

Parsha Plug: Vayeitzei

Bereshit 28:10-19	בראשית כח:י-יט
<p>10And Yaakov left Beersheva and went to Haran. 11And he arrived at the place and lodged there because the sun had set, and he took some of the stones of the place and placed [them] at his head, and he lay down in that place. 12And he dreamed, and behold! a ladder set up on the ground and its top reached to heaven; and behold, angels of God were ascending and descending upon it. 13And behold, the Lord was standing over him, and He said, "I am the Lord, the God of Avraham your father, and the God of Yitzchak; the land upon which you are lying to you I will give it and to your seed. 14And 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. 15And 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." 16 Yaakov awakened from his sleep, and said, "Indeed, God is in this place, and I did not know." 17And he was frightened, and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." 18And Yaakov arose early in the morning, and he took the stone that he had placed at his head, and he set it up as a monument, and he poured oil on top of it. 19And he named the place Beth El, but Luz was originally the name of the city.</p>	<p>י וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב מִבְּעֵר שֶׁבַע וַיֵּלֶךְ חֲרָנָה: יא וַיִּפְגַּע בַּמָּקוֹם וַיֵּלֶן שָׁם כִּי־בָא הַשָּׁמֶשׁ וַיִּקַּח מֵאֲבָנֵי הַמָּקוֹם וַיִּשֶׂם מֵרָאשָׁתּוֹ וַיִּשְׁכַּב בַּמָּקוֹם הַהוּא: יב וַיַּחְלֵם וְהִנֵּה סֹלֶם מֻצָּב אֶרֶצָה וּרְאִשׁוֹ מֵגִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיְמָה וְהִנֵּה מַלְאֲכֵי אֱלֹקִים עֹלִים וְיֹרְדִים בּוֹ: יג וְהִנֵּה ה' נֹצֵב עָלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹקֵי אֲבִרְהָם אָבִיךָ וְאֱלֹקֵי יִצְחָק הָאֵל רִצְן אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה שֹׁכֵב עָלֶיהָ לָךְ אֶתְנַנֶּה וּלְזָרְעֶךָ: יד וְהִנֵּה זָרְעֶךָ כְּעֹפֶר הָאֶרֶץ וּפְרֻצֹת יָמָה וּקְדֻמָּה וְצָפֹנָה וְנִגְבָּהּ וְנִבְרָכּוּ בְךָ כָּל־מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאָדָמָה וּבְזָרְעֶךָ: טו וְהִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי עִמָּךְ וְשָׁמַרְתִּיךָ בְּכָל־ אֲשֶׁר־תֵּלֵךְ וְהָשִׁבְתִּיךָ אֶל־הָאָדָמָה הַזֹּאת כִּי לֹא אֶעְזֹבְךָ עַד אֲשֶׁר אֶמְעָשִׂיתִי אֵת אֲשֶׁר־דִּבַּרְתִּי לָךְ: טז וַיִּיקָץ יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁנָתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲכֹלֵן ה' בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי: יז וַיִּירָא וַיֹּאמֶר מִה־נִּזְרָא הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה אֵין זֶה כִּי אִם־בֵּית אֱלֹקִים וְזֶה שְׁעַר הַשָּׁמַיִם: יח וַיָּשָׁכֶם יַעֲקֹב בְּבֹקֶר וַיִּקַּח אֶת־הָאֲבָן אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם מֵרָאשָׁתּוֹ וַיִּשֶׂם אֹתָהּ מִצְבֵּה וַיִּצֹק שָׁמֶן עַל־רֹאשָׁהּ: יט וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־שֵׁם־הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא בֵּית־קֵל וְאֵילָם לִזְוֵי שֵׁם־הָעִיר לְרֹאשְׁנָה:</p>

Chizkuni on Bereshit 28:13	חזקוני בראשית כח:יג
<p>Your father Avraham: We learn from here that grandchildren are treated as if they were one's children.</p>	<p>אברהם אביך מלמד שבני בנים הרי הם כבנים.</p>

Rashi on Bereshit 28:11	רש"י בראשית כח:יא
<p>I have spoken to you: In your interest and concerning you. Whatever I promised to Avraham regarding his seed it was in reference to you and not in reference to Esav, for I did not say to him "Yitzchak shall be called your seed" (meaning all Yitzchak's descendants would be Avraham's) but I said "in Yitzchak" not "all</p>	<p>דברתי לך. לְצָרְכְּךָ וְעֵלֶיךָ; מִה שֶׁהִבְטַחְתִּי לְאַבְרָהָם עַל זָרְעוֹ, לָךְ הִבְטַחְתִּיו וְלֹא לְעֵשָׂו, שְׁלֹא אָמַרְתִּי לוֹ כִּי יִצְחָק יִקְרָא לָךְ זָרַע אֱלֹא כִּי בִי־צָחָק, וְלֹא כָּל</p>

of Yitzchak"...This is proof since it cannot mean "I have spoken to you" as He had never spoken to Yaakov before this occasion.	יִצְחָק...וְזֶה יוֹכִיחַ, שֶׁהָרִי עִם יַעֲקֹב לֹא דָבַר קִדְּם לָכֵן:
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Or HaChayim on Bereshit 28:13	אור החיים בראשית כח:יג
The God of your father Avraham: The reason the Torah added the superfluous word 'your father' as well as the reason why Avraham is described as Yaakov's father without the addition of Yitzchak was intended to emphasize that Esav had no share in the heritage of Avraham. The Torah here made Yaakov the sole heir of Avraham...	אלקי אברהם אביך וגו'. טעם אומרו אביך ללא צורך, גם דייק לומר אביך באברהם ולא אמר אברהם ויצחק אבותיך, נתכוין למעט עשו מירושת אברהם ועשה יעקב הוא היורש אברהם...

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, <i>Why Yitzchak? Why Yaakov?: Toldot 5778</i>
So, why Isaac and not Ishmael? Why Jacob and not Esau? To this there are two types of answer. The first is given by midrash. On this reading Isaac and Jacob were righteous. Ishmael and Esau were not...But it is not the way of the written Torah itself...There is nothing in the word itself that implies improper conduct... <i>Ishmael and Esau were at home in nature</i> . They were strong, adroit, unafraid of the wild. In any other culture they might have emerged as heroes. And that is the point. We will only understand the Torah if we recall that <i>every other religion in the ancient world worshipped nature</i> . That is where they found God, or more precisely, the gods: in the sun, the moon, the stars, the storm, the rain that fed the earth and the earth that gave forth food. Even in the twenty-first century, people for whom science has taken the place of religion still worship nature...The faith of Avraham and his descendants is different. God, we believe, is beyond nature, because He created nature. And because He made us in His image, there is something in us that is beyond nature also. We are free. We are creative. We can conceive of possibilities that have not yet existed, and act so as to make them real. We can adapt to our environment, but we can also adapt our environment to us. Like every other animal we have desires, but unlike any other animal we are capable of standing outside our desires and choosing which to satisfy and which not...Yitzchak and Yaakov were not men of nature: the field, the hunt, the gladiatorial game of predator-and-prey. They were not Ishmael and Esau, people who could survive by their own strength and skill. They were men who needed God's spirit to survive. <i>Israel is the people who in themselves testify to something beyond themselves</i> . Jews have consistently shown that you can make a contribution to humanity out of all proportion to your numbers, and that a small nation can outlive every empire that sought its destruction. They have shown that a nation is strong when it cares for the weak, and rich when it cares for the poor. Jews are the people through whom God has shown that the human spirit can rise above nature, testifying that there is something real that transcends nature.

Rashi on Bereshit 28:11	רש"י בראשית כח:יא
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And he arrived at the place: The verse does not mention which place, but by writing במקום it refers to the place mentioned already in another passage, namely Har Moriah of which it is stated (Bereshit 22:4) “And he saw המקום afar off”.	ויפגע במקום. לא הזכיר הכתוב באיזה מקום אלא במקום – הנזכר במקום אחר, הוא הר המוריה, שנאמר בו וירא את המקום מרחק.
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Bereshit Rabbah 68:11	בראשית רבה סח:יא
And he took stones of the place:...The Rabbis said that the minimum of the plural of stones is two. Avraham produced negative attributes/waste- Yishmael and the sons of Keturah. And Yitzchak produced Esav and his descendants. If You join these two stones together, I know that I (Yaakov) will not produce any negative attributes in my descendants.	ויקח מאבני המקום (בראשית כח, יא)...רבנן אמרי מעוט אבנים שנים, אברהם יצא ממנו פסלות, ישמעאל וכל בני קטורה. ויצחק יצא עשו וכל אלו. ואני אם מתאחות שתי אבנים זו לזו, יודע אני שאינו יוצא הימני פסלות.

Likutei Moharan 9:6-8	ליקוטי מוהרן ט:ו-ה
This is why when Avraham blemished the Land of Israel (when God promised him the inheritance of the land and Avraham asked (Bereshit 15:8), “How shall I know?”) it became necessary for our ancestors to go down to Egypt. It was [Avraham’s] blemishing of faith, of the Land of Israel, the aspect of miracles, which resulted in Yaakov and his sons descending to Egypt, the antithesis of the Land of Israel. And, it was specifically Yaakov and his sons who went down. Avraham blemished the Land of Israel/prayer, and Yaakov and his [twelve] sons—who correspond to prayer and its twelve gates—descended.	בשביל זה, כשפגם אברהם בארץ ישראל, בשעה שהבטיח לו הקדוש-ברוך-הוא על ירשת ארץ, אמר (בראשית טו): במה אדע – עלידייזה ירדו אבותינו למצרים, כי פגם באמונה, הינו ארץ ישראל, בחינת נסים, וירד יעקב ובניו למצרים, ששם הפך הנסים, שזה לעמת זה. וירדו דוקא יעקב ובניו, כי הוא פגם בארץ ישראל, בחינת תפלה, וירדו יעקב ובניו, שהם בחינת תפלה, שהם בחינת שנים-עשר שערי תפלה.

Daat Zekeinim on Bereshit 28:13	דעת זקנים בראשית כח:יג
Behold God was standing over him: We do not find this with the other Avot. On this verse Rabbi Simmon comments that it is not the custom for a king to personally supervise the plowing of his field or its being sown with seed. He does not do so until the corn has been harvested. Avraham had been told by God to move to the land; and of Yitzchak, he sowed seed (Bereshit 26:12). Now came Yaakov, who was the ‘harvest’...	והנה ה' נצב עליו. לא מצינו כן בשאר האבות א"ר סימון אין המלך עומד על שדהו לא כשהיא נחרשת ולא כשהיא נזרעת אלא כשהתבואה עומדת בכרי כך אברהם חרשה שנאמר קום התהלך בארץ. יצחק זרעה שנאמר ויזרע יצחק. בא יעקב שהוא כרי התבואה...

Rav Yonatan Grossman, <i>The Parallel between Yaakov and Avraham</i>

God's initial appearance to Avraham involves a clear, unconditional command: "Go ('lekh-lekha') from your land, your birthplace and your father's home to the land which I will show you" (12:10). Avraham must detach himself from his past; he is bidden to uproot himself from his family and homeland. This element of detachment from one's family finds clear expression with regard to Yaakov's journey, as well, already from the outset. When his parents order him to flee from Canaan, they employ expressions reminiscent of God's memorable charge to Avraham, "lekh-lekha:" "Now, my son, listen to me, get up and flee ('berach-lekha') to Lavan" (27:43). The verses continue, "Get up and go ('lekh') to Padan Aram ... and take for you ('kach-lekha') a wife from there" (28:2). [It should be emphasized in this context that both the expressions, "berach-lekha" - in the context of Yaakov's journey - and "lekh-lekha" - in the context of Avraham's trip - are grammatically both unique and difficult. In both instances, the word "lekha" - "for you" - modifies a verb - "flee," and "go," respectively - rather than a noun...

As opposed to Yitzchak, who was named by Hashem even prior to his birth, Avraham receives his God-given name much later in life, as is Yaakov's name changed to 'Yisrael' during his adulthood. Both these name-changes, Avram to Avraham and Yaakov to Yisrael, occur in the context of physical wounds: Avraham's name is presented together with the commandment of circumcision, and Yaakov receives his new name as he limps in the aftermath of his fight with the mysterious angel. Both these "defects" have ramifications for future generations. All Avraham's male descendants must be circumcised, and as a result of Yaakov's dislocated hip, his progeny may not partake of the "gid ha-nasheh." Furthermore, the blessings accompanying these events bear striking resemblance: To Avraham (17:1-7): "God appeared to Avraham and said to him, I am 'E-l Sha-dai' Your name will no longer be called Avram, Your name will be Avraham. I will make you very fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings will emerge from you". To Yaakov (35:10-11): "God said to him, I am 'E-l Sha-dai'. Your name will no longer be called Yaakov. For your name will be Yisrael. Be fruitful and multiply, a nation and a group of nations will emerge from you, and kings will emerge from your loins." Avraham is bidden to sacrifice his son, Yitzchak, who was born to him and his barren wife after many bitter and frustrating years of waiting. Likewise, Yaakov loses his beloved son, Yosef, who was born to Rachel only after many years of infertility...[many more examples abound].

It appears as though Yaakov repeats virtually all of his grandfather's actions, thus rendering him, if you will, a new Avraham...Perhaps the most significant and noteworthy of these events is Yaakov's departure to Charan. He returns to his grandfather's birthplace, Aram Naharayim, as if to relive the process of Avraham's relocation from Charan to Canaan. As we have seen, the places where he encamps and offers sacrifices reflect the precise same journey as was taken by his grandfather. Apparently, then, Yaakov should be seen as a new beginning of the process of the establishment of the Nation of Israel. Like Avraham two generations earlier, he becomes the initiator of the process, not its perpetuator...In the Book of Bereishit we thus encounter two founding fathers - Avraham and Yaakov. Yitzchak, by contrast, serves merely as the source of continuity of Avraham's heritage. God did not choose him over anyone else. Yitzchak, is, undoubtedly, "Yitzchak avinu," our forefather, but his contribution lies, first and foremost, in his being the son of Avraham. He is our forefather only through his being a son,

through his loyal adherence to the path paved by his father. As stated, Yaakov, like his grandfather, was the initiator, the second of the two ultimate "forefathers" of our people.