each other, supporting and enabling one another's *avodah* and ascent. May we remain present and committed, holding

each other up and providing strength and encouragement in our efforts toward higher encounters with the *Ribbono Shel Olam*.

Hebrew Language in the Parsha



David Curwin
balashon.com

At the end of Parashat Vayetze, Yaakov confronted Lavan and finally complained about all of the mistreatment he had received over the years. He opens his speech as follows:

וַיַּחַר לְיַעֲקֹב וַיִּרְבּוּ בְלָבוֹן וַיַּעֲקֹב וַיֹּאמֶר לְלָבוֹן מִה־פִּשְׁעֵי מַה חָטָאתִי כִּי דָלַקְתָּ אַחֲרָי:

“Now Jacob became incensed and took up his grievance with Laban. Jacob spoke up and said to Laban, “What is my crime, what is my guilt that you should pursue me?” (Bereshit 31:36)

The word translated as “pursue,” דָּלַקְתָּ, is an uncommon one. The more popular root meaning “chase,” רָדַף, appears over 140 times in the Tanakh. The root דָּלַק, however, has only 9 occurrences. In about half of them it means “to pursue” (like in our verse). In the other half, it means “to burn.”

This latter sense is the one that endured into modern Hebrew. It gives us such words as הִדְלִיק – “to light, to kindle,” דָּלִיק – “flammable,” דָּלֶק – “fuel,” and דָּלַקְתָּ – “inflammation” (in Biblical Hebrew it likely meant “fever.”)

How did the same root come to mean both “to pursue” and “to burn”?

As you might expect, there are a variety of opinions. One theory is that the original meaning was to burn, and the concept of “chasing” came later - in the sense of “hot pursuit”, as we say in English.

A second opinion is that the first meaning was “to chase”, and later came the idea of burning, because of the way the fire chases the wick. For example, Rashi on Tehillim 7:14 writes that “every דָּלִיקָה is chasing.”

And the last claim is that the two meanings are of unrelated origins. This is based on comparisons with Arabic cognates to

each meaning (chase and burn), but are spelled with different letters.

However, even if the different uses of דָּלַק have distinct etymologies, that doesn't mean the Biblical texts didn't take advantage of their homographic nature. For example Yeshayahu 5:11 contains the root דָּלַק:

הוּי מְשֻׁמֵּי בְבֹקֶר שָׁכַר וְרִדְפוּ מֵאַחֲרֵי בִשְׂוֵף יַיִן וְדָלִיקִים:

Some interpretations say the root here means “to burn” and translate the verse as follows:

“Ah, those who chase liquor from early in the morning, and till late in the evening are inflamed by wine!”

Others, like Ibn Ezra, say that the last phrase should be rendered “will pursue wine.” But there are recent linguists who say that by using this ambiguous word, the prophet was actually alluding to both senses.

Parsha Riddle



Reb Leor Broh
Mizrachi Melbourne

In the Parsha of Vayetze, Yaakov had two of these. Lavan had only one. What were they?

Answer to the Parsha Riddle

Yaakov had two wives, Leah & Rachel. (Billah and Zilpah were maidservants and even after bearing tribes for Yaakov are referred to as maidservants or concubines, for example, ref. 35:22 רבא פירגא אבא (בלה ופירגא אבא רבא). Lavan, on the other hoof, has only one wife, albeit not mentioned in the Parsha. Another possible answer:

Yaakov has two dreams. The first one appears in 28:12 with the ladder and the angels, the second one appears in 31:10 when the angel asks him to lift his eyes and see the spotted sheep that the angels were bringing across from Lavan's flock to breed with Yaakov's flocks. Lavan has one dream (31:24) in which Hashem warns him not to speak with Yaakov for good or for bad.



HAMIZRACHI

PARSHA WEEKLY

OUR PARTNERS

Department of Education of the World
Zionist Organization

AUSTRALIA

Mizrachi Australia

MELBOURNE

Blake Street Hebrew Congregation
Elsternwick Jewish Community
Mizrachi Melbourne

SYDNEY

Mizrachi Bondi

PERTH

Dianella Shule – Mizrachi Perth

AUSTRIA

VIENNA

Mizrachi Österreich

BELGIUM

ANTWERP

Menashe Michaeli

BULGARIA

SOFIA

Jewish Community

CANADA

MONTREAL

ADATH Congregation
Hebrew Academy

HAMPSTEAD

The ADATH

TORONTO

Beit Tzion Congregation
Bnei Akiva Schools of Toronto
Shaarei Tefillah Congregation

CROATIA

ZAGREB

Bet Israel Jewish Community of Croatia

CZECH REPUBLIC

PRAGUE

Prague Jewish Community

ECUADOR

Equador Jewish Community

FINLAND

HELSINKI

Jewish Community of Helsinki

GERMANY

KOLN

Jewish Community

GUATEMALA

Guatemala City Jewish Community

HOLLAND

AMSTERDAM

AMOS Amsterdam Modern Orthodox Sjoel

HONG KONG

CHABAD HK

Jewish Women's Association (JWA)

Kehilat Zion – Hechal Ezra

Ohel Leah Synagogue

The Jewish Community Centre

United Jewish Congregation (UJC)

ISRAEL

JERUSALEM

Amudim Beit Midrash for Women

Baer Miriam

Hashiveinu

Jacques Sueke Foundation

Michlelet Mevaseret Yerushalayim (MMY)

Midreshet Emunah v'Omanut

Midreshet Eshel

Midreshet HaRova

Midreshet Rachel v'Chaya

Neve Hagiva'a

Shapell's/Darche Noam

Torat Reva Yerushalayim

Yeshivat Eretz HaTzvi

Yeshivat Hakotel

Yeshivat Orayta

BEIT SHEMESH

Tiferet Midrasha

Kehillat Nofei Hashemesh

Yeshivat Ashreinu

Yeshivat Hesder Lev HaTorah

HERZLIYA

Mizrachi OU-JLIC Herzliya

MEVASERET ZION

Yeshivat Mevaseret

RAMAT GAN

Israel XP at Bar Ilan University

THE NEGEV

Mechinat Ruach HaNegev

MACEDONIA

SCOPIA

Jewish Community

MALTA

Jewish Community

PORTUGAL

PORTO

Rabbi Daniel Litvak

SERBIA

BELGRADE

Rav Isak Asiel

SOUTH AFRICA

JOHANNESBURG

Mizrachi Glenhazel Shul

SWEDEN

The Jewish Community of Stockholm

SWITZERLAND

BERN

Jüdische Gemeinde Bern

ZURICH

Mizrachi

UNITED KINGDOM

Mizrachi UK

UNITED STATES

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Kol Hatorah Kulah

National Council of Young Israel

RZA-Mizrachi USA

CALIFORNIA

Beth Jacob Congregation
Harkham Hillel Hebrew Academy
West Coast Torah Center
Young Israel of North Beverly Hills
YULA High School
Young Israel of Century City

COLORADO

DAT Minyan
East Denver Orthodox Synagogue
The Denver Kehillah

CONNECTICUT

Beth David Synagogue
Congregation Agudath Sholom
Young Israel of West Hartford

FLORIDA

Beth Israel Congregation
Hebrew Academy RASG
PlayHard PrayHard
Congregation Torah Ohr
Sha'arei Bina Torah Academy for Girls
Young Israel of Hollywood-Ft. Lauderdale

GEORGIA

Congregation Beth Jacob
Congregation Ohr HaTorah

HAWAII

Kehilat Olam Ejad Ganim

ILLINOIS

Mizrachi-Religious Zionists of Chicago

MARYLAND

Kemp Mill Synagogue
Pikesville Jewish Congregation
Bnai Jacob Shaarei Zion Congregation

MASSACHUSETTS

Congregation Beth El Atereth Israel
Congregation Kadimah-Toras Moshe
Congregation Shaarei Tefillah
Young Israel of Brookline

MICHIGAN

Young Israel of Oak Park
Young Israel of Southfield
Congregation Kadimah-Toras Moshe

MINNESOTA

Congregation Darchei Noam

MISSOURI

Yeshivat Kadimah High School Nusach

Hari B'nai Zion Congregation
Young Israel of St. Louis

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Hillel at Dartmouth

NEW JERSEY

Ahavas Achim
Volunteer Chaplain Middlesex County
Congregation AABJ&D
Congregation Adath Israel of the JEC
National Council of Young Israel
Congregation Ahavat Achim
Congregation Ahavath Torah
Congregation Brothers of Israel
Congregation Darchei Noam of Fair Lawn
Congregation Etz Chaim of Livingston
Congregation Israel of Springfield
Congregation Ohr Torah
Congregation Sons of Israel of Cherry Hill
Ma Tov Day Camp
Ohav Emeth
Pal Foundation
Shomrei Torah of Fair Lawn
Synagogue of the Suburban Torah Center
Yavneh Academy
National Council of Young Israel
Young Israel of Teaneck

NEW YORK

Congregation Anshei Shalom
Congregation B'nai Tzedek
Congregation Bais Tefilah of Woodmere
Congregation Beth Sholom
Ramaz
Ma'ayanot Yeshiva High School for Girls
MTA – Yeshiva University
High School for Boys
Young Israel of Merrick
Congregation Beth Torah
Congregation Etz Chaim of
Kew Gardens Hills
Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun
Congregation Ohab Zedek
Great Neck Synagogue
Iranian Jewish Center/Beth
Hadassah Synagogue
Irving Place Minyan
Jewish Center of Atlantic Beach
Kingsway Jewish Center
Lincoln Square Synagogue
Merkaz Yisrael of Marine Park

North Shore Hebrew Academy
Young Israel of Merrick
NYC Department of Correction
OU-JLIC at Binghamton University
OU-JLIC at Cornell University
Queens Jewish Center
Stars of Israel Academy
The Riverdale Minyan
Vaad of Chevra Kadisha
West Side institutional Synagogue
Yeshiva University High School for Girls
Young Israel of Hillcrest
Young Israel of Jamaica Estates
Young Israel of Lawrence-Cedarhurst
Young Israel of New Rochelle
Young Israel of North Woodmere
Young Israel of Oceanside
Young Israel of Scarsdale

OHIO

Beachwood Kehilla
Congregation Sha'arei Torah
Congregation Torat Emet
Green Road Synagogue
Fuchs Mizrachi School
Heights Jewish Center

PENNSYLVANIA

Shaare Torah Congregation

SOUTH CAROLINA

Brith Sholom Beth Israel
Congregation Dor Tikvah

TENNESSEE

Baron Hirsch Congregation

TEXAS

Mayerland Minyan Synagogue
Robert M. Beren Academy
United Orthodox Synagogues of Houston

VIRGINIA

Keneseth Beth Israel

WASHINGTON

Bikur Cholim-Machzikay Hadath
Northwest Yeshiva High School
Sephardic Bikur Holim Congregation

VENEZUELA

CARACAS

Ashkenazi Kehilla
Mizrachi Venezuela



To sign up to receive HaMizrachi
Parasha Weekly for free:
mizrachi.org/hamizrachiweekly



To sign up your organization
as a partner for free:
mizrachi.org/hamizrachiweeklyorgs