

ב"ה

# Torah Tidbits

ISSUE 1494 DEC 3<sup>RD</sup> '22 ט' כסלו תשפ"ג

פרשת ויצא

PARSHAT VAYEITZEI

OU  
ישראל

ויחלם והנה שלם  
מצב ארצה וראשו  
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בראשית כח"יב



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Director of RCA Israel Region  
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The Labyrinth of Redemption  
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YERUSHALAYIM IN/OUT TIMES FOR SHABBAT PARSHAT VAYEITZEI  
CANDLES 3:59PM • HAVDALA 5:15PM • RABBEINU TAM 5:52PM

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## Kiddush Levana - Kislev

7 Days After Molad - 8 Kislev/Wed. night Dec. 1

Last Opportunity to Say Kiddush Levana until - 14 Kislev/ Wed. night Dec. 7 , all night

# CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



## OTHER Z'MANIM



### JERUSALEM

Ranges 11 days Wed - Shabbat  
Nov. 30 - Dec. 10/6 - 16 Kislev

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	<b>5:26 - 5:33</b>
Sunrise	<b>6:20 - 6:28</b>
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	<b>8:54 - 9:00</b>
Magen Avraham	<b>8:15 - 8:21</b>
Sof Zman Tefila	<b>9:45 - 9:50</b>
(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanaya)	
Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	<b>11:27 - 11:31</b>
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	<b>11:57 - 12:01</b>
Plag Mincha	<b>3:30 - 3:32</b>
Sunset (Including Elevation)	<b>4:40</b>



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CANDLES	VAYEITZEI	HAVDALA	VAYISHLACH	
			Candles	Havdala
<b>3:59</b>	Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	<b>5:15</b>	4:00	5:16
<b>4:17</b>	Aza area (Netivot, S'derot, Et al)	<b>5:18</b>	4:18	5:19
<b>4:18</b>	Beit Shemesh / RBS	<b>5:16</b>	4:18	5:17
<b>4:15</b>	Gush Etzion	<b>5:15</b>	4:16	5:16
<b>4:15</b>	Raanana / Tel Mond / Herzliya / K. Saba	<b>5:15</b>	4:15	5:16
<b>4:15</b>	Modi'in / Chashmona'im	<b>5:15</b>	4:15	5:16
<b>4:15</b>	Netanya	<b>5:15</b>	4:15	5:16
<b>4:17</b>	Be'er Sheva	<b>5:17</b>	4:18	5:18
<b>4:16</b>	Rehovot	<b>5:16</b>	4:18	5:17
<b>3:59</b>	Petach Tikva	<b>5:15</b>	4:00	5:16
<b>4:14</b>	Ginot Shomron	<b>5:14</b>	4:14	5:15
<b>4:03</b>	Haifa / Zichron	<b>5:14</b>	4:03	5:15
<b>4:13</b>	Gush Shiloh	<b>5:14</b>	4:14	5:15
<b>4:16</b>	Tel Aviv / Giv'at Shmuel	<b>5:16</b>	4:16	5:17
<b>4:14</b>	Giv'at Ze'ev	<b>5:15</b>	4:15	5:16
<b>4:15</b>	Chevron / Kiryat Arba	<b>5:16</b>	4:16	5:17
<b>4:15</b>	Ashkelon	<b>5:16</b>	4:18	5:18
<b>4:16</b>	Yad Binyamin	<b>5:16</b>	4:16	5:17
<b>4:06</b>	Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden	<b>5:11</b>	4:06	5:12
<b>4:11</b>	Golan	<b>5:11</b>	4:11	5:12

**Rabbeinu Tam (J'lem) - 5:52PM • next week - 5:53pm**

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



Earlier this week I received an email from one of our Torah Tidbits readers thanking us for this publication.

As he shared, “There is no politics, just *ahavat Yisrael*.” He went on to share that despite the positive stories I’ve shared about Israeli youth, the reality is quite difficult, and he asked that I address this issue.

Over the years I have come to appreciate the vantage point I am able to have in my role at the OU which gives me a front row seat to witness the beauty of *Am Yisrael*. It is from this perspective that I write my column each week, expressing the appreciation I feel in my heart with the hope that it provides inspiration, hope and encouragement to readers. While it is true that the world can be grim and we have our work cut out for us, I make an effort to find moments of beauty – a value I learned years ago from my *rebbe*, Rav Mordechai Eliyahu z”l.

Rav Eliyahu taught me that a person has a choice in how they respond to situations in life. Those who respond with an attitude of “חצי כוס מלאה,” a “*cup half full*,” are wise. This idea can be found in the *rashei tevot* of this very phrase, “חצי כוס מלאה”, spelling the word “חכמ.” After all, the concept of gratitude and positivity is woven into the fabric of every Jew as we begin each day with the words, “*Modeh Ani Lefanecha*.”

Striving to live my life with this guiding value, I feel compelled to share moments

which demonstrate the beauty of *Am Yisrael* with readers. And while I could fill the pages of Torah Tidbits from cover to cover with our triumphs, perhaps what highlights our qualities as *Bnei Yisrael* best is our ability to see light within the darkness.

This past week *Am Yisrael* was once again devastated by two *pigu'im* that took the lives of Aryeh Shechopek, a 16-year-old Canadian *oleh*, and Tadasa Tashume Ben Ma’ada, a 50-year-old Ethiopian *oleh* who left behind a wife and six children. The attack impacted many, including some of OU Israel’s *Bnot Sherut* who were on their way to the *Makom Baleyv* OU Youth Center in *Beit Shemesh* - Naomi, Shira and Hodayah.

Naomi is the daughter of my good friend, Rabbi Uri Pilichowski and his wife Aliza, and I had the *zechut* to speak with Naomi and Shira in my office this week. It was humbling to hear their reflections of what transpired. Notably, they spent much of our time together sharing the many *nissim* that took place which allowed them to be at a far enough distance from the explosion. Naomi and Shira are not alone in publicizing the *Yad HaShem* that was apparent on Wednesday morning. Countless articles and messages have been shared by those present whose lives have been spared, highlighting the *miracle* that took place at the Ramot Junction bus stop, in which the bomb detonated just seconds after a bus that was filled with passengers pulled away.

With the pain of the Shechopek and Ben

Ma'ada families weighing on my heart, I found myself spending late hours at the Zula this week. I simply couldn't pull myself away. Teens swarmed the hallways of the building, connecting with one another and their *madrichim* late into the night. Spending their time productively and out of harm's way, I saw the beauty of *Am Yisrael*. Despite the late hour and the heavy hearts, staff members stayed with the teens, offering support, guidance and comfort.

When reflecting on what we've been able to build at the Zula, which is funded by donations from Jews within Israel and around the world, teens continue to find a place of refuge in which to grow. The Zula is just one of many reminders that when members of *Am Yisrael* are in need, distance is no object. However, with our successes thus far, there is still much work to be done and we are always in need of more resources to fill the gaps for teens looking for stability. In times when I feel overwhelmed by the magnitude of need that our youth face, I am comforted knowing that as members of *Klal Yisrael*, there will always be those willing to do their part to make this world – and our future – brighter.

This week, the Zula reminded me of the immense power of kindness, providing me with hope for the future of *Am Yisrael*. It was with this thought that I addressed the participants at our OU Israel Center annual Thanksgiving meal. As *Klal Yisrael*, we are an *Am Levadad Yishkon*, and within the borders of *Eretz Yisrael* we feel this verse acutely - especially in times of national sorrow. Yet as I saw in the brimming hallways of

the Zula, the *chesed* of *Klal Yisrael* remains unchanged despite the world around us. If anything, it reaches new heights as we redouble our efforts in the merit of the *neshamot* tragically taken from us.

May *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* bless us with a week of peace, safety and healing. May the *neshamot* of Aryeh and Tadasa Tashume have an *aliyah* in *Shamayim*, and those injured have a *refuah shelaima*. May we find the strength to see the world around us with a "חצי כוס מלאה" and experience the *Yad HaShem* in our lives.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



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

nisht on shabbos...



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## FROM THE DESK OF RABBI MOSHE HAUER



OU Executive Vice President

# Vayeitzei – Effective Criticism

All of us occasionally find ourselves in situations where we may need to offer constructive criticism. Yet, effective and constructive criticism is an art form. Indeed, the Talmud (Eruchin 16b) notes that Rabbi Tarfon expressed doubt that any one of his contemporaries could properly accept criticism, while Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya questioned if anyone could deliver criticism respectfully and without generating shame (see Rashi there).

It is therefore noteworthy how in our Parsha (29:4) the usually reticent Yaakov Avinu arrives in Charan, meets several of the locals and almost immediately begins to criticize them for their work ethic. Even stranger, they seem to have no problem with it at all. How did Yaakov accomplish this?

One of the great post-Holocaust rebuilders of Judaism was Rabbi Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman, zt”l, the Ponevezher Rav. He was passionately dedicated to rebuilding in Israel the destroyed yeshivas of Lithuania, seeing it as his mission and as the charge he had received from his saintly teacher, the Chafetz Chaim. Remarkably, he earned the love and admiration of the broader Israeli

leadership and society while serving as one of the chief architects of the emerging Haredi world.

The Rav highlighted that when Yaakov addressed the locals, he opened with one critical word, *achai*, “my brothers.” Yaakov was able to convey a true and genuine feeling of care and kinship that enabled him to address the other constructively.

For the Ponevezher Rav this was not just a thought on the Parsha. He would invariably begin his public speeches and private conversations in the way of Yaakov, *achim yekarim, mein ty’ere breiderlach*, “my dear brothers...” He succeeded in conveying his respect and love for others, and they saw that it was genuine, opening the door to real communication and connection.

This is a model for all of us to emulate in our personal, professional, and communal relationships. ■

In loving memory of our beloved mother

**Rachel Gutman a”h**

**רחל בת יצחק הלוי ע”ה**

אשת חיל וחסד

May the Torah learning  
from this issue be לעילוי נשמתה

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# 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. As he leaves, he dreams 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 descendants. And that He will protect Yaakov and

Condolences to Rabbi Yaakov Zev  
upon the passing of his brother

**Eli Zev z"l**

אליעזר דוד בן הרב יחיאל מיכאל זאב ז"ל  
of Los Angeles, California

Torah Tidbits regrets the misinformation  
that appeared in last week's issue  
and wishes Rabbi Yaakov Zev  
חיים ארוכים עד מאה ועשרים

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

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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 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 Yissachar, followed by Zevulun. Rachel bears Yosef. Yaakov asks Lavan 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 Vayera (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.

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. Yaakov too has been unusually blessed in his breeding of flocks. 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 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.

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



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.

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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 Hashem. However, Hoshea assures the people that Hashem 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."

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.

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## A SHORT VORT | BY RABBI CHANOCH YERES

Rav, Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

As Yaakov is dreaming, G-d appears to him and blesses him. As G-d concludes his blessing, He says: והנה אנכי עמך ושומרתיך בכל אשר תלך והשיבתך אל האדמה הזאת כי לא אנטוך (כח:טו)

"And behold, I am with you, and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back into this land; for I will not leave you." (28:15)

The Sages of the Midrash point out that G-d responded in affirmative to all of Yaakov's requests with the exception of his request for sustenance. (BR 69). How could G-d ignore this basic request from Yaakov fleeing from his home?

The Dubno Magid (1741-1804) answers through a parable, in his Sefer "Ohel Yaakov". There was once a man who sent his son away to a distant land. He prepared all the necessary provisions for his son's travels including all the money needed for his expenses. Before the son began his journey, his father received word of impending dangers on the roads he plans to take. The father immediately decides to accompany his son on his journey to protect him from any obstacles on the way. As they began the journey together, the son asked his father how much money did the father allocate to his son for the trip. Whereas the father responded, now that I am with you and taking care of you, what is your need for money?

Similarly, here, perhaps Yaakov had a need to request sustenance but now that G-d assured him that "I will not leave you", there is no longer the need for G-d to address this issue. Shabbat Shalom



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BY RABBI DR. TZVI HERSH WEINREB

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# IN THE PARSHA

## Two Meanings of Maturity

How do you define “maturity”? The dictionary definition asserts that it is a state of being full-grown, ripe, or fully developed. But I think that the common man gives a subjective definition to maturity in one of two other ways.

Maturity, depending upon whether one tends to be idealistic or leans toward cynicism, seems to carry one of the following meanings:

Either one takes the position that maturity is associated with the wisdom gained from experience over time. From this point of view, the mature person is one who has learned from all that has happened to him and has developed, if not an infallible system that answers all questions, then at least an approach to life which is practical,

informed, and wise.

Or, one takes the position that maturity is the state reached when one realizes that his childhood dreams were just that: dreams, and no more. One who is mature has learned to abandon youthful ideals, surrender impractical hopes and plans, and settle for reality and its limitations.

Which definition of maturity is yours, dear reader? Is maturity associated with wisdom? Or is the mature person the one who has learned to live a practical and cautious life, without ideals and utopian dreams?

In this week’s Torah portion, *Parshat Vayetze* (Genesis 28:10-32:32:3), we have the opportunity to read about the maturation of our Patriarch, Jacob. The portion begins with a dream, a sublime dream. Toward the middle of the portion, Jacob dreams again, this time a very businesslike, down-to-earth, practical dream.

Jacob’s first dream, the sublime one,

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envisions a ladder firmly rooted into the earth but extending heavenwards. However one interprets it, and creative interpretations abound, it is a majestic glimpse of infinite possibilities, of ideals of immense significance. If anything, it is a grand imaginative symbol of the relationship between man and God, and of the former's potential to connect with the latter.

But then, Jacob spends his years working for his uncle, Laban. He is busy with mundane affairs; in his own words, "scorched by heat all day, and freezing at night." He is busy, nay preoccupied, with business affairs, with profit, with practical material matters.

And he dreams again. But the second time, his dream is far from sublime. He sees that "the he-goats mating with the flock were streaked, speckled, and mottled." Things are going his way in the world of sheep-raising. Every trace of another higher world is missing.

If Jacob's second dream would end at this point, we could say that he matured in the second, cynical, sense. His initial dream was a lofty one; his subsequent dream, a come-down. His vision was diminished, from a glimpse of Heaven to earthly things.

But his second dream does not end with

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his vision of goats, speckled or otherwise. Rather, an angel appears to him and says that he, the angel, has observed Jacob's dream and has "noted all that Laban has been doing to you." The angel in the dream is the better part of Jacob himself, the part that realizes that Laban's environment has contaminated his dreams.

The angel in the dream then goes on to say that he represents the God of Bethel and that it is time for Jacob to "leave this land and return to his native land." It is time for him to become mature in the first sense. It is time for him to reclaim his first dream and to do all that he can to make that dream real.

Jacob reaches true maturity when he decides not to yield to the temptation to compromise upon his original dream. When he realizes that his dreams are not what they once were and that he has lost his youthful vision of a ladder connecting heaven and earth, he does not merely settle for his new reality.

Rather, he learns, and this lesson is

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imparted to him by God Himself, that one must not surrender to mundane dreams, abandoning old ideals. He learns that he can return to the dream of his youth. And he learns not only that he can go home again, but that he must go home again.

There is, of course, another lesson that he learns, and this is an eternal lesson for the Jewish people. The dreams of our national youth, the visions of our biblical heroes and of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs, can only be achieved in the Land of Israel. The dreams of the Diaspora are apt to be mundane, short-sighted, and a bit selfish. The dreams of the Land of Israel are noble dreams, exalted dreams, and dreams which ultimately connect us to heaven. Indeed, the dreams of Israel ideally connect all of the earth's inhabitants to their Father in Heaven.

We can revisit the dreams of our youth. We can go home again. The Land of Israel is the land of our dreams, and it is home. This is one lesson learned from this week's Torah portion: a lesson about being a Jew, and a lesson about true maturity. ■

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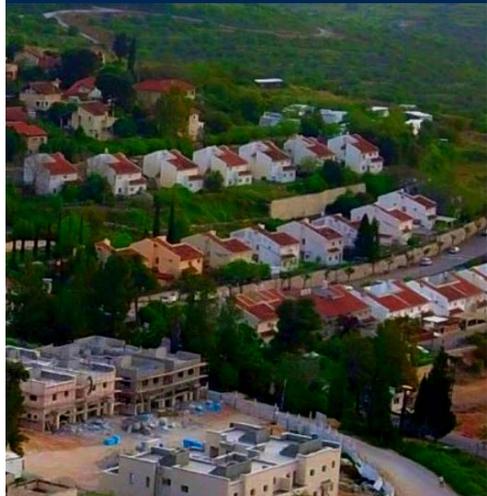
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# COVENANT & CONVERSATION

Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from  
**RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS ZT"l**  
Former Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew  
Congregations of the Commonwealth

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## How the Light Gets In

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

The answer, it seems to me, is intimated in the beginning of this *parsha*. Jacob was in the middle of a journey from one danger to another. He had left home because Esau had vowed to kill him when Isaac died. He was about to enter the household of his

uncle Laban, which would itself present other dangers. Far from home, alone, he was at a point of maximum vulnerability. The sun set. Night fell. Jacob lay down to sleep, and then saw this majestic vision:

He dreamed and, look, there was a ladder set on the earth, with its top reaching heaven; and look, angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And look, the Lord stood beside him and said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread forth to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed through you and through your offspring. And look, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place – and I did not know it!" And he was afraid, and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." (Gen. 28:12–17)

Note the fourfold "and look," in Hebrew *vehinei*, an expression of surprise. Nothing has prepared Jacob for this encounter, a

point emphasized in his own words when he says, “the Lord is in this place – and I did not know it.” The very verb used at the beginning of the passage, “He came upon a place,” in Hebrew *vayifga bamakom*, also means an unexpected encounter. Later, in rabbinic Hebrew, the word *haMakom*, “the Place,” came to mean “God.” Hence in a poetic way the phrase *vayifga bamakom* could be read as, “Jacob happened on, had an unexpected encounter with, God.”

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

Jacob thus became the father of the people who had their closest encounter with God in what Moses was later to describe as “the howling wasteland of a wilderness” (Deut. 32:10). Uniquely, Jews survived a whole series of exiles, and though at first they said, “How can we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?” (Ps. 137:4) they discovered that the *Shechina*, the Divine Presence, was still with them. Though they had lost

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everything else, they had not lost contact with God. They could still discover that “the Lord is in this place – and I did not know it!” Abraham gave Jews the courage to challenge the idols of the age. Isaac gave them the capacity for self-sacrifice. Moses taught them to be passionate fighters for justice. But Jacob gave them the knowledge that precisely when you feel most alone, God is still with you, giving you the courage to hope and the strength to dream.

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

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

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

Sometimes our deepest spiritual experiences come when we least expect them, when we are closest to despair. It is then that the masks we wear are stripped away. We are at our point of maximum vulnerability – and it is when we are most fully open to God that God is most fully open to us. “The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit” (Ps. 34:18). “My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart You, God, will not despise” (Ps. 51:17). God “heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds” (Ps. 147:3).

Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav used to say:

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

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

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

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

---

1 Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav, *Likkutei Maharanim* 2:46.

in ourselves, God never loses faith in us. And though we may feel utterly alone, we are not. God is there, beside us, within us, urging us to stand and move on, for there is a task to do that we have not yet done and that we were created to fulfill. A singer of our time<sup>2</sup> wrote, "There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in." The broken heart lets in the light of God, and becomes the gate of heaven. ■

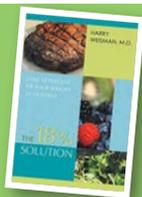
2 Leonard Cohen in "Anthem."

These weekly teachings from Rabbi Sacks zt"l are part of his 'Covenant & Conversation' series on the weekly Torah teaching. With thanks to the Schimmel Family for their generous sponsorship, dedicated in loving memory of Harry (Chaim) Schimmel. Visit [www.RabbiSacks.org](http://www.RabbiSacks.org) for more.

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Faculty, OU Israel Center

# THE PROPHETS

Rabbi Winkler's popular Jewish History lectures can be viewed by visiting the OU Israel Video archive: <https://www.ouisrael.org/video-library>

**S** efer Hoshe'a, the first book of the Trei Asar, the twelve "minor" prophets, is a collection of prophecies replete with condemnation and criticism of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Throughout its fourteen chapters, the navi Hoshe'a focuses upon the faithlessness of "Efrayim", and her abandonment of Hashem. In order to better understand the message of this book and, therefore, this week's haftarah, we should understand the specific time and the historical events that took place during this era.

Hoshe'a prophesied during the reign of Yerov'am ben Yo'ash (Yerov'am II) who ruled over the Northern Kingdom for 41 years. Like his namesake, Yerov'am angered Hashem, following the idolatrous and corrupt ways of his predecessor. Nonetheless, the text describes his military victories, through which he succeeded in restoring Israel's original northern border. Her military successes and the lengthy reign of

her king, allowed Efrayim to believe that the era of stability and security was proof enough that the prophet's claim of Hashem's anger of their corrupt behavior and devotion to false gods, was unfounded.

Our haftarah opens with the nation's claim that deception and falsehood was part of our very past. The Malbim offers a unique approach to understanding the words of Hoshe'a and explains that these opening verses reflect the peoples' argument against the navi's criticism. Denying that they were guilty of dishonesty, they claimed that deception was part of Israel's past: Ya'akov was forced to escape to Aram due to his deception and he was then deceived by Lavan and, despite this, he still continued to "protect" the flocks he guarded. Likewise, they argued that Hoshe'a's criticism of their idolatrous worship of the "calves" (agalim") was also untrue since it was a navi who was sent by Hashem to release the nation from Egypt and a navi, who, despite their worship of the golden calf, "protected" them from punishment! Remarkably, the people were telling Hoshe'a that it was, therefore, his responsibility to defend them before G-d – not condemn them!!!

The navi rejects their arguments, reminding them that their "powerful" king had turned to

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idols only because of his fear that, were the people to return to worship Hashem, they would rebel against him, joining the Southern Kingdom in their worship of Hashem in the Bet HaMikdash, just as Yerov'am I had feared years earlier. Hoshe'a fills his message with the warnings of the coming disasters that would befall the Kingdom if they do not cease their idolatrous ways. Powerfully, the prophet also brings up their past history, reminding the nation of all the kindnesses that G-d had done for them and how they had paid back those favors by forgetting His love and abandoning His worship.

Perhaps more than any other theme, Hoshe'a – throughout his sefer – calls out Israel for her lack of gratitude to G-d and appreciation for what He had done for them. He resorts to bringing up the past when speaking to the sinful nation in the hope that they would finally be able to remember what they owe their Heavenly Father and, as a result, return to Him.

The harsh words of the prophet's message do not complete his Sefer. On the contrary, the final message of the haftarah – and Hoshe'a's book - is one of comfort and promise. The book - replete with warning, criticism and reproach of the nation - closes, fittingly, with a call for repentance and with the promise of G-d's eventual return to His people.

It is this “coda” that opens the haftarah that precedes Yom Kippur. Indeed, it is that cry “Shuva!”, that gives the title to that Shabbat itself. ■




**Mazal Tov to**  
**Akiva & Rivkah Ariel and family**  
 on the birth of their son




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## Constant Gratitude

וַתְּהַר עוֹד וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ יְהוּדָה...  
קְרָאָהּ שְׁמוֹ יְהוּדָה...

*And she conceived again and bore a son, and she said, "This time, I will thank Hashem! Therefore, she named him Yehuda..." (Bereshit 29:35).*

Leah names her fourth child "Yehuda" (which means "thanks") to encapsulate her appreciation for having given birth to a fourth son.

The Gemara in Berachot (7:) states as follows:

ואמר רב יוחנן משום רבי שמעון בר יוחי מיום שברא הקב"ה את עולמו לא היה אדם שהודה להקב"ה עד שבאתה לאה והודוה שנאמר "הפעם אודה את ה'".

*Rav Yochanan in the name of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai said: from the day God created the world no one expressed gratitude to Hashem until Leah did so as is stated: "This time I will thank Hashem."*

This is a somewhat puzzling statement. Is it possible that Adam who is credited with composing *mizmor shir l'yom HaShabbat, tov l'nodot l'Hashem*, did not thank God? Avraham and Yitzhak never expressed appreciation to Hashem? Could it be that Leah was the first human being to truly thank Hashem?

There are several explanations offered. In

the past we offered the following explanation. The *avot* certainly praised and thanked Hashem, but they lived a life of tremendous miracles, so their praise may not be viewed as on the highest level of *hoda'a*. Leah, on the other hand, gave birth to Yehuda in the usual, natural childbirth. Thousands of babies are born each day. What was the great miracle of Yehuda's birth? It was natural. No great miracle occurred. Leah recognized Hashem's greatness and kindness and thanked Him for what most of us view as natural. Leah was the first to thank Hashem for something **natural**, recognizing that there's nothing natural about it. To appreciate what appears mundane is often a great miracle performed by Hashem on our behalf (See Shalom Rav, Koren Press).

In his sefer *Lehitaneg Betaanugim* Rav Greenboim offers an alternative important insight based on the following story. Rav Shalom Messas, the Rav of Jerusalem was once invited to speak in a Yeshiva. After completing his shiur, he began descending the staircase and accidentally dropped his cane. Several students jumped to pick up and return the cane to the elderly Rav. Rav Messas refused and easily walked down the stairs without his cane. The students were shocked how well he walked without his cane and asked why he used it since it did not appear that he required the assistance of the cane.

The Rav explained that ten years earlier he underwent a dangerous surgical

procedure, and it was not clear whether or not he would be able to walk again. After months of physical therapy, miraculously, he was totally cured and able to walk on his own. In order to express his gratitude to Hashem, he decided to use a cane, although not necessary, so that he would constantly be reminded of the grace of God, who miraculously healed him.

Adam and others likely praised and thanked God. They may have done so, but it was on occasion. Leah, however, was the first to call her son Yehuda – a name that would serve as a **constant** reminder to be thankful for the blessings she received. It is not enough to simply say “thank you” once in a while. We ought to constantly express our gratitude. May we emulate Leah’s attitude and **constantly** offer our appreciation. ■

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## Remarkable Rebuke

Yaakov Avinu's arrival in Charan is recounted in great detail. The Torah describes how Yaakov sees 3 flocks of sheep resting near the well as their shepherds wait nearby. He strikes up a conversation with the shepherds asking them where they are from, whether they know Lavan and then, it seems he rebukes them, "*Hen od hayom gandol, lo eit hei-asef hamikneh, hashku hatzon u'lechure'u* – But it still the middle of the day, it's not yet time to bring the livestock together. Why not water the sheep and go on grazing?" (*Bereisheet 29;7*) It is a curious exchange. How does Yaakov, a stranger to the region, have the impudence to offer reproach to the local residents? More than a simple story, this section offers us a model for how and when to rebuke others.

The *Seforno* explains that a *tzadik* cannot tolerate any type of injustice. Yaakov, therefore, felt compelled to react to what appeared to him as the travesty of stealing from an employer. The *Malbim* qualifies this view as Yaakov first asks the shepherds, "From

where do you come?" (*Bereisheet 29;4*) He gives them the benefit of the doubt; if they have come from afar, they would need time to rest before continuing with their work. This is the first step before castigating others for their behavior. We must check the facts and clarify the situation.

Rav Kaminetzky, based on many *Rishonim*, notes that the key lies in the first word that Yaakov uses, "*achai* - my brothers." Yaakov Avinu shows warmth and affinity towards the shepherds. After establishing a rapport with them, they are more readily able to receive Yaakov's censure. Step two requires an understanding that comes from a place of love and concern, not from superiority. Indeed, before rebuking others, including family members and friends, we must ask ourselves, what is our motivation? Do our words express compassion and sensitivity or criticism and derision?

Rabbi Alpert, in *Lemudei Nissan*, shares the importance of building a relationship before admonishing others. He notes that Yaakov Avinu attempts to converse with the shepherds who respond rather curtly, clearly not interested in chatting with him. It is only after he asks about Lavan's welfare that they add more information, "*Vehinei*

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*Rachel bito ba'ah im hatzon* – here is his daughter Rachel, coming with the sheep.” (*Bereisheet 29:6*) Yaakov Avinu now realizes that they feel more open to connecting with him. Thus, he feels comfortable commenting, “It is still the middle of the day, not yet time to gather in the livestock.” Since the *passuk* does not state, “he said to them,” Rabbi Alpert suggests that Yaakov Avinu said the words out loud, as if talking to himself, so they would overhear. When they don’t respond, he becomes more direct and asks, “Why not water the sheep and go on grazing?” Yaakov Avinu begins his rebuke in a gentle and indirect way, so they don’t feel targeted or attacked. He allows them to respond, giving them a chance to save face. What a powerful tool in rebuking others, allowing the message to penetrate in an agreeable, manageable way. ■



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## Climb!

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

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

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

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

The Baal Shem Tov explained to the chasidim, “When I meditate in *Amidah*, many hidden things are revealed to me, but my consuming desire is to ascend to the level in the World Above which the *Zohar* calls ‘the Palace of the Bird’s Nest’ — the abode of the Mashiach. But I cannot reach that height unless I first stand you, my disciples, on each others’ shoulders.

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

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

As a refugee running from a brother who sought to kill him, Yaakov Avinu’s future is uncertain. With nowhere to go and no roof over his head, Yaakov experiences a Divine encounter on the Temple Mount: “And

Yaakov encountered the Place — and he slept there.”

וַיִּפְגַּע בַּמְקוֹם וַיִּלֶן שָׁם כִּי־בָא הַשָּׁמַשׁ

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

וַיִּחַלֵּם וְהִנֵּה סֹלָם מָצַב אֶרְצָה וְרֹאשׁוֹ מֵגִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיְמָה  
וְהִנֵּה מַלְאָכֵי אֱלֹקִים עֲלִים וְיֹרְדִים בּוֹ

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

(28:12)

“How awesome is this place!” cries Yaakov Avinu as he awakens from this encounter with the *Ribbono Shel Olam* at the location of the future Beis Hamikdash, the headquarters of *tefillah*. He is shocked to realize he had slept at the *שער השמים*, “gate of the Heavens”, where all prayers ascend to the World Above.

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

וַיִּפְגַּע בַּמְקוֹם: וְאִין פְּגִיעָה אֵלָּא תַפְלָה

“And Yaakov encountered the Place: the word ‘encounter’ always means prayer,

as it is said when Hashem spoke to Yirmiyahu Hanavi,

וְאֵתָה אֵל תִּתְפַּלֵּל בְּעַד הָעָם הַזֶּה וְאֵל תִּשָּׂא בְעַדָּם רְנָה

וְתַפְלָה וְאֵל תִּפְגַּע בּוֹ

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

Jewish mystical tradition frames our formal ‘encounter’ with God in *tefillah* as one of ascent, climbing through spiritual dimensions to the Supernal World. Indeed, Rebbe Yaakov ben Asher, the *Ba'al haTurim*, writes that the word *sulam*, ladder, shares the same

*gematria*, numerical value as קול, ‘voice’ — “for the voice of the *tefillah* of the *tzadikim* is a ladder upon which the angels ascend.”

.....

Dr. Avraham (Alan) Rosen is a prolific author and editor of Holocaust literature, testimony, and history. He was a *talmid muvhak* of Prof. Elie Wiesel, *zy'a*, for almost forty years. As a doctoral student and project director for the Wiesel Living Archive at the 92Y, he maintained a monthly *chavrusashaft*, sharing and learning Torah with Prof. Weisel on Rosh Chodesh. During one such shmooze on Rosh Chodesh Kislev, Dr. Rosen pointed out that the upcoming *sedra* related Yaakov’s dream vision of a ladder *mutzav artzah v’rosho magiah hashamayma*, “stretching from the ground toward Heaven.” He commented: “Is there any greater episode, or more splendid image, than that of this ladder?”

Quoting the *pesukim* by heart, Prof. Wiesel shared his interpretation. “...We help each other rise by being one another’s ladder.”

Chevreh, together we are creating a ladder for each other, supporting and enabling one another’s *avodah* and ascent. May we remain present and committed, holding each other up and providing strength and encouragement in our efforts toward higher encounters with the *Ribbono Shel Olam*. ■



# INSPIRATIONAL TORAH LEARNING AT OU ISRAEL

SUN, DEC 4

**9:15 AM**

Journey Through the Siddur  
**Rabbi David Walk**

**10:20AM**

Mishnah with Rambam's  
commentary **Rabbi Dr.  
Aaron Adler**

**11:30 AM**

Shivat Tzion in Tanach: Daniel,  
Ezra, Nechemia  
**Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz**

**2:00 PM**

Men's Talmud-Mesechta  
– Bava Basra **Rabbi Jeff  
Bienenfeld**

**7:30 PM**

Hashkafa & Gemara in  
Depth (The Bais) with  
**Rabbi Azarya Berzon**

**8:30 PM**

Gemara B'Iyun (The Bais)  
with **Rabbi Azarya Berzon**

**SPECIAL EVENT**

**9:00AM-1:00 PM**

Sefer Yechezkel Yom  
Iyun (L'Ayla)

MON, DEC 5

**9:15 AM**

Divre Hayamim  
**Rebbetzin Pearl  
Borow (L'Ayla)**

**10:30 AM**

The Thought of Rav Kook  
on Eretz Yisrael: A study  
of the sefer Eretz Chefetz  
**Rabbi Aaron  
Goldscheider**

**11:45 AM**

Halacha and Agada in  
Contemporary Society  
**Rabbi Shmuel  
Herschler**

**8:30 PM**

Semichat Chaver  
Program **Rabbi Elyada  
Goldwicht (The Bais)**

TUE, DEC 6

**9:15 AM**

**Rebbetzin Smiles**  
Torah Tapestries (L'Ayla)

**9:30AM**

Minchat Chinuch-Meaning  
in Mitzvot **Rabbi Yitzchak  
Breitowitz**

**10:30AM**

Parshat HaShavua  
**Rabbi Shmuel Goldin**

**12:15 PM**

Jewish National Revival:  
The Infant State Matures  
**Dr. Deborah Polster**

**2:00 PM**

Men's Talmud-Mesechta – Bava  
Basra **Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld**

**7:30PM**

Men's Safrus course with  
**Rabbi Tzvi Mauner (The Bais)**

**8:00PM**

Sefer Shmuel **Rabbi  
Mordechai Machlis**

**SPECIAL EVENT**

**9:00AM-1:00 PM**

Finding your roots  
(Keshet)

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[ouisrael.org/events/](http://ouisrael.org/events/)

WED, DEC 7

**9:00 AM**

Medina and Halacha  
**Rabbi Shimshon Nadel**  
(Resumes December 14)

**10:15 AM**

Contemporary Issues in  
Halacha and Hashkafa  
**Rabbi Anthony  
Manning**

**11:30 AM**

Great Jewish Thinkers  
**Rabbi Alan Kimche**

**12:30 PM**- Trailblazing  
the Text of Tanach-  
Lunch and Learn  
**Rabbi Neil Winkler**

**8:30 PM**

Halachic Controversies  
**Rabbi Aschi Dick**  
(The Bais)

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THURS, DEC 8

**9:00 AM**

Parshat HaShavua  
**Rabbi Ari Kahn**

**10:15 am**

Parshat HaShavua  
**Rabbi Baruch Taub**  
(Resumes Mon. January 12)

**11:30 AM**

Unlocking the Messages  
of Chazal  
**Rabbi Shai  
Finkelstein**

**2:00 PM**

Men's Talmud-Mesechta –  
Bava Basra  
**Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld**



## VIRTUAL SCHEDULE

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<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88363420460>  
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### Rabbi Taub

Parsha, 7:00PM Mon  
Halacha, 7:00PM Wed  
(Resumes Monday  
January 9)

### Rebbetzin Shatz

(L'Ayla)-Insights of  
Chazal- Tues, 5:00PM

### Rabbi Goldwicht

Parshat HaShavua  
Wed. 8:30PM  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2244321902>  
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**Mrs. Zemira Ozarowski**

**9:25AM** From Yishayahu to Chizkiyahu: What Changed? The Divine Message to the First Jews in Exile  
**Mrs. Yael Dworkin**

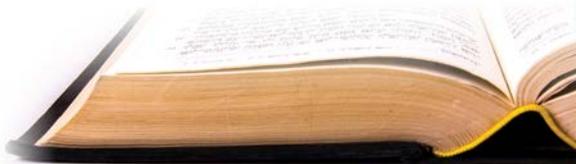
**10:15AM** Yechezkel's uniqueness as an experiential Navi  
**Mrs. Leah Falik**

**11:00AM** Brunch

**11:30AM** The Heavenly Visions of an Earthly Man  
**Mrs. Leah Feinberg**

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- 9:30 AM** Chanuka's Double Hidden Meaning - **Rabbi Zev Shandalov** author & lecturer
- 10:30 AM** Chanuka: The Light That Unites - **Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider** Editor, OU Torah Tidbits
- 11:30 AM** Chanuka, Yosef and the Burning Bush - **Rabbi Sam Shor** - Program Director, OU Israel Center
- 12:20 pm** Closing Remarks - **Rabbi Ezra Friedman** Followed by Mincha

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# SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

Our *Sedra*, *Parshat Vayeitzei* opens with Yaakov departing from *Be'er Sheva* toward *Charan*, in order to flee from the potential danger he faced at the hands of *Eisav*, following Yaakov's masquerade, pretending to be *Eisav*, and receiving the *bracha* from *Yitzchak*.

The *Torah* tells us:

וַיִּפְגַּע בְּמַקְוֹם וַיֵּלֶן שָׁם לַיְלָא וַיִּקַּח מֵאֲבָנֵי  
הַמַּקְוֹם וַיִּשָּׂם מִתַּחַת רִאשׁוֹ וַיִּשְׁכַּב בְּמַקְוֹם הַהוּא

*He came upon the place and stopped there for the night, for the sun had set. He took from the **stones** of that place, and placed it under his head and lay down in that place.*

Just a few verses later we read:

וַיִּשְׁכֶּם יַעֲקֹב בְּבֹקֶר וַיִּקַּח אֶת־הָאֲבָנִים וְאֶשְׂרָשָׁם  
מִתַּחַת רִאשׁוֹ וַיִּשָּׂם אֹתָם מִצְבֵּה וַיִּצַק שָׁמֶן עַל־רֵאשׁוֹ׃

*Early in the morning, Jacob took the **stone** that he had put under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on the top of it.*

The *Gemara* in *Chulin* explains the apparent contradiction between these two verses pertaining to this incident.

*It is written: "And he took from the stones of the place, and placed them under his head, and lay down in that place to sleep" (Breisheet 28:11). And (a few verses later) it is also written: "And Yaakov rose up early in*

*the morning, and he took the stone that he had placed under his head, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it" (Breisheet 28:18). The first verse indicates that Yaakov took several stones, whereas the latter verse indicates that he took only one stone. Rabbi Yitzchak says: This teaches that all those stones gathered to one place and each one said: Let this righteous man place his head upon me. And it was taught: And all of them were absorbed into one large rock.*

According to our *gemara*, the many stones super-naturally merged together to become one stone, upon which Yaakov Avinu would rest his head at this sacred place.

The *Ohalei Yaakov*, Rebbe Yaakov Friedman of Husiyatin, zy'a, was one of the great religious personalities of the pre-state Yishuv and early years of *Medinat Yisrael*. The Rebbe of Husiyatin, was fortunate to make *aliya* from Poland, just ahead of the Nazi onslaught, settling in *Tel Aviv* in 1938, where he lived until his passing in 1957. Within the Rebbe's beautiful teachings we not only find depth and inspiration, but are often given a glimpse of this very challenging period in Jewish History.

The *Rebbe* sees within our verse and the *Gemara's* interpretation of our verse, a powerful message which is as relevant today as it was when the Rebbe shared these words in 1947.

## Mazal Tov to

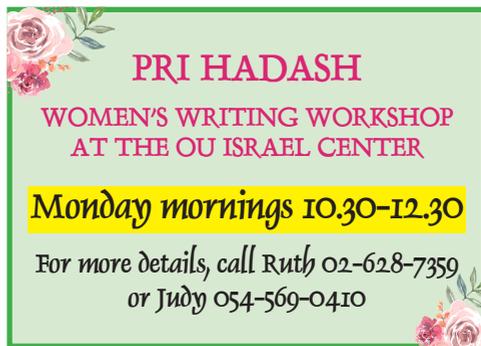
Hannah & Menachem Katten and family  
on the birth of their newest granddaughters

*The stones coming together as one is a message and allusion to the future. As the Jewish People gather from all corners of the Earth and return to make Aliya to Eretz Yisrael, Am Yisrael will need to unite and come together to take action. It is not enough for us to say Mashiach has not yet arrived, and therefore we await his arrival and he will take us forth, rather we must first come together and take action, and then that will hasten our full redemption. The stones coming together and becoming one stone, teaches us that it not simply enough for us to gather together from across the globe, rather the key to our success and ultimate redemption is to come together and become one united entity-Shalom and Achdut-Peace and Unity among the Jewish People will ultimately fix the entire world.*

The Rebbe's powerful insight continues

to ring loud and clear, more than 75 years later. Now, perhaps more than ever, there is a need for the Jewish people to unite and come together as one, as we secure our future here in *Artzeinu Hakedosha*.

*Yehi Ratzon*, may each of us heed this beautiful teaching from the Rebbe of Husi-yatin zt'l, and may we merit to see that unity, and ultimate redemption and tranquility for the entire world. ■



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# GEULAS YISRAEL

BY RABBI MOSHE TARAGIN  
Ram, Yeshivat Har Etzion

## The Labyrinth of Redemption

Ya'akov worked for seven long years, patiently awaiting the day he would marry Rochel, start his family and perhaps, commence his return to Israel. He hoped that after seven years of hard labor his bitter odyssey in a foreign land would come to a close. Even if his return to Israel were delayed, his marriage to Rochel would liberate him from his burdensome labor. As a married man, he would hold more sway in Lavan's house and would possess both greater leverage as well as freedom of movement. During those seven long years of labor his horizons of hope were wide open, as he looked forward to better times.

As we all know it didn't end that easily. It never does. Life is seldom as smooth and simple as we imagine. Ya'akov was deceived by his father-in-law into marrying Leah and this subterfuge compelled him to an additional seven years of hard labor for the "right" to also marry Rochel. Even after marrying Rochel and laboring an additional seven

years, his trials didn't cease, and it took him an additional six years to disentangle himself from his swindling father-in-law. All told, he spent twenty years in a foreign land and in the clutches of his devious father-in-law before returning with his family to Israel. Despite his initial hopes for a brief seven-year expedition and a rapid turnaround, Ya'akov's ordeal lasted far longer and was far more complicated than he could ever have imagined.

Chazal viewed Ya'akov's marital odyssey as a metaphor for Jewish history and for the redemptive process. As the midrash comments: דוגמא שלכם דומה ליעקב אביכם מה יעקב: אביכם עד שלא נשא אשה נשתעבד משנשא אשה נשתעבד אף אתם משלא נולד גואל נשתעבדתם משנולד גואל אתם משתעבדין. Just as Ya'akov was indentured both before, during, and after his marriages, similarly the Jewish people will endure hardship both before their redeemer is born, as well as after he is born. The story of Yaakov's dashed expectations is a cautionary tale, signaling that our redemptive arc will also be complicated, and warning us against adopting simplistic redemptive narratives. Our geulah will be convoluted in the same manner that Ya'akov's marital process was prolonged. Redemption will not be a straight line, but rather a jagged journey.

We often adopt simplistic redemptive assumptions. We presume that redemption will be immediate and conclusive, yielding a utopian reality absent of any hardship or

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struggle. We naively expect all our outsized redemptive expectations to be met as soon as the redemptive process is launched. When, and if, redemption evolves more gradually and with less than idyllic conditions, we doubt its validity or its divine source.

Ya'akov's marital misadventures debunk these simplistic notions of redemption. Redemption isn't immediate and it certainly isn't smooth. There are watershed moments in which redemptive potential develops, but it may take time for that potential to fully materialize. That redemptive period may be marked by hardship and struggle even as the overall process surges toward a final and complete redemption.

We cannot allow naïve expectations which go unfulfilled, to fluster our redemptive stamina. In the mid-90's we relinquished land in Israel hoping to achieve a durable peace, which, sadly, remained and continues to remain elusive. Independent of whether this proposed peace agreement was prudent, any relinquishing of land in Israel is a heartbreaking setback. Many were disillusioned by this calamity, concluding that the redemptive process had screeched to a halt. Ya'akov's entanglement reminds us that even as redemption unfolds, the struggle for complete geulah continues. Redemption and struggle go hand in hand. The process may include lags and even setbacks.

### Two Steps Forward, One Step Back

Even when redemption does surge forward, we can still experience struggles and possibly, even reversals. Even after Ya'akov's second marriage, in which he finally weds Rochel, his struggles with Lavan continue, and even intensify. His repeated efforts to disassociate with Lavan fail, forcing him

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to escape with his wives and children in the “middle of the night”. Similarly, our redemption may stumble even after it surges forward. Even after we witness redemptive advances, we can still encounter adversity and frustration. Nothing is guaranteed but the terminus. Final redemption will one day arrive and the journey toward that condition has begun. How soon we arrive and how rocky the road to final redemption will be, are each unknown.

### While We Struggle, We Also Build

During the second seven-year term of his labor Ya’akov didn’t just struggle with Lavan, but was also busy constructing the foundation for his future. During those years, his wives bore eleven sons who would later form the bedrock of the twelve tribes and of the Jewish nation. Those subsequent years, when he labored as a married man were characterized by struggle and adversity, but also by phenomenal growth, expansion, and development of his future.

We have yet to receive our final, perfect, and long-awaited for redemption. Many are waiting for our redemptive struggles to end, for optimal redemptive conditions to develop and for a perfect Messianic world to emerge. Others have decided to build *while we wait*. Though we haven’t yet achieved the

redemption of our dreams, we are slowly but surely building the infrastructure for that future. The society we build will serve as the foundation of our future utopia. The religious spirit we infuse into our secular culture, will, one day blossom into deeper and broader religious commitment. The roads we build will serve as causeways along which thousands pilgrimage to Yerushalayim for the chagim. Our efforts to absorb immigrants from vastly different cultures will, one day yield a common narrative and sweeping national unity. Every stone we lay, will serve as the foundation of the city we will one day raise.

We have so much to build and so much to construct. Instead of wasting our time sorrowing over the imperfect state of redemption, let us continue building that future. Perhaps, one day, our eyes will gaze upon the radiant and golden city of Yerushalayim with a Mikdash perched at its center. Perhaps we will be that fortunate. Alternatively, we may not be that fortunate and this vision will only occur long after our eyes have permanently shut. Either way, we will have built a historical platform for the future. If our eyes don’t witness final redemption, at least our handiwork will greet it. We may not personally witness it, but our fingerprints will be all over it. ■





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BY MENACHEM PERSOFF

Special Projects Consultant, OU Israel Center  
menpmp@gmail.com

# With Faith and Fortitude

In Parshat Vayetze, Yaakov embarks on a life-changing odyssey, leaving Eretz Yisrael for Haran. However, his journey was not just a matter of changing geographical locations: Yaakov was leaving his spiritual comfort zone for unknown pastures replete with challenges to his worldview.

The question is often asked: Why did Hashem create a world where instead of dwelling in tranquility while observing His mitzvot, we face many vicissitudes, including dealing with the internal and external influences that threaten our well-being and challenge our faith?

Let us visit Yaakov and observe his take on that question. How did he prepare for the upcoming trials related to living in a spiritual wilderness?

First, suggests the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Yaakov recognized that he was put into this world to be part of it, to interface with reality with all its incumbent difficulties, and not to be a recluse whose only focus was Torah study. More so, Yaakov understood (as perhaps we should) that we must embrace the material world in order to raise it to a higher spiritual level of *Kedushah*.

Yaakov would not seek trouble, but he knew to be prepared for eventualities

and confrontation with the “other side.” Indeed, if “*Nisyonot*” – spiritual challenges or tests – came his way, he would accept, even welcome them. Rather than despairing, he internalized that overcoming these kinds of adversities was his purpose in life.

When Yaakov laid down to rest, he placed stones around his head, ostensibly (following Rashi) to protect himself from wild animals. But why, asks the Rebbe, did he place stones only around his head? – Because, for the Rebbe, the head needed to be protected from the *spiritual* wild beasts about to impinge on Yaakov’s cognition, moral fiber, and ethical sensitivities.

Yaakov needed to remain cool-headed and determined in his new environment. Yes, he would take care of his material concerns and provide for his (future) family. But he would not sacrifice the standards of right and wrong inherited from his holy fathers for an easier godless existence.

In that context, the Rebbe reminds us of David Hamelech’s assertion (Tehillim 128):

יניע כפיר כי תאכל  
אשריך וטוב לך.

“*When you eat the labor of your hands  
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**RABBI AARON**

**GOLDSCHIEDER**

Editor, Torah Tidbits

# Exalted Yearnings

*The yearning of those who desire to live in the Land of Israel even when the intentions are motivated by mundane considerations and solely for the welfare of the nation is noble and exalted; owing to the fact that whenever there is a yearning in the nation of Israel for even materialism, with time it will culminate in a spiritual realization...” (Eretz Chefetz 1:11)*

The Torah praises the Land of Israel for its seven grains and fruit: “It is a land of wheat, barley, grapes, figs and pomegranates; a land of oil olives and honey dates (*Devarim* 8:8).

The Talmud (*Berachot* 41b) discusses which blessing is recited first when the different items of the seven species are available to be eaten. Rabbi Hisda says that the most logical preference in reciting a blessing should reflect the order of the produce mentioned in the verse. So, for example, one

first recited a blessing over the pomegranate before a date. Rabbi Hamenuna, however, explained that while the order in the verse is indeed important, there is even a more important factor: how close is the name of the fruit to the word *Land* in the verse.

Rav Hamenuna explains that pomegranates are the fifth produce mentioned after the first time Land appears in the verse. Dates, however, are the second fruit mentioned after Land appears a second time in the verse. In other words, the position of dates in the verse indicates a greater closeness to the Land of Israel; therefore this fruit deserves to come first.

Rav Hamenuna suggests that the proximity of the word to the Land is an expression of love of the Land.

Rav Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook commented on this passage and stated that one who is closer to the Land, and demonstrates a greater connection to it, should be blessed first. Such a person is closer to attaining wholeness and a closeness with



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the Almighty that is only obtained through the Land alone.

Rav Kook expands on this idea and offers a remarkable interpretation of the deeper meaning of the verse above which describes the seven species.

We may ask, why is the word Land mentioned twice in the verse? Why does the verse divide up the produce of Eretz Yisrael into two categories?

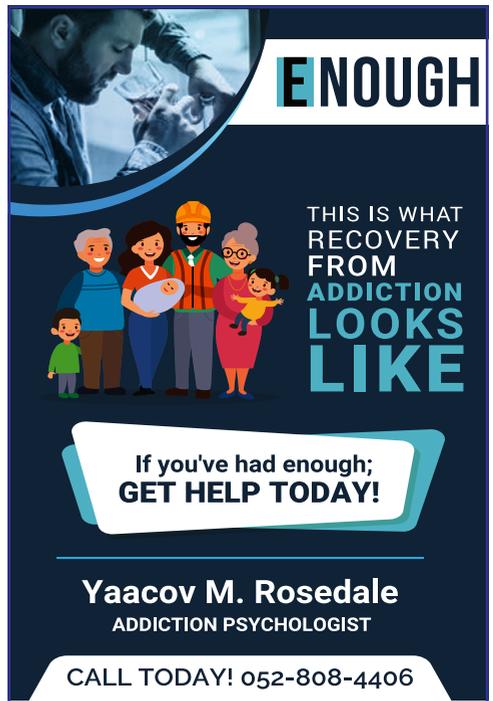
Rav Kook suggested that there are in fact two types of love for the Land of Israel. There are those who appreciate its holiness and spiritual qualities. Others, however, appreciate its material benefits and work towards rebuilding the Land. The first half of the verse refers to those who love its holiness; the second half of the verse refers to those who are drawn to its physical and practical benefits.

With this in mind Rav Kook makes the bold claim that although the pomegranate listed in the verse belongs to the first group, it remains somewhat distant from its connection to the Land. The date, on the other hand, is near the top of the second group. The Jews, symbolized the date, devotion is more robust. Their closeness and dedication to the Land is therefore even more precious than the first category of commitment, because it is more passionate and impactful. (An excellent summary of this teaching is found in “Gold From the Land of Israel,” Morrison, pp. 303-306)

Rav Kook’s classic work *Orot* was met with criticism in the Old Yishuv of Jerusalem. One particular passage accentuates the theme articulated above. Undoubtedly, this was one one of the ideas that did not sit comfortably with some of Rav Kook’s opponents.

“The *nefesh* of those secular Jews who are connected with great love to matters of the Jewish nation, to the Land of Israel, and to the revival of its people, is more perfected than the *nefesh* of religious Jews who lack this profound concern for the Jewish people and for building up the Land of Israel. On the other hand, the *ruach* of those who are religious and follow the Torah and mitzvot is more perfected.” (*Orot, Hatechiyah #43*, translation from “The Spiritual Revolution of Rav Kook,” Schwartz, pp.134-135)

Rav Kook firmly believed that there will surely come a time when each side will appreciate the other and embrace their positive aspects. “As a result of all of this, a great light will come upon both groups, and a holistic spiritual transformation will emerge in the world. The Jewish people will then be ready for redemption.” (Ibid) ■



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Two amazing passages appear in this week's Torah portion and both of them teach us much about the power of love.

At the beginning of the parasha, we read that Rachel Imeinu comes to water her flock at a well which is covered with a massive stone. Generally speaking, a combined effort of several shepherds is needed to move this stone from the mouth of the well. But what happens when Ya'akov takes one look at Rachel? "When Ya'akov saw Rachel... he went up and rolled the stone off the mouth of the well." Suddenly the heavy stone becomes light. Inspired by the sight of Rachel, Ya'akov virtually defies the law of gravity itself.

Afterwards, Ya'akov works seven years in order to marry Rachel, and this period is described in the following beautiful verse: "So Ya'akov worked seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her." Once again we see how love vanquishes an arduous challenge: Seven years pass like a few days. If previously the law of gravity was defied, now the idea of time is rendered meaningless.

The connection between Ya'akov and Rachel reminds us of the power of love, of human connection, of those individuals who awaken us, inspire us, and give us extraordinary strength. There are people who clip our wings and others who give us

wings. By whose side should we choose to live? ■



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Yoni thanks Hashem for having the opportunity of having Tziporah in his life, to learn of her caring, patience and happiness, to overcome her challenges. May Tziporah's Neshama be a light onto the world, in a time of darkness, and may her Neshama shine to Gan Eden. Yoni misses Tziporah with tears in his eyes, as Hashem gave him a gift, a crown jewel, now he returns her to Hashem.

With thanks and Toda. Love, Yoni

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# Paying a Babysitter for Work on Shabbat

**Question:** We need a babysitter for a few hours on Shabbat. Is there a problem paying her for Shabbat work?

**Answer:** *S'char Shabbat* (pay for permitted services one provided on Shabbat) is forbidden Rabbinnically like other commercial activity, lest one come to write (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 306:4; Mishna Berura ad loc. 16). The direct prohibition is on the worker receiving pay (therefore, a Jew may pay a non-Jew but may not be paid by a non-Jew), but it is forbidden to give money to one who may not receive it (Mishna Berura 306:21).

The most common way to allow receiving money for work done on Shabbat is through *havla'ah*. That means having the Shabbat-related money “swallowed up” by combining it with weekday pay, as pay for a period of work that includes Shabbat (Shulchan Aruch *ibid.*; Nedarim 37a-b).

*Poskim* point out that “*havla'ah* units” are determined not by payment installments but by the period of employment. The period of employment is the time during which there

is a commitment to continue the employer-employee relationship. We have dealt in the past (see *Living the Halachic Process*, vol. V, C-19) with a youth leader, whose employment unit is a year, in which case it is not difficult to give the leader some responsibilities during the week, within the course of the year.

This does not naturally work for the average babysitter, who is hired for an individual time period, which in this case, is entirely on Shabbat (Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata 28:58; Orchos Shabbat 22:94). However, *poskim* (*ibid.*; *ibid.* (146)) allow one to create a permitted merging of employment units in the following manner. When agreeing upon her working on Shabbat, commit to each other that she will also work in the future during the week. The Orchos Shabbat describes the commitment as being absolute, so that even if you would not want to use her again, you would still have to pay for the second time. The Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata suffices with an expectation of continuing employment so that if one backs out, the other would have a grievance on the other. It is possible that the difference is that the former refers to artificially creating another, single babysitting session, which then must be binding. In contrast, the Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata is referring to a naturally ongoing relationship over a period of time, which also may explain why he permits even calculating the pay based on the exact hours worked on Shabbat.

The Orthodox Union - via its website - fields questions of all types in areas of kashrut, Jewish law and values. Some of them are answered by Eretz Hemdah, the Institute for Advanced Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, headed by Rav Yosef Carmel and Rav Moshe Ehrenreich, founded by HaRav Shaul Yisraeli zt"l, to prepare rabbanim and dayanim to serve the National Religious community in Israel and abroad. Ask the Rabbi is a joint venture of the OU, Yerushalayim Network, Eretz Hemdah... and OU Israel's Torah Tidbits.



If you do not have a commitment to an ongoing employment relationship with the babysitter, the above approach can be somewhat complex. Therefore, we present a different form of *havla'ah*, which can be accomplished at one time. There is a famous *heter* to pay waiters for their work on Shabbat by requiring them to also work before and/or after Shabbat (see Mishna Berura 306:21). Some also use this system to pay a *chazan* for *Yamim Noraim*, by having him be *chazan* for *Selichot* as well (see Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata 28:(144)). In this case, you can arrange it by having her prepare something, in a way that could only be done before Shabbat (e.g., a game, a picture), to be used along with the babysitting. It does not suffice for the preparation to be theoretical or possible, but obligatory work that is time-consuming enough to warrant pay (Orchot Shabbat 22:90). Another form is for her to bring food for the kids, so that payment due for its price creates *havla'ah* that covers the babysitting. This is learned from the Noda B'yehuda (II, OC 26) who justified a *mikveh* operator taking money for the service they provide on Shabbat, as the compensation they deserve for the wood fuel they provide creates a *havla'ah*.

There is a *machloket* whether one can take money for providing a *mitzva* service on Shabbat (Shulchan Aruch, OC 306:5). While babysitting in and of itself is not considered a *mitzva* (see Nedarim 37a), if she is hired

to enable parents to do a *mitzva*, it would count as *mitzva* work (see Bemareh Haba-zak III:36). However, the *havla'ah* system, if done properly, is a broader and more clearly accepted leniency. ■

## Having a dispute?



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One response I received was from Tsvi Klejman, an English speaker who grows 11 dunams (1.1 hectares) of Syrian olives near Rosh Pina. Tsvi served as an *otzar beit din* agent of the Golan Height Beit Din (Rabbi Uri Sedan, former rabbi of Nov). Now, *besh'a'ah tovah*, the oil is ready. The price is set by the *beit din*, after considering many different parameters. Tsvi does not make a living from the olives, just takes care of them “on the side.” The price covers his expenses and the expenses of the *beit din*.

Buying Tsvi’s olive oil strengthens farmers who observe *shemitah* and affords us the privilege to use Israeli olive oil produced by an olive orchard that strictly observed the laws of *shemitah*. Furthermore, even though we are no longer in the *shemitah* year, the holiness of *shemitah*, its halachot and values will continue to accompany us for many months to come.

The olives are grown organically (but do not have official organic supervision since the grove is too close to non-organic olive trees, which makes it impossible to receive an official organic status and due to the high costs of the supervision). Of course, there is no concern of *orlah*, *tevel* or *kila'im*.



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## Tragic News

In the past couple of months doctors, ethicists, rabbis and couples have focused on a cataclysmic event that happened in one of the hospitals in Central Israel.

Some time ago a couple presented for fertility treatment, underwent an in-vitro fertilization, and an embryo was transferred to the wife. The couple received the highly anticipated good news that the treatment was successful and they were expecting a child.

The pregnancy proceeded as normal and the couple were extremely excited as they approached the due date. They imagined holding their very own daughter, watching her brought into this world, going through childhood and adolescence, becoming a young woman, graduating high school and college. The hopes and dreams of all expecting parents.

Quite late in the pregnancy a suspected congenital defect was observed in the heart. The parents were advised to undergo an amniocentesis, in which a sample of the fluid in the amniotic sac, where the fetus develops, is removed and analyzed. The test was performed, and a very exact and in-depth genetic analysis was carried out.

The results came back that the girl was genetically healthy, but there was an

unforeseen result that would shake the parents, the hospital and many others. The girl was not theirs!! Apparently, there had been a tragic mistake on the day of the embryo transfer, and, instead of transferring their embryo, the woman has been implanted with another couple's embryo.

The doctors immediately went back into their records to discover who were the genetic parents of the rapidly growing fetus. The check seemed to point conclusively to another couple who underwent treatment at the same time.

This situation raised huge ethical questions, who were the parents of the child, the woman who supplied the genetic material or the woman who carried the baby? This is not a new question; all cases of egg donation or gestational carriers, in which one woman supplies the egg and another woman carries the baby and delivers the child, raise the question of the definition of motherhood.

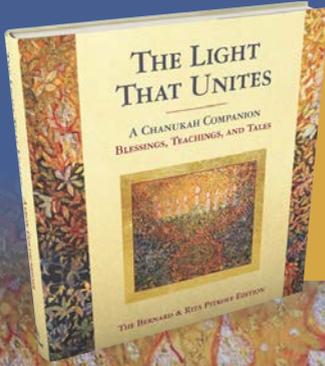
What makes this case somewhat unique is that the embryo was transferred without consent of either of the women. In a case of egg donation both women have agreed to the scenario prior to embarking on treatment. Often a legal contract has been signed before treatment and so the question of motherhood was ideally already discussed and determined. But not in the case of this mistake.

More on this next time. ■

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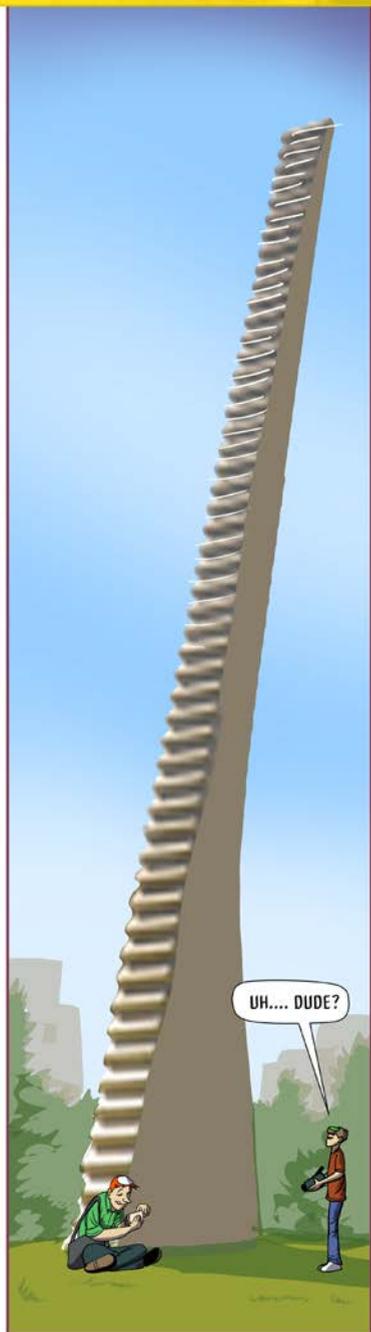
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# TORAH 4 TEENS

## BY TEENS

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### Using Zeal To Overcome The Zzz's

In this week's Parsha of Vayeitzei, Yaakov leaves his hometown of Beer Sheva and heads to Charan. It says in the second pasuk that "And he arrived at the place and lodged there because the sun had set, and he took some of the stones of the place and placed [them] at his head, and he lay down in that place" and after his evening he "arose early in the morning, and he took the stone that he had placed at his head, and he set it up as a monument, and he poured oil on top of it". This can teach us a valuable lesson about how Yaakov is as a person and his response to being zeal and not being lazy.

Had Yaakov continued on his journey after the sun set, he would not have been able to rise early the next day to keep moving toward his destination. When someone is lazy, it distances the person from allowing them to reach their full potential and truly work on themselves. They are going to believe that they are content with the way that they are and will not want to bring change to move themselves forward.

Yaakov stopped once the sun set because he knew that he needed the rest so that he could arise early the next day and keep

moving. Being filled with alacrity is a trait that I have pushed myself to work on tremendously. Coming from a secular background, if I wanted to grow in any direction to live a Torah based life, I could not be lazy.

My zeal is what pushed me to spend my 17th birthday in the exact way that I wanted to, keeping Shabbat. It is also exactly what I needed to be able to spend a gap year in Israel because without it, I would not have had the strength to raise all of the funds to make it possible. Had I been lazy, the second it got difficult, I would have given up the hope to live a Torah based lifestyle and continue on the path that my family has set out for me. Instead, I used my actions and the zeal that I had to push myself and excel.

Yaakov truly embodies what it means to constantly be growing and working on ourselves so that we can fight our desire to be lazy.



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### Changing of the Guards

We all know the story of Yakov dreaming of the angels going up and down the ladder.

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Who were these angels?

Rashi explains that since Yakov was leaving Israel, the angels were 'changing the guard.' The 'Eretz Yisrael angels' left and the 'Chutz L'aretz angels' came down. Why would the angels be changing now, Yakov is still in the middle of Israel? Shouldn't that happen as he crosses the border?

There is a profound message here. It is not about where you are, but in what direction you are headed. Yaakov is planning to leave Eretz Yisrael, therefore the angels change right away, while he is still in Israel. The same should be true the other way around. No matter where we find ourselves, if we decide to start going in a better direction, the "angles will change" and Hashem will help us reach and accomplish our goals.

Sometimes in life when we want to make a change or accomplish something, we stress and get in over our heads. We cannot see the end, so we do not even take the first step. Sometimes you just need to relax, start the journey, and know that Hashem is with you. ■

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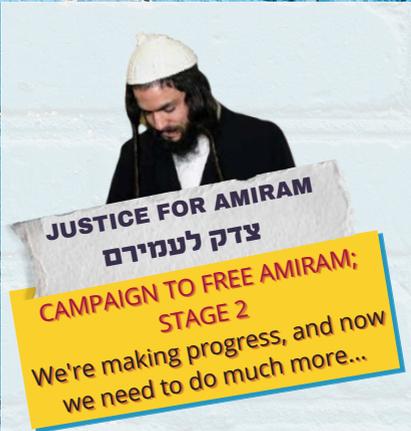
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