

# Torah Tidbits

ט' כסלו תשפ"ב 13<sup>TH</sup> NOV 2021 ISSUE 1442

פרשת ויצא

PARSHAT VAYEITZEI

ב"ה

OU  
ישראל



## Spiritual Schizophrenia

**Rabbi Shalom Rosner**

Rav Kehilla, Nofei HaShemesh  
Maggid Shiur, Daf Yomi, OU.org  
Senior Ra"m, Kerem B'Yavneh

page 24



## What is Cosmetic?

**Rabbi Gideon Weitzman**

Machon Puah for Fertility and  
Gynecology in Accordance with  
Halacha

page 59

## ונאספוי-שמה כלי-העדרים

בראשית כ"ט, פסוק ג'

ZEV R

YERUSHALAYIM IN/OUT TIMES FOR SHABBAT PARSHAT VAYEITZEI

Candles 4:06PM • Havdala 5:19PM • Rabbeinu Tam 5:58PM

# This week's Torah Tidbits cover image!

**Photo By:** Zev Rothkoff. I live in Efrat and the photo was taken at Itamar.

**Meaning:** The photo represents the connection between our time and our Forefathers' time.

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Shlomo Rayman // Mordechai Grossman



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## OTHER Z'MANIM



### JERUSALEM

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Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	5:10 - 5:18
Sunrise	6:03 - 6:12
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	8:43 - 8:48
Magen Avraham	8:05 - 8:10
Sof Zman Tefila	9:36 - 9:40
(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanya)	
Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	11:22 - 11:24
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	11:52-11:54
Plag Mincha	3:35 - 3:32
Sunset (Including Elevation)	4:47 - 4:42

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CANDLES	VAYEITZEI	HAVDALA	VAYISHLACH	
			Candles	Havdala
4:06	Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	5:19	4:02	5:17
4:24	Aza area (Netivot, S'derot, Et al)	5:22	4:20	5:19
4:24	Beit Shemesh / RBS	5:20	4:21	5:17
4:22	Gush Etzion	5:20	4:18	5:17
4:22	Raanana / Tel Mond/ Herzliya/ K. Saba	5:20	4:18	5:17
4:22	Modi'in / Chashmona'im	5:20	4:18	5:17
4:21	Netanya	5:20	4:18	5:17
4:24	Be'er Sheva	5:22	4:20	5:19
4:22	Rehovot	5:21	4:19	5:18
4:06	Petach Tikva	5:20	4:02	5:17
4:21	Ginot Shomron	5:19	4:17	5:16
4:10	Haifa / Zichron	5:19	4:06	5:16
4:20	Gush Shiloh	5:19	4:16	5:16
4:22	Tel Aviv / Giv'at Shmuel	5:21	4:19	5:18
4:21	Giv'at Ze'ev	5:19	4:17	5:17
4:22	Chevron / Kiryat Arba	5:20	4:18	5:17
4:24	Ashkelon	5:22	4:20	5:19
4:22	Yad Binyamin	5:21	4:19	5:18
4:13	Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden	5:17	4:09	5:14
4:18	Golan	5:17	4:14	5:14

**Rabbeinu Tam (J'lem) - 5:58PM • next week - 5:55pm**

Times According to MyZmanim (20 min. before sundown in most cities, 40 min. in Yerushalayim and Petach Tikva, 30 min. in Tzfat/Haifa)



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# DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY



**RABBI AVI BERMAN**  
Executive Director, OU Israel



This is my 21<sup>st</sup> year working for the OU, and my 16<sup>th</sup> year as the Executive Director of OU Israel. Over the years, the idea had been raised for me to write a weekly Torah Tidbits column, and for a variety of reasons I concluded not to until the pandemic. There were several reasons why I did not start this column earlier. First, I don't particularly enjoy writing. Second, for my first 14 years at OU Israel, Phil Chernofsky wrote a wonderful weekly piece which included OU Israel's activities and I did not feel a need to duplicate his efforts. Third, writing, particularly to a broad audience, requires being very sensitive, and no matter how much the writer tries to take everyone's feelings into account there will generally be times that someone reading the piece will feel slighted, hurt, or insulted – which I never want to do. Fourth, pre-Covid I would see and speak with many Torah Tidbits readers each week, whether it be at the OU Israel Center, on the street, at

the Shuk, or at smachot. These interactions provided me with the opportunity to share what was happening at the OU and hear from you.

When the idea for me to start a column arose during Covid, I decided the timing was right. My staff and I missed seeing you face to face and wanted to utilize Torah Tidbits as a way of staying in touch. I appreciate all of the feedback you have and continue to send me and want to take this opportunity to share some insights into what I chose to write about.

Several times a week, I receive feedback asking why I phrased something a certain way, and approximately once a week someone asks why I didn't write about topic X. I am not writing this to discourage you from sharing your feedback in any way, shape or form. On the contrary, I love hearing your feedback.

One of the themes in the feedback is asking why I don't write about the yahrts of specific rabbis and community leaders. I recently received an email from a dear Jew wanting to know why I did not write about Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks ZT"l in my column the week of his yahrzeit. While Rabbi Sacks' legacy remains an inspiration to us all and we are honored to publish his weekly Dvar Torah in Torah Tidbits, I felt it more appropriate that others write his tributes. Unfortunately, Klal Yisrael has lost too many Rabbanim and leaders to count,

May the Torah learning in this issue  
be in loving memory of and  
לעילוי נשמת my mother  
**רחל בת יצחק הלוי ע"ה**  
**Rachel Gutman a"h**  
אשת חיל וחסד  
On her 46th yahrzeit - יא כסלו  
*Tzippy Grunstein and family*

and I do not want to make anyone feel bad or slighted by mentioning some but failing to mention others. This does not mean that I will never mention a specific rabbi, and I am more than happy to hear feedback about the rabbis that inspire you. Yet, since numerous such inquiries have come my way, I wanted to share my reasoning.

---

## I look forward to spending Shabbat with this community

---

In general in life, I try to inspire others. I don't usually share sad stories or ideas that will make people anxious. Instead, I focus on positive messages to help make us into better people, better colleagues, better friends, better parents/grandparents/great grandparents, etc. Generally speaking, this is what guides me in writing this column. I try to update you with what's happening at the OU and in my personal life, and I aspire to share upbeat messages that will hopefully inspire people to be better.

This is a goal that I try to accomplish in other areas of my personal and OU life. I am very excited that after over a year and a half of minimal traveling, this Shabbat I will be the Scholar in Residence at Beth Torah in Brooklyn. I'm not excited to leave my family and fly again but I am excited to see my friends in North America. I look forward to spending Shabbat with this community, sharing the wonderful stories and positive messages coming out of OU Israel and the State of Israel.

As Executive Director of OU Israel, I am blessed to have many opportunities to speak to groups. Thank you to Mrs. Howitt for recently opening her house and inviting

her friends for an Emunah gathering and inviting me to speak to them. I shared the history of the OU and the work we're doing to save at-risk teens in Israel. Based on the audience, I spoke about the unique role that grandparents have in their grandchildren's lives – to provide them with unconditional love.

Those of us fortunate to grow up with our grandparents can attest to how special the relationship can be. The hugs, kisses, special foods, and even the name we call our grandparents provide us with warmth. I once heard from Moshe Berliner, a friend and psychologist I hold very highly of, that successful grandparents make sure to give advice only when they are asked, and they never ask if the grandchildren followed through with their advice. It's great if the grandchildren follow-up on their own, but don't ask if they took your advice. The role of a grandparent is to keep your door open and shower your grandchildren with love and goodies. By doing this, we can hopefully become sources of knowledge, direction, and role models for them.

Wishing you an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



Avi,  
Executive Director, OU Israel  
[aberman@ouisrael.org](mailto:aberman@ouisrael.org)

The OU Israel Family  
extends its heartfelt condolences  
to the children and family of  
**Mrs. Lori Levmore ע"ה**  
המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

# VAYEITZEI



## ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



**Rabbi Reuven Tradburks**  
Director of  
RCA Israel Region

Our Parsha begins with Yaakov fleeing the Land of Israel from Esav's murderous intent and it concludes with his return to the Land of Israel. He dreams as he leaves of a ladder reaching to Heaven with G-d promising that He will bring Yaakov back in peace. Yaakov meets Rachel at the well in Charan, marries Leah and Rachel, 11 of the 12 sons and Dina are born. Lavan and Yaakov bicker. Yaakov earns his wages through animal husbandry. Angels greet Yaakov on his return to Israel.



**1<sup>st</sup> Aliya (28:10-22)** Yaakov flees the Land of Israel. He dreams: a ladder with angels, G-d at the top. G-d reiterates to Yaakov the promise of the Land of Israel and of numerous



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descendants. And that He will protect Yaakov and bring him back to the Land. Yaakov makes a monument at that spot and declares that upon his safe return he will come back and make this spot a house of G-d.

One of the great dreams of the Torah. In fact, the first dream of an upcoming series of dreams in the Torah: Yosef's dream, Paro's dream. In this dream Yaakov is assured of Divine protection. But why did he need this assurance? What was on his mind?

Let's place ourselves in Yaakov's sandals. He does not know the end of the story. We do but he doesn't. He is filled with uncertainty. Avraham had 2 children: Yishmael and Yitzchak. One, Yitzchak continued Avraham's legacy as a Jew. The other, Yishmael was out. Then Yitzchak had 2 children, me and my brother Esav. Maybe we too will repeat this same pattern: one will be in and one will be out. Who is the one – am I in or am I out? I stole the blessing intended for Esav my brother. Perhaps my fleeing Israel now is a Divine sign that I am out and Esav is in. After all, my father Yitzchak never left the Land. So am I being expelled from the Land, expelled from the promise of the Land? G-d reassures him – I will give *you* the Land and bring you back. But. In a dream. Are dreams real or wishful thinking?



**2<sup>nd</sup> Aliya (29:1-17)** Yaakov arrives in Charan. He converses with shepherds at the well. They are waiting for a crowd of them to remove the stone over the well. He inquires of Lavan; that is Rachel, daughter of Lavan, coming now. Yaakov removes the heavy stone of

the well, gives Rachel water. He tells her he is Rivka's son. Rachel runs to tell her father; Lavan runs to greet Yaakov. Yaakov stays with them for a month.

If Yaakov is looking for a sign that G-d is with him, he got it. There are so many parallels to Eliezer finding Rivka at the well. Except in reverse. Rivka drew the water for Eliezer and his camels; Yaakov removes the stone and gets water for Rachel and her animals. Eliezer asked Rivka who she was; Yaakov tells Rachel who he is. Rivka ran home to her mother; Rachel runs home to her father. Lavan ran out to greet Eliezer; and Lavan runs out to greet Yaakov. Eliezer was seeking a wife for Yitzchak and returning to Israel; Yaakov is seeking family but not leaving.



**3<sup>rd</sup> Aliya (29:18-30:13)** Yaakov loves Rachel. In response to Lavan asking how he can compensate Yaakov, Yaakov offers to work 7 years to marry Rachel. At the end of that time, Lavan makes a celebration. He gives Leah to Yaakov. In the morning Yaakov realizes. Lavan remarks that here we don't switch younger and older. Yaakov marries Rachel and works another 7 years. Leah has 4 children: Reuven, Shimon, Levi, Yehuda. Rachel is upset, as she is barren. She gives Yaakov Bilhah, her maidservant. She has Dan and Naphtali. Zilpah, Leah's maidservant has Gad and Asher.

Let's get back in Yaakov's sandals. He still wonders if he is part of the Jewish people or has been spurned – was that dream of Divine protection prophetic or mere wishful? He is tricked at night when it is hard to see and marries Leah. Is this a sign from G-d of displeasure at Yaakov tricking

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his father who could not see to get the bracha? Maybe I am out. On the other hand, my dear wife Rachel seems to follow in my grandmother Sarah's footsteps; she is barren and gives her servant to me to have a child, just like Sarah was barren and gave Hagar to Avraham to have a child.



**4<sup>th</sup> Aliya (30:14-27)** Reuven brings jasmine, a fertility enhancer to Leah. Rachel asks for it and in exchange Leah conceives and has Yis-sachar, followed by Zevulun. Rachel bears Yosef. Yaakov asks Lavan's permission to return home.

11 of the sons of Yaakov and his daughter Dina have been born. There is but one son from his dear wife Rachel. If we get back in Yaakov's shoes, he does not know if he is to be in the Jewish people or not. Because another thing may sit uncomfortably with

him. Avraham was the first generation of the Jewish people. While he was in, his brother Nachor was out. Back at the end of Yayera (22:20-14), we learn that Nachor had 8 sons with his wife Milka and 4 with his concubine Reuma. 12 sons. And at the end of Chayei Sarah (25:12-15), we learn of the children of Yishmael, the one who is out of the Jewish people. 12 sons. Hmm, the ones who are out of the Jewish people, Nachor, Avraham's brother, and Yishmael, Yitzchak's brother, had 12 sons. I have 11. On the other hand, all my children are walking in the footsteps of Avraham, leaving their Land of Charan and journeying to Israel. Which sign is it? Am I in or out?



**5<sup>th</sup> Aliya (30:28-31:16)** Lavan asks Yaakov what his wage is for all the work he has done. Yaakov asks that he be allowed to select and breed certain animals as his wage. He is wildly successful and becomes laden with livestock. Lavan's sons become jealous. Yaakov knows it is time to leave. He carefully explains to Rachel and Leah that he is worried as Lavan has not been honest with him. And that the angel has told him it is time to return to the Land. They agree that whatever G-d says they must do.

לעילוי נשמת  
**Rabbi Dr.**  
**Avigdor Bonchek z"l**

מרדכי אביגדור בן  
חנוך שלמה הכהן ז"ל  
ח' כסלו

*Missed very much by the  
Bonchek, Dokow, Shneur,  
Rabi and Rothschild families*

Yaakov creates enormous wealth. Perhaps this is a Divine sign: Avraham had great wealth, Yitzchak was blessed with “meah shearim”, a 100 fold bounty of agriculture. Perhaps this is a Divine sign that I walk in my forefather’s footsteps.



**6<sup>th</sup> Aliya (31:17-42)** Yaakov and the family leave without telling Lavan. Rachel steals Lavan’s

idols. Lavan pursues. G-d tells him not to harm Yaakov. Lavan berates Yaakov for his deception, not allowing him to kiss his children. Were it not that G-d instructed him otherwise, he would be justified in harming Yaakov. He searches for his idols but does not find them. Yaakov is fed up. He berates Lavan for his lack of appreciation of all of Yaakov’s hard work, changing his wages 10 times. But G-d saw my oppressive work and rewarded me.

One last look from Yaakov’s shoes. He still is unsure whether he is part of the covenant or not. But another prediction rings in his ears. Years earlier Avraham was told

To mark the Shloshim of our beloved **Binyamin Glickman z”l** family, students, friends, choir members, and all who loved him will gather to honor his memory on Tuesday, November 16th at 19:30 Israel time (12:30pm EST/10:30am PST) via YouTube at the following link: <https://youtu.be/7LL0AN3Jf8w>

Unveiling on Wednesday, November 17th. Buses will leave from Mount Scopus at 14:30. Please sign up for place on the bus via <https://forms.gle/JTLedbgDdNvkikJR8>

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his children would be in a foreign land and afflicted, the Hebrew word “eenu”. For 400 years. And would return with great wealth. Yaakov uses that very word to describe his hard work for Lavan “G-d saw my hard labour – an’ee”. Perhaps, Yaakov wonders, I am that Jewish people. Foreign Land. Afflicted. I am here 20 years, a long time – seems like 400. Leaving with great wealth.

On the one hand, on the other hand – Yaakov’s sees signs in his life that point to his being the next link in the Jewish people. And he sees signs that perhaps he is the one that is out and Esav in. But the scale is clearly weighing in his favour.



**7<sup>th</sup> Aliya (31:43-32:3)** Lavan and Yaakov part amidst a parting ceremony. A marker and stones are placed as testimony that Lavan will not approach Yaakov, nor Yaakov approach Lavan. Lavan returns home. Angels encounter Yaakov as he returns to the Land.

The break with Lavan is complete. Pacts come in different shapes and sizes. If you

get in trouble, I will come to help. Or, we will open our borders to commerce. Or. A wall. A cold peace. You, on your side. I on mine. Kind of like the mitzvah to never return to Egypt. Years of deception, of toil, of suspicion. That chapter is closed.

The angels greet him. Angels when he left and angels when he returns.

## HAFTORAH

### HOSHEA 11:7-12:14

This week’s haftorah makes direct mention of Yaakov’s flight from home to the “field of Aram,” which is a critical episode recounted in this week’s Torah reading.

The haftorah states Hoshea’s rebuke of the Jewish people for their sin of forsaking God. However, Hoshea assures the people that God will not abandon them: “How can I give you, Ephraim, and deliver you [to the hands of the nations]? . . . I will not act with My fierce anger; I will not return to destroy Ephraim.”

## A SHORT VORT

BY RABBI CHANOKH YERES

Rav, Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

### **(28:10) “Vayeitzei Yaakov M’Beer Sheva.”**

“And Yaakov Left Beer Sheva”

Why was it necessary for the Torah to mention Yaakov leaving Beer Sheva? It would be enough just to mention his going to his new destination of Charan.

Rashi answers that Yaakov’s exit from the city left an impression behind. Yaakov, as a righteous individual, his absence was felt by people.

The Kli Yakar (Rabbi Shlomo Luntschitz, 1550-1619) asks a deeper question. Why by Avraham Avinu was there no mention of his exit from a city, he left no impression as a righteous person?

He answers that there was a unique difference between the two people. Yaakov left his parents behind, Yitzchak and Rivka, who could understand and feel the loss and absence of Yaakov, the Tzadik. However, Avraham traveled with his whole family wherever they went. No righteous people were left who could fathom the absence of the righteous Avraham.

So too, a righteous person who leaves a community says something not only about that individual but also of the worthiness of that community from whom the person left.

Shabbat Shalom

The haftorah proceeds to discuss the transgressions of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and the future demise of the Kingdom of Judea. The navi makes a comparison between this generation and the behavior of their forefather Yaakov who was faithful and dedicated to God and prevailed against his enemies

The haftorah optimistically highlights the eventual ingathering of the exiles which will occur at the Final Redemption: "They shall hasten like a bird from Egypt and like a dove from the Land of Assyria; and I will place them in their houses, says the Lord." ■



## STATS

7th of 54 sedras; 7th of 12 in B'reishit  
Written on 235.3 lines, ranks 12th Vayeitzei is one single very long (closed) Parsha. It's being a S'TUMA fits with the fact that it is a continuation of the To-l'dot story. It is the Torah's longest closed parsha, and second only to the open parsha that is all of Mikeitz (254.6 lines)

148 p'sukim - rank: 6th (3rd in B'reishit)

2021 words - rank: 4th (3rd in B'reishit)

7512 letters - rank: 5th (3rd in B'reishit)



## MITZVOT

None of the 613 mitzvot are in Vayeitzei This is one of 17 mitzva-less sedras, 9 of which are in Sefer B'reishit, 3 in Sh'mot, none in Vayikra, 2 in Bamidbar, and 3 in D'varim.

In loving memory of my mother

**Esther Goldstein ע"ה**

לע"נ אסתר בת אהרן צבי ע"ה

on her 15th yearzeit, י"א כסלו

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## THE PERSON

BY RABBI DR. TZVI HERSH WEINREB

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## IN THE PARSHA

# Tears

Many years ago, when I was studying for my doctorate in psychology, we had a number of fairly strict requirements in addition to our courses in psychology. For example, we were expected to possess a reading knowledge of two foreign languages, and Hebrew was then not one of them. We were also required to study statistics and to take several courses in what was called “the biological bases of behavior.” These courses were designed to provide us would-be experts on the “mind” with some understanding of the workings of the “body.”

The instructor was a specialist in human

physiology who only lectured sporadically. Instead, he had each of us choose a topic of interest to us, research it thoroughly, and present our findings to the class. I still remember some of the topics I selected. One was the physiology of sleep, and another, the effects of physical exercise on emotions. Perhaps I’ll find a way to weave one of those topics into a future column on the *parasha*. But this week, I’ll refer instead to a third topic I selected; a talk I gave about tears. If I recall correctly, I entitled the talk “Shedding Tears: A Uniquely Human Behavior.”

It amazed me at how little was known about tears back then. In preparation for this column, I had a brief “consultation” with Google and discovered that not much more is known about the subject today than was known back in my graduate school days.

What we do know is summarized in the simple dictionary definition: “A tear is a drop of the clear salty liquid that is secreted by the lachrymal gland of the eye to lubricate the surface between the eyeball and the eyelid to wash away irritants.” We still know little about the physiological explanations for the correlation between tears and mood improvement, and questions as to why women shed tears more easily than men are still largely unresolved.

We are on solid ground when we explain why onions stimulate tears, or why our noses run when we cry. We remain in

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the dark when we attempt to understand the significance of the fact that crying for emotional reasons seems to be unique to humans. Crocodiles shed tears, but not because they are emotionally upset or aesthetically inspired.

At this point, I am sure that the reader has begun to wonder about the connection of my abiding and consuming interest in the phenomenon of human tears to this week's Torah portion, *Parashat Vayetzeh* (*Genesis 28:10-32:3*). Let me assure you, dear reader, that there is a connection, and it is to these remarkable verses: "Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older one was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah had weak eyes; and Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance."

Many find it curious that the Bible accentuates Rachel's physical beauty. There is, however, ample precedent for that. Her predecessors Rebecca and Sarah are both described as exceedingly beautiful.

But why is Leah's physical appearance denigrated? Why do we need to be told that her eyes were weak, soft, and tender? Is this facial feature of Leah's a virtue or a blemish? And if it is the latter, why mention it?

Rashi helps us answer these questions. He comments, "Leah supposed that she was destined to marry Esau, hence she shed tears. She heard people say that Rebecca had two sons and Laban two daughters. Surely, the older daughter will marry the older son, and the younger daughter the younger son." This prediction, this assumption that she was destined to spend her life with the wicked Esau, troubled her greatly, and she cried and cried until her tears



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disfigured her beautiful face.

Chassidic masters have interpreted this seemingly superficial difference between Rachel's pristine beauty and Leah's imperfect appearance as symbolic of two types of moral heroines. Rachel represents the perfect *tzaddeket* who encounters no challenges to her moral perfection. Leah, on the other hand, exemplifies the person who overcomes obstacles and experiences setbacks in her struggle to achieve the status of *tzaddeket*. Leah's tears are the tears of a *ba'alat teshuvah*, one who has known disappointment and failure in her progress toward perfection and whose tears are an essential component of her moral triumph.

This view of tears as part and parcel of the struggle of the searching soul is found time and time again in King David's *Book of Psalms*. Thus, in psalm 42, we read: "Like a hind crying for water, my soul cries for You, O God...my tears have been my food day and night; I am ever taunted with, 'Where is your God?'"

And in psalm 56, we learn that not only do tears comprise the experience of the spiritual seeker, but that the Almighty keeps track of tears, cherishing them and preserving them: "You keep count of my wanderings; You put my tears into Your flask; into Your record."

Finally, the *Book of Psalms* teaches us that tears shed in the interest of drawing closer to God not only are eventually effective, but that those tears are transformed into songs of joy. Thus, we have become familiar with the phrase in the *Shir HaMaalot*, or *Song of Ascents*, psalm 126, which reads: "They who sow in tears shall reap with songs of joy."

Leah's weak eyes are not a physical defect. Her tears are emblems of her moral strivings. Her tears are not signs of weakness or cowardice; quite the contrary, they encompass her strength of character, and we would be well advised to learn from Leah how and when to cry.

It was about the time that I presented that paper on the physiology of tears in graduate school that I first read and appreciated what has since become one of my favorite novels, Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*. I favor it for many reasons, one being that in this novel, Dickens portrays a Jew as a kind, compassionate, and heroic figure. But I also admire the following quotation from the novel, one that I have copied down for reference in my work as both a psychotherapist and spiritual guide:

"Heaven knows we need never be ashamed of our tears...I was better after I had cried, than before—more sorry, more aware of my own ingratitude, more gentle."

I could easily conclude this essay with the above quotation from this great British novelist, one of the keenest observers of the human condition. But I choose instead to conclude with this Talmudic teaching, found in Tractate *Berachot* 32b:

"Rabbi Elazar also said: Since the day the Temple was destroyed, the gates of prayer were locked, as it is said: 'Though I plead and call out, He shuts out my prayer.' (*Lamentations* 3:80) Yet, despite the fact that the gates of prayer were locked, the gates of tears were never locked, as it is stated: 'Hear my prayer, Lord, and give ear to my pleading, keep not silence at my tears.' (*Psalms* 39:13)" ■



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## Three Kinds of Love

Judaism is supremely a religion of love: three loves. “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might.” (Deut. 6:5); “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” (Lev. 19:18); And “You shall love the stranger, for you were once strangers in a strange land.” (Deut. 10:19)<sup>1</sup>

Not only is Judaism a religion of love. It was also the first civilisation to place love at the center of the moral life. C. S. Lewis and others pointed out that all great civilisations contain something like the golden rule - Act toward others as you would wish them to act toward you,<sup>2</sup> or, in Hillel's

negative formulation: Don't do to others what you would hate them to do to you. (Shabbat 31a) This is what Game Theorists call reciprocal altruism or tit-for-tat. Some form of this altruism, (especially the variant devised by Martin Nowak of Harvard called “generous”) has been proven by computer simulation to be the best strategy for the survival of any group.<sup>3</sup>

Judaism is also about justice. Albert Einstein spoke about the “almost fanatical love of justice” that made him thank his lucky stars that he was born a Jew.<sup>4</sup> The only place in the Torah to explain why Abraham was chosen to be the founder of a new faith states, “For I have chosen him so that he will instruct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just.” (Gen. 18:19) So why this combination of justice and love? Why is love alone not enough?

Our parsha contains a gripping passage of only a few words that gives us the answer.

3 See for example Martin Nowak and Roger Highfield, Super Cooperators: Altruism, Evolution and Mathematics (or, Why We Need Each Other to Succeed). Melbourne: Text, 2011.

4 Albert Einstein, The World As I See It, New York: Philosophical Library, 1949.

1 See also Leviticus 19:33-34.  
2 C. S. Lewis, The Abolition of Man, New York, 1947.

Recall the background: Jacob, fleeing home, is taking refuge with his uncle Laban. He falls in love with Rachel, Laban's younger daughter, and works for seven years so that he can marry her. A deception is practised on him, and when he wakes up the morning after their wedding night, he discovers that he has married Rachel's elder sister Leah. Livid, he confronts Laban. Laban replies: "It is not done in our place to marry the younger before the elder." (Gen. 29:26) He tells Jacob he can marry Rachel as well, in return for another seven years of work.

We then read, or rather hear, a series of very poignant words. To understand their impact, we have to recall that in ancient times until the invention of printing there were few books. Until then most people (other than those standing at the *bimah*) *heard* the Torah in the synagogue. They did not *see* it in print. The phrase *Keriat ha-Torah* really means, not *reading* the Torah but *proclaiming* it, making it a public declaration.<sup>5</sup>

There is a fundamental difference between reading and hearing in the way we process information. Reading, we can see the entire text – the sentence, the paragraph – at one time. Hearing, we cannot. We hear only one word at a time, and we do not know in advance how a sentence or paragraph will end. Some of the most powerful literary effects in an oral culture occur when the opening words of a

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5 This has halachic implications. *Keriat ha-Torah* is, according to most Rishonim, a *chovat ha-tsibbur*, a communal rather than an individual obligation (unlike the reading of the Megillah on Purim).

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sentence lead us to expect one ending and instead we encounter another.

These are the poignant words we hear: “And he [Jacob] loved also Rachel” (Gen. 29:30). This is what we expected and hoped for. Jacob now has two wives, sisters, something that will be forbidden in later Jewish law. It is a situation fraught with tension. But our first impression is that all will be well. He loves them both.

That expectation is dashed by the next word, *mi-Leah*, “more than Leah.” This is not merely unexpected. It is also grammatically impossible. You cannot have a sentence that says, “X *also* loved Y *more than* Z.” The “also” and the “more than” contradict one another. This is one of those rare and powerful instances in which the Torah deliberately uses fractured syntax to indicate a fractured relationship.<sup>6</sup>

Then comes the next phrase and it is

6 The classic example is the untranslatable verse in Gen. 4:8, in which Cain kills Abel. The breakdown of words expresses the breakdown of relationship, which leads to the breakdown of morality and the first murder.

May the learning from this issue of Torah Tidbits be a Z'chus for our beloved parents:

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shocking. “The Lord saw that Leah was hated.” (Gen. 29:31) Was Leah hated? No. The previous sentence has just told us she was loved. What then does the Torah mean by “hated”? It means, that is how Leah felt. Yes she was loved, but less than her sister. Leah knew, and had known for seven years, that Jacob was passionately in love with her younger sister Rachel, for whom the Torah says that he worked for seven years “but they seemed to him like a few days because he was so in love with her.” (Gen. 29:20)

Leah was not hated. She was less loved. But someone in that situation cannot help but feel rejected. The Torah forces us to hear Leah’s pain in the names she gives her children. Her first she calls Reuben, saying “It is *because the Lord has seen my misery*. Surely my husband will love me now.” The second she calls Shimon, “Because *the Lord heard that I am not loved*.” The third she called Levi, saying, “Now *at last my husband will become attached to me*” (Gen. 29:32-35). There is sustained anguish in these words.

We hear the same tone later when Reuben, Leah’s firstborn, finds mandrakes in the field. Mandrakes were thought to have aphrodisiac properties, so he gives them to his mother hoping that this will draw his father to her. Rachel, who has been experiencing a different kind of pain, childlessness, sees the mandrakes and asks Leah for them. Leah then says: “Wasn’t it enough that you took away my husband? Will you take my son’s mandrakes too?” (Gen. 30:15). The misery is palpable.

Note what has happened. It began with love. It has been about love throughout.



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Jacob loved Rachel. He loved her at first sight. There is no other love story quite like it in the Torah. Abraham and Sarah are already married by the time we first meet them. Isaac had his wife chosen for him by his father's servant. But Jacob loves. He is more emotional than the other patriarchs; that is the problem. Love unites but it also divides. It leaves the unloved, even the less-loved, feeling rejected, abandoned, forsaken, alone. That is why you cannot build a society, a community or even a family on love alone. There must be justice-as-fairness also.

If we look at the fifteen times the word "love," *ahavah*, is mentioned in the book of Genesis, we make an extraordinary discovery. Every time love is mentioned, it generates conflict. Isaac loved Esau but Rebecca loved Jacob. Jacob loved Joseph, Rachel's firstborn, more than his other sons. From these came two of the most fateful sibling rivalries in Jewish history.

Yet even these pale into insignificance when we reflect on the first time the word love appears in the Torah, in the opening words of the trial of the Binding of Isaac: "Take now your son, your only one, the one you love..." (Gen. 22:2). Rashi, following Midrash (itself inspired by the obvious

comparison between the Binding of Isaac and the book of Job), says that Satan, the accusing angel, said to God when Abraham made a feast to celebrate the weaning of his son: "You see, he loves his child more than You." (Rashi to Genesis 22:1) That, according to the Midrash, was the reason for the trial, to show that Satan's accusation was untrue.

Judaism is a religion of love. It is so for profound theological reasons. In the world of myth, the gods were at worst hostile, at best indifferent to humankind. In contemporary atheism the universe and life exist for no reason whatsoever. We are accidents of matter, the result of blind chance and natural selection. Judaism's approach is the most beautiful I know. We are here because God created us in love and forgiveness, asking us to love and forgive others. Love, God's love, is implicit in our very being.

So many of our texts express that love: the paragraph before the Shema with its talk of "great" and "eternal love"; the Shema itself with its command of love; the priestly blessings to be uttered in love; *Shir ha-Shirim*, the Song of Songs, the great poem of love; Shlomo Albaketz's *Lecha Dodi*, "Come, my Beloved," Eliezer Azikri's *Yedid Nefesh*, "Beloved of the Soul." If you want to live well, love. If you seek to be close to God, love. If you want your home to be filled with the light of the Divine Presence, love. Love is where God lives.

But love is not enough. You cannot build a family, let alone a society, on love alone. For that you need justice also. Love is partial, justice is impartial. Love is particular, justice is universal. Love is for this person not that, but justice is for all. Much



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of the moral life is generated by this tension between love and justice. It is no accident that this is the theme of many of the narratives of Genesis. Genesis is about people and their relationships, while the rest of the Torah is predominantly about society.

Justice without love is harsh. Love without justice is unfair, or so it will seem to the less-loved. Yet to experience both at the same time is virtually impossible. Niels Bohr, the Nobel prize winning physicist, once discovered that his son had stolen an object from a local shop. He realised that he could have two separate reactions to the situation: he could view his son from the perspective of a judge (justice) or through his perspective as a father (love), but he could not do both simultaneously.<sup>7</sup>

At the heart of the moral life is a conflict with no simple resolution. There is no general rule to tell us when love is the right reaction and when justice is. In the 1960s the Beatles sang “All you need is love.” Would that it were so, but it is not. Love is not enough. Let us love, but let us never forget those who feel unloved. They too are people. They too have feelings. They too are in the image of God. ■

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7 Jerome Bruner, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 51.

*Covenant and Conversation 5782 is kindly supported by the Maurice Wohl Charitable Foundation in memory of Maurice and Vivienne Wohl z"l. These weekly teachings from Rabbi Sacks zt"l are part of the 'Covenant & Conversation' series on the weekly Torah reading. Read more on [www.rabbisacks.org](http://www.rabbisacks.org).*

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## PROBING

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## THE PROPHETS

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As we closed last week's parasha of Toledot, we read of Ya'akov Avinu's departure from his parent's home, following the request of his father to find a wife from his mother's family but, even more crucially, following the advice of his mother to escape the wrath of his brother Eisav who planned to kill him. This week's parasha of VaYetzei picks up on that journey, opening with the words "Vayetzei Ya'akov", that Ya'akov left Be'er Sheva on his way to Charan. Our haftarah echoes the opening verse of the parasha with the words of Hoshe'a "VaYivrach Yisra'el s'deh Aram", describing how Ya'akov fled to the field of Aram.

Although we might see nothing unusual with that statement, Rav Moshe Lichtenstein reveals to us important insights regarding the prophetic words of Hoshe'a. To begin with, it is highly unusual to find a review of patriarchal stories in the books of the nevi'im. Although we might find mention of the personalities of our Avot or Imahot, we almost never read of the events or episodes that our patriarchs experienced. The fact that the final chapters of

Sefer Hoshe'a (Hoshe'a 9-10; 12-13) DOES do that makes it quite unique. And WHY he does that requires a look at our haftarah.

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

Yishayahu, Rav Lichtenstein suggests, fought against an idolatry when Israel chose another "deity", believing that the different "god" was more powerful and therefore, should be worshipped. But Hoshe'a battled against a disloyalty that went from one 'divinity' to another, causing the nation to constantly search for...

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another to save them from one threat or another. It was a faithlessness that denied their past and ignored all that Hashem had done for them in exchange for ....anyone.

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

Faithfulness requires sacrifice, and the long history of our people has proven that we have internalized the lesson that Hoshe'a taught so long ago. Over our many years we have – and continue - to make that sacrifice. Sacrifice for the G-d of Israel, the Torah of Israel and the Land of Israel. It is a sacrifice and a faithfulness that no other people has ever shown.

We have the right to read this haftarah of rebuke with pride and not with shame. We have learned what Hoshe'a's generation did not. We have learned to sacrifice because.... We are a faithful nation. ■

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# RABBI SHALOM

## ROSNER

Rav Kehilla, Nofei HaShemesh  
Maggid Shiur, Daf Yomi, OU.org  
Senior Ra"m, Kerem B'Yavneh

# Spiritual Schizophrenia

When Yaakov encounters Rachel for the first time, he greets her and then he cries (Bereshis 29:11). Rashi offers two explanations for his sadness, the second reason being that Yaakov came empty-handed. When Eliezer greeted Rivka he showered her with valuable gifts. Yaakov had nothing. Chazal tell us that Elifaz, Esav's son chased after Yaakov as per his father's instructions to kill him. Yet, when Elifaz confronts Yaakov, he is confused. On the one hand he had learned with his grandfather Yitzhak that one cannot kill another, yet he also was obligated to fulfill his father's request in accordance with the mitzva of *Kibbud av*. To resolve this conflict, Yaakov suggests that Elifaz take all his belongings, because a poor individual is compared to a dead person (*anei chashuv k'mes*).

Elifaz had a distorted sense of morality. He was somewhat schizophrenic. His understanding of right and wrong, light and darkness was convoluted. Rav Chaim Shmulovitz in his sefer *Sichos Mussar* suggests that each and every one of us struggles with this conflict. At times we may be swayed to act a certain way under the guise of a mitzva.

Let's offer an example, cited by the Chafetz Chaim. In *Zecharya* (haftorah for *Be'haaloscha*) the Satan is referenced as being on the right side (*v'hasatan omed al yemino l'sotno*). The Chafetz Chaim asks, isn't the Satan usually referred to as being on the left side? The right side is typically affiliated with the correct path. The Chafetz Chaim explains, that at times, the Satan appears under the guise of a mitzva in order to accomplish its deceptive mission. The Chafetz Chaim used to shut the lights (put out the candles) in the Beis Medrash at a certain hour, lest talmidim stay up late learning and sleep through minyan

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b'tzibur in the morning.

It is not surprising that Amalek is the descendent of Elifaz. Amalek b'gematria is equal to safek (confusion) 240. Amalek seeks to instill confusion into the world.

Eliyahu Hanavi rebukes the masses for wavering between worshipping God and idolatry. עד מתי אתם פוסחים על שתי הסעי. פים אם ה' האלוקים לנו אחריו ואם הבעל לנו אחריו (1 Melachim 18:21). Worshipping God and idolatry simultaneously, essentially mixing darkness and light is worse than selecting either.

Another application of how one can distort morality appears in the story with the two mothers who approach Shlomo Hamelech to determine whose child lies before them. It is unfathomable that a person would go out of their way to kidnap a child so that they could raise them as their own and a day later be willing to have the child killed if they can't keep it.

We should take care to ensure that we do not justify unbecoming behavior for what we unduly label a greater cause. This includes violating a mitzva *ben adam l'chavero* on account of fulfilling a mitzva *ben adam l'makom*. May we be able to overcome Elifaz's confusion within us and act *b'derech hayashar* in fulfilling all mitzvos! ■

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## Strategic Stones

We find a curious theme throughout our *parashah*, the appearance of *avanim*, stones. In his flight from his brother Eisav, Yakov Avinu places stones around his head before going to sleep and then makes this stone into a *matzeivah* the next morning (*Bereisheet* 28;11,18). When Yakov arrives in the vicinity of *Charan*, he sees a group of shepherds gathered around a well waiting for help to remove the huge stone that rests upon the well. Yaakov Avinu lifts the stone with ease as Rachel Imeinu approaches (*Bereisheet* 29;2-10). Finally, at the end of the *parashah*, we encounter Yaakov Avinu yet again, as he tells his family to collect stones and make a mound as a witness between him and Lavan (*Bereisheet* 31;46-48). What is the symbolism implicit in these stones?

The *Abarbanel* sees a strong interconnection between the stone Yakov used to build a *matzeivah* and the stone that he found

on the well. When consecrating the altar, Yakov Avinu davens for Hashem to escort him throughout his journey and return him safely to his father's house. Yaakov Avinu is afraid of the evil influences that he will inevitably find in the home of Lavan and wants to feel Hashem's protection as he goes into exile. His first experience upon arriving in *Charan* involves a well with a stone upon it. Yaakov Avinu sees this stone on the well as an echo of the stone he erected and takes it as a sign that Hashem is indeed with him, and he has nothing to fear.

Rav Breslover in *Lemachar Aatir*, views the three encounters with stones as a three-step process in Yaakov Avinu's journey as he begins to build his home. Placing the stones around his head before going to sleep reflects Yakov's vision for his family; the hope that the stones would all come together, that they would live together in peace and harmony. When he gets to *Charan*, he removes the stone from the well. The *Kli Yakar* understands this stone as a symbol of infertility; it



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must be removed so Yakov Avinu can build his family. This includes Yakov Avinu's *tefilot* removing all obstacles to merit the 12 tribes. Lastly, the stones of the *brit* with Lavan reflect the protection that Yaakov Avinu erected around his family, guarding them from outside influences.

Chazal teach that the word *even*, is a contraction of two words, *av* and *ben*, father and son. Each new generation is another 'stone' in building the world. We see this concept reflected in the custom to place a stone upon a grave, signifying continuity of life.

Thus, we see here the model to create a successful Jewish home. One must have a vision, daven for success to implement that vision, and create the necessary boundaries to protect and fortify what he builds. Only then can one be assured of a lasting structure with strong values that will endure. ■



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Mashpiah, OU-NCSY  
Executive Director, Camp HASC  
Author of *Baderech: Along the Path of Teshuva* (Mosaica 2021)

# When Hashem Will Help

A *Yid* arrived to seek the blessing and counsel of his Rebbe, the great Reb Yisrael of Rizhin. As he prepared himself to enter the tzadik’s office, the Rebbe’s son, Reb Dovid Moshe, who was then a curious child and later to become the Rebbe of Chortkov, asked the visitor what he was going to ask of his holy father.

As the door opened for his *yechidus* to begin, the Jew turned to Dovid Moshe and said, “I am going to ask for a bracha from the Rebbe; I am davening for many things,” and entered the room.

A few short minutes later, when the man emerged from his meeting with the Rizhiner, the inquisitive child asked, “So? What did my father have to say?”

“The Rebbe said that *der Eibeshter vet hel-fin*, ‘God Above will help.’”

Seeing that the man was still feeling stressed by his predicaments, Dovid Moshe said, “Aha, that’s nice. But what will be *biz der*

*Eibeshter vet hel-fin*’ — until Hashem helps?” “I don’t know,” the man admitted. “Go back to my father and ask him what will happen until Hashem yisborach helps.”

When the man reemerged a second time, the boy asked, with a twinkle in his eye, “So what did my father tell you?” The man smiled: “The Rebbe said that *der Eibeshter vet hel-fin ... biz er vet hel-fin*, “The One Above will help ... until He will help.”

In our sedra this week, while on the run, fleeing for his life, Yaakov Avinu received words of assurance from Hashem:

וְהִנֵּה אֲנִי עִמָּךְ וְשָׁמְרְתִיךָ כָּכָל אֲשֶׁר-תֵּלֵךְ...כִּי לֹא אֶעֱזָבְךָ  
עַד אֲשֶׁר אֶם-עָשִׂיתִי אֶת אֲשֶׁר-דִּבַּרְתִּי לְךָ

“And behold, I am with you, and I will guard you wherever you go...

for I will not forsake you until I have done what I have spoken concerning you.” (28:15).

A disagreement between Sages is recorded in Midrash Rabbah (69:6) over the extent to which Hashem assures Yaakov Avinu. Specifically, does the promise *Hinei Anochi imach*, “And behold, I am with you,” cover all of Yaakov’s requests, or does it just ensure his personal safety from Eisav and Lavan? The Sages maintained that it was a general promise for wellbeing and



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salvation, but did not include a blessing for *parnassah*, sustenance.

Rav Assi, however, taught that God did answer Jacob's request for sustenance too, for in the meantime, before he would be saved from those who sought his harm, before he would find his way back and return home safely, לא אֶעֱזֹבךָ, "I will not forsake you." *Der Eibeshter vet helfn biz er vet helfn*, "Until Hashem will help, Hashem will help."

David haMelech echoed this sentiment in *Sefer Tehillim*. In the face of adversaries and struggling with many challenging travails, he sings, ואני בחסדך בטחתי, "As for me, I trusted in Your loving kindness;" יגל ליבי בישועתך, "my heart will rejoice in Your salvation" (13:4). Reb Shlomo Carlebach melodically interpreted: "David Hamelech is telling God, 'I believe so strongly in your lovingkindness and faithfulness in helping me, that even before you help and deliver me,' יגל ליבי בישועתך, 'I'm already rejoicing! I am already celebrating and thanking you with all my heart for taking care of me, for saving me, even before You do.'

The Midrash further explains the opening words of our parsha, ויצא יעקב, "And Yaakov

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left.” It implies that despite being pursued by Eisav, Yaakov went with security and faith, for *אָז תֵּלֵךְ לְבֶטֶחַ דְּרַכְךָ*, “then you will go in securely on your way” (*Mishlei*, 3:23), is a reference to Yaakov Avinu.

Knowing that Hashem was with him, and confident that the Ribbono Shel Olam would deliver him, allowed Yaakov to avoid feeling the pressure, fear and panic one might have in the face of existential danger. *Vayeitzei Yaakov*: even ‘before’ Hashem helped, before his salvation, yet while still in a state of uncertainty, Yaakov was living with the faith that Hashem was *already* helping.

Reb Tzadok haKohen of Lublin (*Sefer Pri Tzadik*) teaches that during Kislev there exists a special potential to bolster our *Emunah* that Hashem is taking care of us, and to strengthen our self confidence. It is an opportune time to reassess that which is most central in our lives: HaKadosh Baruch Hu is helping us all the time.

Reb Tzadok cites a textual allusion in *Sefer Iyov* as the source through which we can understand the meaning and essence of Chodesh Kislev. In response to his suffering and trials, Iyov delivers a powerful

monologue directed toward HaKadosh Baruch Hu, and declares his innocence and righteousness, stating his belief in Hashem as the sole source of his strength: *Im samti zahav kisli, ve-laketem amarti mivtachi* — “If (on the other hand) I would have made gold my hope (*kisli*), and would have said to fine gold, ‘You are my confidence...’” (31:24). Iyov defends himself by stating that he has not placed his faith in “gold” and material belongings, and that the source of his inner strength and “hope” (*kisli*) is his *Emunah*, not his possessions. And as our sages teach us, the word *kisli* is a subtle reference to Chodesh Kislev.

Rebbe Avraham Ibn Ezra defines the word *kisli* as *mish’ani*, “my walking stick” — as if Iyov is saying that his sole source of support, mobility and *chizuk* — his entire sense of self and confidence — is based solely on his relationship with Hashem, and not on anything external.

May we have the confidence and faith to express thanks to Hashem now for all that He has promised Am Yisrael regarding our bright future. And may we place our hope in the fact that until that future comes, Hashem will always be there for us. ■



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SUN, NOV 14

**9:00 AM**

**Rabbi David Walk**

Tehillim: Divine Poetry

**10:15 AM**

**Rabbi Aharon Adler** The  
Biblical Abraham Accords

**11:30 AM**

**Rabbi Yitzchak  
Breitowitz**

Shir haShirim (L'Ayla)

**2:00 PM**

**Rabbi Jeffrey Bienenfeld**

Men's Gemara Chabura  
S,T,TH

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**4:30 PM**

**Rabbi Hillel Ruvell**

Men's Gemara B'Iyun  
S,M,W,Th

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MON, NOV 15

**9:15 AM**

**Rebbetzin Pearl Borow**

Divrei Hayamim

**10:30 AM**

**Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider**

The Thought of Rav  
Soloveitchik

**11:45 AM**

**Rabbi Shmuel Herschler**

Ethics, family and society  
in the writings of Rav  
Hirsch, Rav Kook and Rav  
Soloveitchik

**4:30PM**

**Rabbi Hillel Ruvell**

**7:00 PM**

**Rabbi Baruch Taub**

(Zoom only)

**8:30PM**

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TUE, NOV 16

**9:15 AM**

**Rebbetzin Shira Smiles**

Torah Tapestries (L'Ayla)

**9:30 AM**

**Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz**

Minchat Chinuch

**10:30 AM**

**Rabbi Shmuel Goldin**

Parshat HaShavua

**2:00 PM**

**Rabbi Jeffrey  
Bienenfeld**

**5:00 PM**

**Rebbetzin Sylvie Schatz**

Chazal: Insights Into Our  
Times (L'Ayla) [https://zoom.](https://zoom.us/j/85177782268)  
[us/j/85177782268](https://zoom.us/j/85177782268)

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Halacha and Medina

**10:15 AM**  
**Rabbi Sam Shor**  
Contemporary Issues in Halacha and Hashkafa (Rabbi Manning will resume on Dec 1)

**11:30 AM**  
**Rabbi Alan Kimche**  
Great Jewish Thinkers

**4:30PM**  
**Rabbi Hillel Ruvell**

**7:00 PM**  
**Rabbi Baruch Taub**  
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**8:30 PM**  
**Rav Meir Goldwicht**  
(Hebrew) [https:// zoom.us/j/2244321902](https://zoom.us/j/2244321902)  
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**8:30 PM**  
**Rabbi Aschi Dick**  
The Bais- Halachic Controversies (Men Only)

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**7:00PM**  
Bat Mitzvah Tour of the Old City

THURS, NOV 18

**9:00 AM**  
**Rabbi Ari Kahn**  
Parshat HaShavua

**9:15AM**  
**Rabbanit Shani Taragin**  
Sefer Kohelet (L'Ayla)

**10:15 AM**  
**Rabbi Baruch Taub**  
Parshat Hashavua

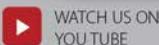
**11:30 AM**  
**Rabbi Finkelstein**  
Unlocking the Messages of Chazal

**2:00 PM**  
**Rabbi Jeffrey Bienenfeld**

**4:30PM**  
**Rabbi Hillel Ruvell**

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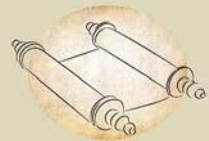
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## DIVREI MENACHEM

BY MENACHEM PERSOFF

Special Projects Consultant, OU Israel Center  
mpersoff@ou.org

# From “Hineh” to “Hinneni”

The first phrase of our Parsha and its title, “Vayetze,” says it all. “*Vayetze Yaakov*” – ‘And Yaakov went out.’ In today’s parlance, we might say that Yaakov went out of his comfort zone. He left Beer Sheva for Horon; he left the spiritual warmth and custody of his parents’ home for the wide world with all its temptations and diversions.

Moreover, R. Hirsch points out that Yaakov was now alone and bereft of wealth and sustenance, unlike Avraham, who set out on a journey with his family and possessions. Thus, what Yaakov takes with him on his journey is but his essential self – his thoughts, values, dreams, and fears.

No wonder that Yaakov was somewhat confused. No wonder that when he awoke from his dream, he surprised himself, exclaiming that where he had rested was holy ground. He declared, “This is none other than the House of God! And this a gate to heaven!” (Bereishit 28:12).

Yaakov witnessed a ladder on which angels were ascending and descending to the very spot where he was sleeping. For R. Hirsch, it appears, Yaakov is the prototype, serving future lost souls searching their way during

their lifetime’s hazardous expedition. Thus, in the broader sense, the angels’ mission was to summon from above both Yaakov and his future descendants “to work themselves up towards a lofty heaven-sent goal.”

The ladder informs us that there is an essential link between ‘Heaven’ and ‘Earth.’ Moreover, the place upon which the ladder stands is no less than the “House of God.”

Extrapolating from this concept, we might say that wherever we rest our weary heads is an abode for Hashem. In a sense, our souls – which represent the breath of God within our material selves – are a repose for Hashem if we but let Him into our innermost sanctum.

It appears that we need Yaakov’s angels to check on us once in a while to remind us of Hashem’s Presence and paternal protection as we travel along our life-long trail. But, oh – How many times do we wake up, having forgotten or betrayed our Father’s house!

Perhaps, like Yaakov, we need that “Hineh” (הנה) experience (v.12), that sudden awareness invoked by the term “And behold!” Or perhaps the term הנה reminds us of the phrase ינה – “Here I am” – stirring us in our dream-like state to recall that Hashem is always there to take care of us. ■

Shabbat Shalom! *Menachem Persoff*



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# GEULAS YISRAEL

BY RABBI MOSHE TARAGIN

Ram, Yeshivat Har Eztion

## The Ladder of History

Ya'akov's nighttime dream ranks as one of the most dramatic episodes in all Sefer Bereishit. "Jacobs's ladder" has become a cross-cultural icon spanning diverse religions and races. Stationed on Earth, this "bridge to Heaven" embodies the desire of the religious spirit to obtain Heaven. Beyond its general religious symbolism, the ladder depicts memorable encounters between Hashem and His chosen nation on Earth. The ladder conjures the epic events at Sinai as a human audience was stationed underneath a fiery mountain "hovering" in Heaven. The ladder also portrays the Beit Hamikdash and the korbanot which lifted Jewish hearts to Heaven and to Hashem.

The Midrash asserts an entirely different symbolism to the ladder: it captures the seminal drama of Jewish history. Angels climbing a ladder represent famous empires which rose to prominence throughout history. Four great empires in particular- Babylonia, Persia, Greece and

Rome- would, in turn, dominate civilization. The concept of these four empires or the "arba malchiyot" is fundamental to both human and Jewish history and would one day be featured in both the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and the prophecy of Daniel. The dream and the prophecy were each presented at a crucial juncture of history, after the first Mikdash was destroyed, as history was hanging in the balance. The Jews would now face exile and suffer persecution at the hands of these empires. These dreams and prophecies – delivered at a crucial historical juncture- highlight the Jewish role in the unfolding struggle of history.

Hundreds of years earlier, as Ya'akov rested upon a mountain in Yerushalayim, the concept of four empires was first presented. More than any of our Avot, Ya'akov's tumultuous life symbolizes the travails and wanderings of Jewish history. Ya'akov is forced to flee the land of Israel from his murderous brother. Toward the end of his life, he will be drawn down to Egypt as a "pawn" in a larger historical narrative of Jewish exile. His "ladder" is really a "lesson"- about his own exile and the ongoing

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historical struggle of his descendants. On the cusp of departing from Israel, the history of his people is foreshadowed.

Ya'akov doesn't just witness angels mounting a ladder, he also becomes alarmed by the heights they ascend to. He lies upon that lonely mountain watching angels soar so high that they disappear from view. Connecting the dots, he soon realizes that formidable empires will not just visit our planet, but come to dominate it. Their success will be so astonishing that they will seem invulnerable. They will rise so high that it will seem futile to oppose them. Initially Ya'akov is scared by the rise of the angels.

Soon though, he watches these angels march down the ladder and return to Earth. Watching their descent, he realizes that as indestructible as human empires may seem, they are all vulnerable. Nothing of human construction is eternal – everything passes. Empires may dominate for centuries or even for a millennium, but, ultimately, they will fade.

As Jews, we often face petrifying “juggernauts” which appear to be undefeatable. History is a ladder. What rises will fall. What goes up ultimately returns to Earth. Only Hashem remains stationed at the top of the ladder.

Growing up as a child, under the intimidating specter of the Soviet Union, I could not imagine a world without this global menace. Communism had captured half of the world and seemed indomitable. No one could imagine the fall of Communism

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and no one dared defy this mighty superpower. No one, of course, aside from a few Jews locked in prison cells for the crime of requesting a ticket to their homeland. In 1986, Natan Sharansky walked across the Glienicker Bridge in a suburb of Berlin, and a few years later, the Berlin Wall fell and the Soviet Union was dismembered. An empire built to last for centuries crumbled in a few years. Empires and rulers may walk up the ladder and reach stratospheric heights. Whoever walks up will ultimately plunge down the ladder. Generally, the way down is much faster than the way up.

Ya'akov watches this cavalcade of angels,

is initially frightened, and ultimately becomes reassured. And then, he receives an invitation from Hashem to join the highway of history and mount the ladder. As the guardians of humanity, Jews are meant to defend the world from religious decline and moral collapse. Each of these great empires advances civilization but also poses grave moral challenges to humanity. Jews aren't meant to merely survive these empires, but to defeat their moral challenges. It is not enough for Ya'akov to wait patiently beneath the ladder for the empires to plummet. He is asked to walk alongside the angels and "protect" history. He was invited up the ladder.

Worried that if he mounts the ladder perhaps the Jewish people would also tumble off the ladder, he declines the invitation. Perhaps, he worries, Jews are subject to the same cycles of history as the rest of humanity. Perhaps they too will rise and fall throughout the revolutions of history. Despite Hashem assuring him that the Jews are immune to historical volatility, Ya'akov remains in place.

It takes great faith to walk the ladder of history. It takes courage and emunah to withstand the intimidation of would-be super empires. It also takes great confidence in Jewish future to outlast the fluctuations of Jewish history and to assert our eternal destiny. We have begun to ascend that ladder. One rung at a time. ■

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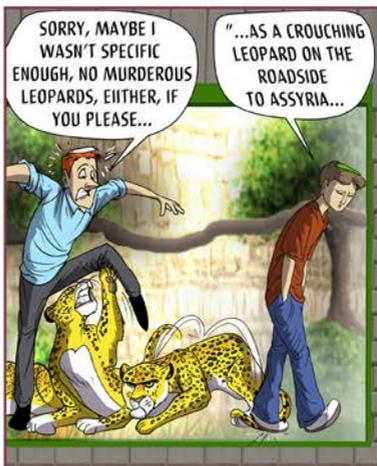
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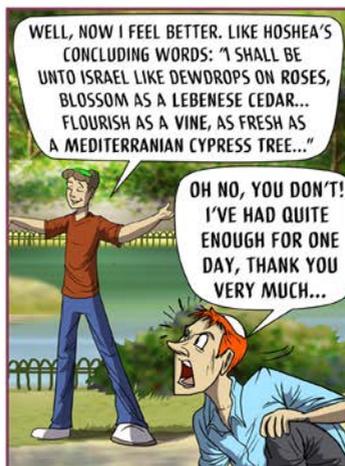
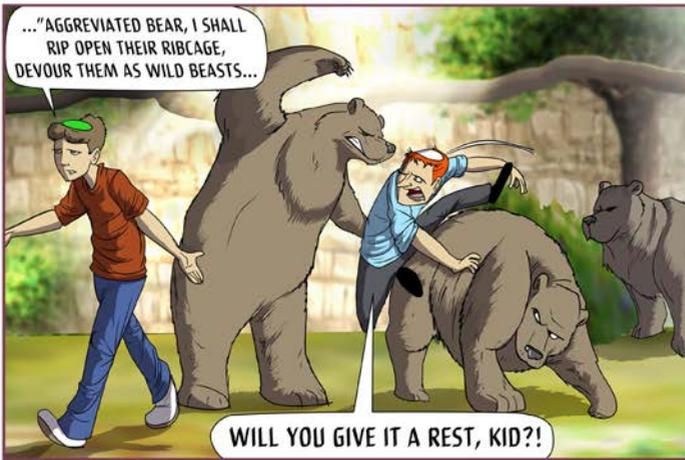


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## SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

**P**arshat Vayeitzei recalls the familiar account of Yaakov Avinu departing from Be'er Sheva as he flees the potential danger and retribution at the hands of his brother Eisav, following Yaakov's having received the bracha from Yitzchak.

As Yaakov lies down to rest under the stars the pasuk tells us:

*Vayachalom v'hinei sulam mutzav artza, v'rosho magia hashamaima- And he dreamt, and suddenly before him was a ladder that leaned toward earth, and it's top rose to Heaven.*

What exactly is the message this dream is meant to convey to Yaakov Avinu? What is the eternal message and relevance of Yaakov's dream for each of us?

Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch zt'l points out that the ladder, which represents the link between Heaven and Earth, was placed from above by Hashem. However the verse reads that the ladder's top reached the heavens. The ladder's purpose, explained Rav Hirsch, was not descent from the Heavens, rather to inspire spiritual ascent, to direct our thoughts and actions toward the Heavens.

The *Netivot Shalom, the Slonimer Rebbe zy'a* offers a different interpretation on the imagery represented by the ladder. A ladder offers the capacity both to climb, as well as to descend. It is important for us to realize that in life even our descents occur within the framework of that proverbial ladder. Even as we may have come down a rung on that ladder, we continue to have the ability to climb back up, and ascend even higher than before!

Similarly, Rav Yaakov Moshe Charlop zt'l, one of the closest and most devoted students of Rav Kook zt'l, explains that the ladder is meant to teach us that sometimes our descents are necessary temporary steps, that actually serve as the impetus to propel us to climb even higher up that proverbial ladder, to reach even higher heights in our Avodat Hashem.

*Yehi Ratzon*, May each of us be blessed both to dream, to seek to ascend higher in our Avodat Hashem, as well as to have the strength and perseverance to bounce back from our temporary descents and setbacks, to achieve even greater clarity and growth each and every day. ■

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**RABBI AARON**

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## Mesorah: In Three Scenes

Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik suggested that an unmistakable motif pervades the book of Bereshit. Namely, the idea of Mesorah. The Ramban drew attention to this theme numerous times in his commentary employing the phrase of *maasei avot siman le'banim* ('the actions of the Fathers are a symbol for the children'). In a word, not only are we called on to emulate the Biblical figures but we are tasked to transmit their teachings and singular way of life to the next generation.

Three unforgettable episodes in the book of Bereshit resound with this essential teaching.

### *They Walked As One*

The *Akeida*, the Binding of Yitzchak, is perhaps most famous for projecting the idea of faith and surrender to the will of God. And yet, another critical lesson is woven into the fabric of the story and is captured in a single word that repeats itself three separate times through the course of the relatively short passage: *Yachdav*, as one (*Bereshit* 22:6, 22:8, 22:19). *Yachdav* does not simply mean that they walked together, rather that they both shared a common goal and

purpose. It is noteworthy that Yitzchak had not heard the call directly from God but only received it via his father. The lesson of a father effectively conveying lessons and dogma to a child is noteworthy in this epic episode.

However, there is another layer of understanding in this context. Rabbi Michael Rosensweig, a renowned student of the Rav and Rosh Yeshiva at RIETS, cites the Midrash which states that Yitzchak asked his father to tie him down lest he move, or try to escape the the knife's direction (*Bereshit Rabbah* 56:8). Evidently it was not as natural for Yitzchak as it was for his father to surrender. Father and son experienced the *Akeida* differently. Yet the word *Yachdav* teaches us that they joined as one although they were not of the same mind. Yitzchak withstood the test with an allegiance not only to God but to his father as well. (YU Torah, The Continuity of the Mesorah, Oct. 25, 2021)

The motif of Mesorah, the transmission of a unique way of life from parent to child is unmistakably embedded in the episode of the *Akeida*.

### *Shalshet HaMesorah*

"Yosef was well-built and handsome in appearance. After a while, his master's wife

**רפואה שלמה דוד חנוך בן יהודית איטה**

took notice of Yosef and said, ‘Come to bed with me.’ But he refused. He said: ‘With me in charge my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?’ (Bereishit 39:6-9).

On the verb *va'yemaen*, ‘but he refused,’ is found a *shalsholet*, the thrice-repeating musical note.

In order to understand its significance, Rabbi Soloveitchik first commented on an intriguing detail in the narrative, concerning the way the Torah reports Yosef’s response to his master’s wife’s proposition. When his master’s wife asked him to be intimate with her, we might expect Yosef to first explain to her why he cannot accept her offer, and then conclude by saying no. Yet, the Torah tells us that the first thing Yosef did was to refuse her. Only afterwards does he justify his refusal. Why?

Furthermore, how did Yosef overcome this enormous temptation?

Aware of the profound danger that he might fall prey to immoral behavior, the first thing Yosef did was present the woman with a thundering “no”. The cantillation of a *shalsholet* is in the configuration of a chain. His refusal stemmed from the unbroken chain of previous generations, the *shalsholet hamesorah* - his genealogy, his patrilineal descent - which impelled him to declare his refusal to be seduced without furnishing logic or explanation.



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In this context Rabbi Soloveitchik took note of another unusual feature in this pasuk - the use of a *p'sik* (*dividing line*). The two words, *va'yemaen*, and *he refused*, and *vayomer*, and *he said*, are distinct and separate; they are divided by a line which signals that the two words are not connected. In other words, Yosef's refusal and explanation do not constitute a cause-and-effect relationship. The word, *va'yemaen* is an expression of unwillingness; a demurral without any reason. ('A Fire In His Soul, Bunim', p.366, *Mesorat HaRav Chumash, Bereshis* p.292)

### *The First Jewish Grandfather*

In the Talmud and Midrash, Yaakov is often called *Yisrael Sava*, "Old Israel." Why was this title conferred on him and not the forefathers who preceded him? The Rav suggests that this honorific is because he is the first patriarch to establish communication with his grandchildren. He was the first to make a declaration to Joseph, "Now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt, before I came to you in Egypt, are mine. Ephraim and Menashe shall be mine, no less than Reuven and Shimon (*Bereshit* 48:5). Yaakov equated them to his own sons who he reared in the land of Canaan.

Avraham never spoke this way about Yaakov, that he was to him as Yitzchak. Yitzchak never said this about Reuven and Shimon. Yaakov was the first to impart special blessings to his grandchildren. He blessed them even before he assembled his own sons for

blessings. The halachic ruling that *b'nai banim harei hem k'banim*, "grandchildren have the same status as children (*Yevamot* 62b), is derived from Yaakov's declaration about Ephraim and Menashe.

Yaakov related directly to his grandchildren. "He leapt over the gulf of generations and transmitted the great *Mesorah* of Avraham directly to Ephraim and Menashe. Despite the discrepancy of years, the *Zaken* (or *Yisrael Sava*), the carrier of the old tradition, succeeded." (*Reflections of the Rav, Besdin*, p. 19) ■

## CHESED FUND

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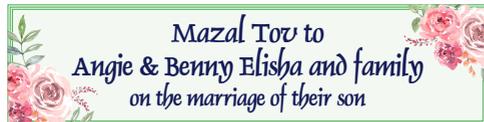
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BY RABBI MOSHE BLOOM

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# WhatsApp Groups, Deadheading and Weeds

## New WhatsApp Group

The English Department at Torah VeHa'aretz Institute has now opened WhatsApp groups for *shemita* updates. These are quiet groups and only updates will be posted by administrators, Rabbi Moshe Bloom, English Department Director at Torah VeHa'aretz Institute, and Shoshan Raiz, the institute's official translator. We welcome you to join and share the link: <https://www.toraland.org.il/linker/wa-english/> Group members can ask administrators their questions and have access to our FAQ database, infographics, and other helpful materials.

Examples of our daily posts:

## Deadheading

**Q:** Is it permissible to deadhead flowers for aesthetic purposes only? My goal is not to promote new growth, just to remove the dead flowers because they look ugly.

**A:** We've been getting lots of questions

on deadheading; that is, removing dead flowers in the garden. Deadheading is a delicate issue because it directly promotes growth. It is fine to pick flowers (with a *shinuy*) when they are alive and put them in a vase with water on your table. If you want to remove the dead flowers only because they are ugly, and you don't care if new flowers will grow, it will be permissible (with a *shinuy*, in a different manner than usual: cut the stems at a different length, change the instrument/ cut them manually, etc.). Take care to remove the dead flowers (or dead leaves) in an area that is dead. However, if you ALSO want new flowers to grow, it is problematic to deadhead any type of flower.



## Weeds

**Q:** I have a newly planted garden. Weeds from the nursery have really enjoyed the fertilizer and compost. Can I remove them to protect the plant? These are not the kind of weeds you can cut at soil surface as they will just grow back stronger.

**A:** It is better to cut it above the surface, spray it, or remove it in a different way. If there is no other possibility, and you can't do all the above, AND if you don't remove the weeds your plant will die—you may uproot the weeds during *shemita*. ■



# V'ten Tal U'matar For Those Returning Abroad In The Fall

**Question:** I am in my second year in Israel but have to go back permanently soon, before Dec 4. I started saying “v'ten tal u'matar” (=vtum) on 7 [Mar]Cheshvan. Should I have? Should I stop now, when I get back to chutz la'aretz, or not at all?

**Answer:** The saying of vtum was instituted by the Rabbis according to the needs for rain of their time's major Jewish communities. The whole Diaspora follows Bavel's needs, which comes out on Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup>. The Rosh (*Shut* 4:10) felt that regions that require rain at other times should be able to add vtum as appropriate. The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 117:2 – see *Beit*

*Yosef* ad loc.) agrees in principle, but not in practice because of *minhag*. Therefore, someone from a place that needs rain earlier should not ask for rain, but if he does, it is unclear if he must repeat *Shemoneh Esrei* (see Shulchan Aruch and Rama *ibid.*). Probably, your home abroad can use rain all year long, in which case saying it is not so bad.

The Mishna Berura (117:5) cites two opinions on the questions of a *ben Eretz Yisrael* visiting abroad and a *ben chutz la'aretz* visiting Israel asking for rain in the interim period. In broad terms, the Birkei Yosef (OC 117:5) says that one follows the practice of the place he is at; the Pri Chadash (OC 117:2) says that one who is returning that year should follow his home. Regarding an Israeli abroad at this time, we wrote (*Living the Halachic Process*, II, A-11; see sources there) that it is, in most cases, safest to ask for rain in *Shomeiah Tefilla* (cited in the name of Rav Auerbach and Rav Elyashiv and recommended in *Yalkut Yosef*). The fundamentally stronger position is to start reciting abroad based on his needs during the year.

Regarding our case, it would follow that while the Birkei Yosef would have you start vtum, the Pri Chadash, as the Pri Megadim (MZ 1) and Mishna Berura (*ibid.*) understand, would not have because you will not feel the effects of the fall's rain at home.

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However, some point out that the Pri Chadash mentioned only an Israeli abroad, and perhaps the Pri Chadash could endorse you starting on 7 Cheshvan. B'tzel Hachochma (I:62) argues that visitors can also benefit from early-season rain, as expectations for a future good crop can lower prices now. The Birkei Yosef (ibid.), in explaining why a *ben chutz la'aretz* in *Eretz Yisrael* should start early, argues there are short-term water needs besides crops. (It is questionable whether this applies nowadays, when there are rarely immediate water shortages affected by November rain.) Furthermore, argues B'tzel Hachochma, if the rainy season in Israel is even a few weeks late, special prayers and fasts can be called; since visitors should take part, *vtum* is appropriate. According to this approach, a variety of combination of needs and connection to Israeli rain make it appropriate to pray for it – a *ben Eretz Yisrael* abroad, due to later benefit; or a *ben chutz la'aretz* presently in Israel, based on minor present benefit. One can suggest that you are a little more fit to say *vtum* than the average visitor since your status quo in regards to rain is like that of a *ben Eretz Yisrael*, based on last year, until you leave. The counter-claim is that this status lapses over the summer.

On the other hand, Be'er Moshe (VII, p. 196-202) argues against someone like you

starting, based on the following factor. The Birkei Yosef (ibid. 6), who usually goes by where one is, says that an Israeli who started asking for rain before his trip should continue because stopping looks ridiculous. Here, since the consensus is that once you leave, you, as a *ben chutz la'aretz* in *chutz la'aretz*, should not recite until Dec. 4. Therefore, you should not have started based on weak need only to distastefully stop. On the other hand, once you did start, with some logic, you should continue.

In short, we would have suggested for you to start saying *vtum* in *Shomeiah Tefilla*, which is safe according to all approaches (as then you ask, but informally). What you did was reasonable, and you can continue until you leave. ■

*Eretz Hemdah has begun a participatory Zoom class - "Behind the Scenes with the Vebbe Rebbe" - an analytical look at the sources, methodology, and considerations behind our rulings, with Rav Daniel Mann. Contact info@eretzhemdah.org to join.*

## Having a dispute?



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# TOWARDS MEANINGFUL

## TEFILLA

BY REBBETZIN ZEMIRA OZAROWSKI

Director of OU Israel L'Ayla Women's Initiative



### שמע קולנו

We have finally arrived at שמע קולינו, the final bracha of the middle section of the Shemoneh Esrei, the section of the בקשות (requests). The **Shulchan Aruch** explains that this bracha is כוללת כל הבקשות, it's the conclusion of all of the many requests we just made. In this bracha, we ask Hashem to please listen and accept all of the בקשות we just requested of Him.

שמע קולנו ה' אלקינו, חוס ורחם עלינו וקבל ברחמים ובצדון את תפלתנו

*Listen to our voices, Hashem our G-d, have mercy on us and accept our Tefillot with mercy and willingness*

The מביט explains that we specifically say שמע קולנו that Hashem should listen to our voices (and not שמע תפילתנו, listen to our Tefillot). Even if we haven't had proper Kavana in our Tefillot, we ask Hashem to please at least listen to our voice, to the sound of our Tefilla. Along the same lines, the חפץ חיים writes that when a person davens, it's important that he cry out. In Mitzrayim, it says that Bnei Yisrael cried

out to Hashem and then וישמע ה' את קולינו - It doesn't say He listened to our Tefillot, it says He listened to our voices, to our cries. He says that we learn from here that – כי האדם נענה יותר כאשר הוא משוע להקב"ה שערי דמעה לא ננעלו – a person is answered more when he cries out to Hakadosh Baurch Hu. The gate of tears is never locked!

כי קל שמע תפלות ותחנונים אִתָּה

*For you, Hashem, listen to Tefillot and Tachananim*

There are two types of prayer – the תפילות, the set words of prayer that Chazal wrote for us, and the תחנונים, the personal kavanot that we insert into each bracha, in which we beg Hashem for what we need on a personal level. We ask that Hashem listen to both.

ומלפניך מלכנו ריקם אל תשיבנו

*And from before You, our King, do not return us empty-handed*

The **Avudraham** explains that we ask that even if we are not zocheh that Hashem will grant us our requests 100%, at the very least, don't turn us away completely empty-handed. In a similar vein, the **Chofetz Chaim** says that sometimes one's Tefillot are accepted immediately, sometimes it might take a few days or weeks, and sometimes it can even take years, but one's

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Tefillot never go unanswered.

When we get to this point of the bracha, we stop and we insert our own personal Tefillot. The **Shulchan Aruch** writes (based on **Gemara Avoda Zara 8a**) "ובשומע" תפלה יכול לשאול כל צרכיו" – that one can ask for all of his personal needs in this Tefilla. **Rav Yonatan Eibeshitz** beautifully writes that we should daven to Hashem for whatever is on our mind, it doesn't matter how small it is. כללו של דבר – אין דבר מה שרצונו לעשות בו. – The rule of thumb is – whatever you want to accomplish that day, you should always daven for Hashem to make you succeed. He says it's important that we daven in our own words even if we can't write a beautiful Tefilla and we struggle for the right words – "הוא חביב לפני הקבה כאילו הרבה להתפלל בלשון" – these heartfelt words are as beloved to Hashem as if they were written in the most beautiful language. Ideally, these requests should be said in Hebrew, but if necessary English is okay too. He says that often when we're davening, since we say the same thing every day, we end up daydreaming as we're davening. But here, since we have to think each day and decide what to say, we will obviously have kavana and so what will result is a תפילה גמורה, a tefilla which comes from the depths of the heart. Another point that he makes is that when we start off our morning contemplating the day ahead of us and thinking of all the things we need Hashem to help us with, we begin to internalize the fact that we cannot do anything without Hashem's help.



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The (91:42) puts a caveat that we should be careful not to go overboard – if it's going to be very long, then wait till the end of the Shemoneh Esrei to add those Tefillot. We don't want to lose track of our Tefilla. Additionally, the **Aruch Hashulchan (OC 119)** writes that we need to be careful not to make a set nusach to add into *Shema koleinu*. We need to make sure to change that personal Tefilla every day so that it does not become a standard part of our Tefilla. Obviously, there are overarching things we need to ask Hashem for all the time – continued health, parnassa, shalom bayit etc. – but we should use this time to ask for specific request for the coming day. And daven for everything else, even in a set nusach, after Shemoneh Esrei.

*continued on next page...*

כִּי אַתָּה שֹׁמֵעַ תְּפִלַּת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרַחֲמִים.

*Because You listen to the Tefillot of Your nation Israel with mercy*

The *מביט* explains that we say that at the end of the Tefilla – Hashem, even those Tefillot which were completely lip service and with no kavana, please through your great *rachamim*, listen to them anyway because you know that we lack the ability to daven with true kavana.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', שֹׁמֵעַ תְּפִלָּה

*Blessed is Hashem who listens to a Tefilla*

The conclusion of this bracha is written in the singular – *Hashem listens to a Tefilla*. We know that Hashem listens to many, many tefillot from Jews around the world, so why is it written in the singular? The **Yalkut**

**Katan** suggests a beautiful answer. When the Jewish people daven, we don't generally find that the minyanim from around the world all daven at the exact same time. Each one davens at their own time. But what happens? After the last minyan finishes davening, a *Malach* gathers all of the Tefillot from shuls around the world and combines them together into one crown and places it on the head of HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Metaphorically this means that he blends all of our Tefillot together and hands Hashem one beautiful combined Tefilla of all of Klal Yisrael together.

It is our hope that by doing this we add extra *koach* and efficacy to our Tefillot, hopefully causing us to be *Zocheh* that Hashem answer our Tefillot both individually and collectively. ■

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## What is Cosmetic?

Last time we saw Rav Elyashiv's decision that preimplantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) is permitted in cases of medical need, but is not allowed for cosmetic reasons. This suggests that when we fight, treat and prevent disease we become partners with God. However, using PGD for cosmetic purposes is forbidden. The rationale for this position is that we would decide which traits are desirable and which are undesirable, and this is extremely close to playing God. The Sages were interested in allowing access to medical treatment in order to promote health and healthy families. They did not want us to use medical advances in a reckless and careless manner.

However, this simple distinction and division is not as simple as it initially appears to be. Let us consider the following example; should we permit a couple to undergo PGD in order not to have a child who is a carrier of a genetic condition.

To explain the question, we must present a concise explanation of genetics. Genes are the map that determines how we will develop into human beings, which traits we will carry, what diseases and what genetic abnormalities. Everyone carries a

significant number of genetic abnormalities but, generally, these have no clinical significance. We can be carriers of recessive genetic diseases which will only express themselves as an actual disease if we marry someone who carries the same recessive genetic disease. In such a case, if both parents pass on the defective gene the child will be affected with the genetic disease, which could be a serious and even fatal condition.

Other genetic diseases are dominant, and are so "powerful" that one cannot be a carrier, if you have the defective gene you are ill with the disease. In such a case it is irrelevant who you marry, your children have a 50% chance of inheriting the disease and being sick.

Being a carrier in of itself is not a genetic disease. A couple marry and one of them is a carrier for Tay Sachs. Since the other spouse is not a carrier, their children will not be ill, but they may be carriers. The couple would like to undergo PGD to ensure that none of their children carry the disease. Is this permitted? In other words, is this case considered a medical need or is it cosmetic? The PGD does not eradicate a disease, and so appears to be cosmetic. On the other hand, the condition is a medical one and so it could be classified as a medical need. More on this next week. ■



# TORAH 4 TEENS

## BY TEENS

NCSY ISRAEL



**Shlomo Rayman**  
Beit Shemesh  
Chapter Director

### Holy Sleep

When I was a teenager I overslept a lot. It wasn't that I had a hard time waking up, my problem was that I always went back to sleep.

Yaakov Avinu unknowingly slept in the place of the future Beit Hamikdash. He had a prophetic dream, seeing angels and hearing from God. Suddenly, he woke up exclaiming his cluelessness that God was in this place! He became full of fear, sleeping in the house of God, at the gates to heaven.

The very next verse says he woke up in the morning. Does this imply that he went back to sleep? How could he sleep in such a holy place?

Perhaps there is something deeper going on here. Rav Hirsch comments that Yaakov

didn't just realize that he was in a holy place, he realized that a place down here on earth has the capacity to be holy. God isn't just in the heavens, we can serve him in this physical world. In Yaakov's dream God promises that he will be with him in *everything* he does. Yaakov internalizes this with his prayer the next morning, recognizing that the bread he eats and clothing he wears is directly from God.

It is no coincidence that the reward for *oneg shabbat*, eating and sleeping on our holiest day, is to receive the reward promised to Yaakov in this very dream. This episode introduced the idea that eating, and dare I suggest sleeping, have tremendous potential religious value. May our sleep be filled with gratitude for the wonderful gift that it is, and infused with purpose, gathering strength to continue serving God in all of our ways.



**Mordechai Grossman**  
Beit Shemesh,  
10th Grade

### Finding light in the dark

"וישק יעקב לרחל וישא את קולו ויבך"

Rashi explains that Yaakov cried because he was going to Rachel empty handed after all of his possessions were stolen by his nephew Eliphaz. At the same time,

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Eliphaz who was on a mission to kill Yaakov at the request of his father, Esav. However, because Eliphaz was a student of Yitzchak, he wasn't able to go through with the murder. When Eliphaz reached Yaakov, he said to him "what should I do about my father's command?" Yaakov replied "take my possessions, because a poor person is considered like a dead person". As a result, Eliphaz was able to keep his father's command by "killing" Yaakov.

Using this extreme example, Rav Chaim Shmulevitz expressed the great contrast of good and evil that is found within every person, adding that even Torah learning cannot necessarily save someone unless his intentions are pure. As it says in Hoshea, "for the ways of HaShem are straight, and the righteous will walk in them and the rebellious will stumble in them". Another example of this is brought in the Gemara which compares Torah to a powerful drug - if it is used properly it will bring life, if not, it will be like a deathly poison.

Similarly, the Vilna Gaon writes that Torah represents water and causes anything that it comes across to grow - whether for good or bad. He explains that both plants used for medicine and those which are poisonous all grow when watered. So too, Torah causes whatever is in the heart to grow, whether for good or bad. Shabbat Shalom! ■

*NCSY Israel is the premier organization in Israel, dedicated to connect, inspire, empower, and help teen olim with "Klita" to the Land of Israel by encouraging passionate Judaism through Torah and Tradition. Find out more at [israel.ncsy.org](http://israel.ncsy.org)*

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# Real Life Rescues



## Becoming a Lifesaving Shepherd

23-year-old Netanel Yeloz lives with his wife in a farming cooperative in Samaria called Havat Yetaidot. He and his wife care for 500 sheep together with three other families from their cooperative, which is located in the bloc of towns near Shiloh. As a person who has spent most of his life living in a rural area where ambulance response times are long, Netanel is no stranger to having to deal with medical emergencies on his own for an elongated period of time, that is why he chose to get training and become a volunteer EMT with United Hatzalah three years ago.

Netanel's journey to becoming a trained first responder started when he was 18-years-old. "I was horseback riding with a friend of mine. I remember it was a month before my friend's wedding. We had strapped on our saddles and double-checked everything, but something must have been off with his saddle. As I rode ahead, my friend fell behind. When I looked back for him I couldn't see him anywhere. Suddenly, the horse turned up, without a saddle and without my friend."

Netanel rushed to the rescue. "I rode straight back on the path we had come and it took me a few minutes but I found him lying on the ground unresponsive. I didn't know what to do. I started calling his name and slapping his face but there was no response. I called for help, but knowing that it would take a long time, I thought I had to start CPR. I didn't know exactly what to do, but I knew the basics. It turns out I was completely wrong. My friend wasn't unconscious because his heart stopped. He still had a pulse and was breathing but he was knocked out because he had hit his head. I was doing CPR on a man with a pulse and doing more damage than good to my friend."

Netanel's friend was taken to the hospital after the ambulance arrived and made it to his own wedding. "When the ambulance arrived they quickly assessed what had happened. I knew then that I had to learn emergency medicine so that in the future I would know what to do properly and how to really help."

Netanel has been volunteering as an EMT for three years and has responded to hundreds of medical emergencies and has saved dozens of lives. He was one of the first responders at the scene in Meron during the disaster this past Lag Ba'omer and attributes all of his lifesaving efforts to his desire to be there for others and help when no one else can.



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