

# Torah Tidbits

ב"ה

ISSUE 1638

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ט"ז כסלו תשפ"ו

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**Transporting Children  
Before or After *Shacharit*?**  
Rabbi Daniel Mann Page 72



**"Incompletely Complete":  
Yaakov's Struggle and the  
Torah's Eternal Embrace of Pain**  
Jen Airley Page 80



## ויזרח-לו השמש בראשית ל"ב:ל"ב

YERUSHALAYIM SHABBAT VAYISHLACH ZMANIM

CANDLES 3:59 PM • HAVDALA 5:15 PM • RABBEINU TAM 5:52 PM



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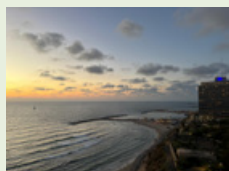
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## COVER IMAGE Photographed by David Hochhauser

We made Aliya in 2014. We live in Beit Shemesh and I am fortunate to have my parents, siblings, and their families here. The picture was taken from the roof of the Dan Tel Aviv at sunset last summer. It captures how the beauty of the Land of Israel is all around us.



**We continue to pray for the return of all the kedoshim from Gaza.**



## IMPORTANT REMINDERS



**Last Opportunity to Say Kiddush Levana until: 15 Kislev/Thurs. night Dec. 4**

# CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



## OTHER Z'MANIM



### JERUSALEM

**Ranges 11 days Wednesday - Shabbat  
December 3 - 13 / 13 - 23 Kislev**

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	<b>5:28-5:35</b>
Sunrise	<b>6:23-6:30</b>
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	<b>8:56-9:01</b>
Magen Avraham	<b>8:17-8:22</b>
Sof Zman Tefila	<b>9:46-9:52</b>
(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanya)	
Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	<b>11:28-11:33</b>
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	<b>11:58-12:03</b>
Plag Mincha	<b>3:30-3:33</b>
Sunset (Including Elevation)	<b>4:39-4:40</b>



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	Vayishlach		Vayeishev	
	Candles	Havdala	Candles	Havdala
Yerushalayim/Maale Adumim	<b>3:59</b>	<b>5:15</b>	<b>4:00</b>	<b>5:17</b>
Aza Area (Netivot, Sderot et al)	<b>4:18</b>	<b>5:18</b>	<b>4:19</b>	<b>5:19</b>
Beit Shemesh/RBS	<b>4:17</b>	<b>5:16</b>	<b>4:18</b>	<b>5:17</b>
Gush Etzion	<b>4:15</b>	<b>5:16</b>	<b>4:16</b>	<b>5:17</b>
Raanana/Tel Mond/Herzliya/K.Saba	<b>4:15</b>	<b>5:16</b>	<b>4:16</b>	<b>5:17</b>
Modiin/Chashmonaim	<b>4:15</b>	<b>5:16</b>	<b>4:16</b>	<b>5:17</b>
Netanya	<b>4:15</b>	<b>5:15</b>	<b>4:16</b>	<b>5:17</b>
Be'er Sheva	<b>4:17</b>	<b>5:18</b>	<b>4:19</b>	<b>5:19</b>
Rehovot	<b>4:16</b>	<b>5:16</b>	<b>4:17</b>	<b>5:18</b>
Petach Tikva	<b>3:59</b>	<b>5:16</b>	<b>4:00</b>	<b>5:17</b>
Ginot Shomron	<b>4:14</b>	<b>5:15</b>	<b>4:15</b>	<b>5:16</b>
Haifa / Zichron	<b>4:03</b>	<b>5:14</b>	<b>4:04</b>	<b>5:15</b>
Gush Shiloh	<b>4:13</b>	<b>5:14</b>	<b>4:15</b>	<b>5:16</b>
Tel Aviv / Givat Shmuel	<b>4:16</b>	<b>5:16</b>	<b>4:17</b>	<b>5:18</b>
Givat Ze'ev	<b>4:19</b>	<b>5:15</b>	<b>4:20</b>	<b>5:17</b>
Chevron / Kiryat Arba	<b>4:15</b>	<b>5:16</b>	<b>4:17</b>	<b>5:17</b>
Ashkelon	<b>4:17</b>	<b>5:18</b>	<b>4:18</b>	<b>5:19</b>
Yad Binyamin	<b>4:16</b>	<b>5:17</b>	<b>4:17</b>	<b>5:18</b>
Tzfat / Bikat HaYarden	<b>4:05</b>	<b>5:12</b>	<b>4:06</b>	<b>5:13</b>
Golan	<b>4:11</b>	<b>5:12</b>	<b>4:12</b>	<b>5:13</b>
Nahariya/Maalot	<b>4:11</b>	<b>5:13</b>	<b>4:12</b>	<b>5:15</b>
Afula	<b>4:12</b>	<b>5:13</b>	<b>4:13</b>	<b>5:15</b>

**Rabbeinu Tam (Jerusalem): Vayishlach - 5:52 PM • Vayeishev - 5:53 PM**

All Times According to MyZmanim (20 mins before Sunset in most Cities;  
40 mins in Yerushalayim and Petach Tikva; 30 mins in Tzfat and Haifa)

**Daf Yomi: Zevachim 83**



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## DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OU ISRAEL  
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It is very common for those who grew up reading the stories of the *Avot* to forget what it is like to hear these stories in the Torah for the first time. When *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* tells Avraham Avinu to bring up his beloved son Yitzchak as a sacrifice, if we didn't already know how the story ends, we would be absolutely shocked, our hearts pounding, wondering what will happen and how Avraham and Yitzchak can make it out alive while listening to Hashem. When the brothers conspire to sell Yosef, we would be on the edge of our seats - if we didn't already know what happens in the story.

So too in *Parshat Vayishlach*. Yaakov Avinu is about to encounter his brother Esav, who, last we heard, planned to kill him all those years ago. Not only that, but we find out that Esav is accompanied by 400 men, a veritable army. What will be Yaakov's fate? Has Esav forgiven Yaakov, or will this be a showdown like no other?

The Torah sets this up as a kind of battle, and in some senses, the fight already

happened the night before with Yaakov wrestling with the angel, the *Sar shel Esav*, according to Chazal. However, just reading the Torah, we find that when Yaakov actually meets Esav, the conversation is seemingly cordial. At the end of the encounter, Esav makes the following statement: (Bereshit 33:9) "*Yesh li rav, achi*" - Brother, I have a lot. Yet, in response, Yaakov says something else: (Bereshit 33:11) "*Yesh li kol*" - I have everything. Then they go their separate ways. What is the difference between having "a lot" and having "everything"?

The answer is that Esav was constantly thinking that yes, he has a lot - but he could always have more. He was unfulfilled, unsatisfied with his family, his power, and his fortune. On the other hand, Yaakov said he had everything. He was happy with what he had, and was content with his lot, and could offer what he had to his brother.

My wife and I and our family have had the tremendous *zechut* of having over the children of Rabbi Mordechai and Shayndel Feuerstein, *a"h*, for many Shabbatot. Rabbi Mordechai and Shayndel Feuerstein were the Rabbi and Rebbetzin in Vancouver, British Columbia, before my family and I spent several years in Vancouver, and then they became the Rabbi and Rebbetzin in Livingston, New Jersey. While their children were growing up, I took such pride in seeing them become advisors in NCSY Vancouver, which I headed. Through that time and beyond, we developed a beautiful relationship with many

**Condolences to  
Mrs. Miriam Stein,  
Susie & Simcha Fund  
and to the entire family  
on the passing of their  
husband/father/  
grandfather/great-grandfather**

**Dr David Stein ז"ל**

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים



of them. I admired Rabbi and Reb-betzin Feuerstein because they were real trailblazers in what they did in their community, both in Vancouver as well as in Livingston, and their children continue in that path.

I remember one time, I had their son Yosef over for Shabbat, and after I cut the challah, he told me how his father, Rabbi Feuerstein, would make sure to collect the crumbs left behind after cutting the challah and eat them. Now, I had heard of the saying of the gemara that those who are careful with the crumbs of the challah will not become poor, and I had heard of various *segulot* involving bread crumbs.

“No, those aren’t the reasons,” he declared. It was something else entirely. He told me that his father would say that if a person stopped to think about the amount of grains of wheat that grow all over the world every single year, from Canada to America to Russia to Israel, they know that that amount must be massive. Ask yourself, he would say, what a particular grain of wheat has thought of on its way to becoming part of a challah. “Am I going to merit to be made into kosher food? Will people say a *beracha* on me? Will I help someone get closer to Hashem?” That grain must have prayed and begged *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* to be part of a challah and be part of our *oneg Shabbat*, with a special board and special cutlery and a beautiful table in front of him.

All those hopes and dreams for this piece of wheat - and it starts to come true. Lo and behold, the *Ribono shel Olam* grants his wish. This little grain travels a great journey, from the field to the factory to the store shelf to the grocery bag, and eventually is made into the *Lechem Mishneh* at a holy Jew’s home



on Shabbat night. Wow! This piece of grain must be over the moon! The family washes their hands and makes *hamotzi*, all sitting in anticipation for their first bite of challah. The wheat grain is so excited. Finally, the *baal habayit* sits down and makes the *beracha*, and cuts the challah. And what should happen then? This little piece of wheat becomes a crumb. Instead of landing on a plate, he lands on the table, a small speck, forgotten and forlorn. “This is it for me,” the grain thinks. “I’m going to end up in the garbage and all is lost. I went through so much to end up here, and this is it.”

So, Rabbi Feuerstein would conclude his story, and say, how could I do that to this piece of wheat? And so he scoops up all the crumbs and brings them into his *seudah* as well.

Do we think this way? Are we sensitive to

In memory of  
**Rabbi Shimon Herman ז"ל**  
beloved husband, father,  
grandfather, great grandfather  
on his 7th yearzeit, 15 Kislev  
*Charlotte, N'tina, Yehuda, Moshe,  
Shmuel, Reuven and families*  
יה זכרו ברוך

the journey of all the things in our lives and how they got to be that way? All the obstacles they had to go through to be where they are supposed to be? Every piece of wood in the table in our kitchen, or every tile on the floor of the shul, has a story. More than that, every person has a story. Of obstacles, yes, but also of tremendous successes in getting through those obstacles.

Esav said, “*Yesh li rav.*” He saw himself as always needing more, not paying attention to the successes already accomplished and what he could be doing with what he has achieved. Yaakov knew that what he has comes from *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, and that his wealth is in the service of a higher ideal. If he had crumbs, he knew they were for a holy purpose. We all should think this way. If I have a car, am I offering rides to others in need? Am I listening to Torah *shiurim* or wasting time? Am I taking my salary and making sure to donate as much as I possibly can, whether it is to OU Israel for the incredible programs that we’re running here in Israel, or to any other worthwhile organization that is doing great things for the Jewish people?

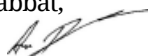
This consideration is particularly poignant in the month of December, when many of us think about how to close out our tax year with donations. So I hope that we’re all able to look up to *shamayim* and say, “*HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, thank You so much for giving us all of the

incredible gifts that we have. We will try our best to take these gifts and sanctify them for the world as much as possible. We’re going to do as much *chesed* as we possibly can, and we’re going to make sure that we will never say just *yesh li rav*, but *yesh li kol.*”

Recently, Rabbi Feuerstein’s son Yosef reminded me how Rabbi Feuerstein would compare his story of the crumbs to how we should view all of *Bnei Yisrael*. We cannot forget any Jew. We need to bring them together and raise them up, spiritually and materially. We have to do everything we can to help them, save them, and be sensitive to their needs. And really, this is why I am so proud of the work we are doing at OU Israel.

Let me add to what Rabbi Feuerstein said and say that when Yaakov Avinu tells Esav “*Yesh li kol,*” he is standing with his eleven sons and his daughter, Dina. Truly, he saw the importance of every single Jew and knew that he had everything he needed when they were united as one.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



Rabbi Avi Berman

Executive Director, OU Israel

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# The Long Game of Jewish History

*In late November 2023, a ceasefire took place, allowing for the release of many hostages. The moment was bittersweet as many hostages still remained in Gaza and potential for a wider conflict loomed large. Rabbi Hauer acknowledged the challenges of the moment and, drawing on our parsha, reminded us how Jews are meant to experience history, by recognizing that we are playing the long game.*

For the people of the book, our view of the present is drawn on a background that stretches back not to 1967 or 1948, not even to the Holocaust, but all the way back to the very beginning of the Jewish story. While smug and self-righteous statesmen and university students justify incomprehensibly monstrous acts of terror within narrow windows of context, Jews see current events as the continuation of the history which is the bedrock of our identity, where “in every generation they stand over us to destroy us.” We have been down this road before, and we know where it leads.

The world looks very different to those who take a step back and see the big picture, and that picture can at times be very sobering. Consider this week of hostage releases. We, who so cherish human life, shared in the profound

joy and relief of the women and children who returned to life and family after being taken and buried alive by the brutal enemy. Yet, when we step back, in the corner of the big picture we notice the homecoming celebration taking place in Ramallah. Those returnees were not hostages but criminals, women and teens who had been imprisoned for terrorist actions. They were celebrated – not in Hamas’ Gaza but in the capital of the moderate Palestinian Authority – as homecoming heroes by those who rather than cherish life have chosen to celebrate death and murder, lionizing and supporting those who have brought death upon thousands of their own children in their blind and venomous hatred of Israel.

Then we take another step back and the picture becomes even more grim. Now we are able to see beyond the joy of today, back to the recent past and into the future. We see Gilad Shalit and – *lehavdil* - Yahya Sinwar. We see the freed Israeli hostages, women and children trying to live happy and productive lives while coping with the grief over their family members massacred by Hamas, the destruction of their homes and communities, and the trauma of their captivity. And we see the freed Palestinian prisoners, women and children yet unrepentant terrorists, heroes all too eager to get back to their work of



murdering and maiming Jews.

From the vantage point of that step back we find it difficult to comprehend how Israel's greatest allies provide them with specific instructions and demands regarding the current humanitarian needs and future governance of those who aid, abet, and celebrate their attackers while coming up short on the specifics of how they can accomplish that and ensure a modicum of safety and security for themselves. From that step back and its view of the elaborate physical infrastructure of terror and the hatred of Israel so deeply embedded in Palestinian cultural and educational institutions, we find it impossibly difficult to understand references to brief wars and quick shifts to an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel.

The Torah records that our first purchase of land in Israel was the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron. It was an elaborate transaction carried out in plain view and with the assent and participation of the local leadership. There we laid our nation's foundations deep in the soil of what would thereby become our homeland. Almost all our original ancestors, Avraham and Sarah, Yitzchak and Rivkah, and Yaakov and Leah, would be laid to rest there, "gathered to their people, aged and satisfied with their years."

Rachel would not join them. Her burial place was neither purchased nor formalized. Instead, after dying in childbirth, she was laid to rest at the side of the road. While the ancestral couples buried in Hebron represent our nation's lasting connection to its homeland, Rachel is recalled by a lonely monument to life interrupted, representing the tragic history of our wanderings in exile. Rachel lies there, crying over her children taken hostage, crying over the

present, until God asks her to take a step back and see the future in a way that is not sobering but comforting, allowing her to see the fuller picture of the future, of *Netzach Yisrael*.

*This is what Hashem says: A voice is heard in Rama, wailing, bitter weeping. It is Rachel weeping for her children. She refuses to be comforted for her children, for they are gone. This is what Hashem says: Restrain your voice from crying and your eyes from tears, for there is a reward for your work... and they will return from the land of the enemy. There is hope for your future, declares Hashem, and your children will return home.* (Yirmiyahu 31:14-16)

Jewish history is a long game. You need to know it to really get it. We must take that step back and not allow others to limit our vision.

Every Jew needs to tell ourselves and our children our story, the long game of Jewish history, the roots that define our past and the big picture view of the world. We must absorb within ourselves the Torah values that must define our present. And we must drive patiently and consistently towards the magnificent and comforting Jewish vision of the future, when (Yeshayahu 25:8) "Hashem will destroy death forever, wiping away tears from **all** faces; and the shame of His people He shall remove from all the earth." ■

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Judith Berger, Zale Newman,  
Chaviva Braun, and families



# OU... BEYOND KASHRUT

## Abba and Ema of Shabbat: Yachad's New Initiative

OU Israel's Yachad program supports Anglo Olim with special needs and their families through social programming, Shabbatonim, and weekly gatherings that create connection and belonging. For many participants, Yachad is one of the only places in Israel where they feel fully understood culturally and linguistically, surrounded by people who speak their language and appreciate their unique challenges as English-speaking Olim. The advisors, volunteers, and Bnot Sherut who guide them often remain an important part of their lives long after their year of service ends.



To keep these relationships strong, Yachad Israel has launched a new initiative called Abba and Ema of Shabbat. Each Shabbat, a married couple who previously served in Yachad returns to help run the kitchen, welcome participants, support logistics, and bring the warmth and hospitality that define the Yachad experience. Their presence gives participants a sense of stability while allowing alumni to stay engaged in a meaningful way.

These couples will also join the upcoming Married Couples Shabbaton, continuing their connection to the Yachad community as they build their own homes.

Each week we share one of OU Israel's impactful programs helping English-speaking Olim with their Klita and impacting Israeli society.



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## ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY

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### PARSHAT VAYISHLACH

Yaakov returns to the Land of Israel. He is fearful of a confrontation with Esav. He prepares by dividing his entourage. A man fights him through the night, changing his name to Yisrael from Yaakov at dawn. Yaakov sends gifts to Esav to appease him. Esav runs, hugs Yaakov, kisses him and cries. Yaakov spurns Esav's request that they settle together. Dinah is raped by Shechem in Shechem. Shimon and Levi kill the men of the city. Yaakov arrives at Beit El, the place of his ladder dream and builds an altar. Rachel dies giving birth to Binyamin. Reuven lies with Bilha. Yaakov is reunited with Yitzchak. Esav's lineage is outlined.



#### 1ST ALIYA (32:4-13)

Yaakov sends messengers to Esav: Tell Esav that his servant Yaakov has been with Lavan. We have much flock. Word comes back that Esav is approaching with 400 men. Yaakov is afraid; splits his entourage, so at least half will survive. And he prays: While I am undeserving, You promised

that my progeny would be numerous.

The story of Breishit is the story of Divine promises. Yaakov received a promise in the dream with the ladder that G-d would return him to the Land of Israel. And he also was instructed by G-d in the middle of last week's parsha to return to the Land and He will be with him.

While Yaakov believes these promises, the devil is in the details. Ok, G-d will return me safely to the Land, but then what? My brother Esav wanted to kill me. That is why I fled. And I had an informant back in the Land who was keeping an eye on Esav, promising to me that she would send me word when the coast was clear to return home. My mother. She promised that when Esav mellowed and no longer wanted to kill me then the coast was clear to return.

But, I never heard from her. Did she switch allegiance? Maybe Esav never mellowed after all and still has every intent to kill me.

So, while I believe G-d's promise that He will bring me back to the Land safely, what happens after that?

He is scared. He sends word to Esav. Esav is coming with 400 men. That is not a welcoming party. He means war.

Yaakov prays.



#### 2ND ALIYA (32:14-30)

Yaakov prepares gifts of his livestock for Esav with the message: from your servant Yaakov. A man fights Yaakov overnight, wounding his thigh. At dawn the man tells him his name is Yisrael,

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for he fought G-d and man and prevailed.

Yaakov attempts to appease Esav with gifts. Why does he think livestock gifts with a gift card attached, “from your servant Yaakov” will cool Esav’s murderous intent?

Perhaps Yaakov is sending a message: the blessing I stole from you was a dud. Never happened. So, no reason to be angry.

What was that bracha? “G-d will give you of the fat of the Land, much grain and wine. And you will rule: your brother will bow to you.” A 3-part bracha: agricultural success, political power and dominance over your brother.

None of it happened. No agricultural success; all I have are animals. No land. Certainly, no fat of the land.

And power? I have been a migrant worker with Lavan.

And who is bowing to whom? “From your servant Yaakov”.

3 strikes – no fat of the land. No power. And you are the master, not me. So, no need to fuss over a bracha that was a blank.



### 3RD ALIYA (32:31-33:5)

Yaakov wakes with a limp, hence the prohibition of eating the sciatic nerve. He sees Esav. Divides his family. Esav runs to him, hugs, kisses and cries.

The struggle with the man ends with a limp. This struggle is immortalized by the prohibition of the sciatic nerve.

This is the only mitzvah from the epoch of the Avot besides brit mila. Any story immortalized by a mitzvah demands attention.

Why would we immortalize Yaakov’s fight over night with a man, or maybe angel, resulting in the change of his name to Yisrael and also with a limp?

The lesson is perhaps a sober one. The

name Israel, the people Israel, will live a confronted life, a life of opposition, of struggle. Oh, we will emerge, persevere, survive the night. But with a limp. Divine promises are not of Gan Eden, of a history of sunny days. The promises are broad, undefined, open ended. Like “I will be with you”. “You will inherit the Land”. Wonderful assurances. But broad. What do they mean? We will persist. Fine. But how? Unscathed? Limping.

It is crucial to read all of the stories of Bereshit in light of the promises. The promises were all well known. However, understanding what Divine promises mean, how they will play out in real life, when they will occur? And at what price? That preoccupies the minds of the Avot. They live with uncertainty. Faith in the promises; uncertainty as to what they mean.



### 4TH ALIYA (33:6-20)

Esav is urged to accept Yaakov’s gifts. Esav offers that they live in brotherhood. Yaakov demurs, sending Esav ahead, hinting he will catch up. He turns instead toward the Land of Israel. He dwells in Sukkot and then in Shechem. He builds an altar and calls in the name of G-d.

Yaakov is undoubtedly relieved with Esav’s embrace. But he insists on a complete separation from Esav. Perhaps Esav’s kisses are sincere. Today. What will tomorrow bring?

And while Yaakov may have tried to convince Esav that the bracha of Yitzchak did not come to be, he does not believe that himself. He is convinced he is the heir to the Jewish legacy. He goes to Shechem and builds an altar.

Why doesn’t he go immediately to Beit El? Didn’t he make a vow when he had the dream with the ladder that he would return to that spot? And why didn’t he immediately



reunite with his mother and father? Why go to Shechem and not Beit El or Chevron?

The Jewish people will enter the land of Israel 3 times. Avraham. Yaakov. Yehoshua. Each time the first stop is Shechem.

Yaakov is following in Avraham's footsteps – literally. Avraham journeyed from Charan; first stop in the Land of Israel was Shechem, where he built an altar. Yaakov has just journeyed from Charan to the Land of Israel, stopping first at Shechem and building an altar. He sees himself clearly as the heir of Avraham, walking in his footsteps.



#### 5TH ALIYA (34:1-35:11)

Dina is raped by Shechem in Shechem. The brothers claim they will only ally with people who are circumcised. While the men are recovering Shimon and Levi kill them all. Yaakov is upset. But they counter; “can they make our sister a harlot?” G-d tells Yaakov to go to Beit El and make the promised altar. He does. G-d appears to him and tells him his name is Yisrael not Yaakov. And that nations and Kings will come from him.

The story of the rape of Dina is the first story of the next generation. And the brother's rhetorical comment will be a clarion for the rest of the book. “Can they make our sister a harlot?” meaning, and we, her brothers stand idly by? No. Brothers stand up for siblings.

What an ironic statement. We must stand up for Dina. And then we sell our brother Yosef. That is rather selective standing up.

Yaakov's reaction to the slaughter of Shechem is also instructive. He criticizes the violence for it will impede good relations with the people of the Land.

Yaakov may think that the Divine promise

of the Land is about to unfold in his time. A promise was made to Avraham at the Brit bein habetarim: your children will be strangers in a foreign land, enslaved, oppressed and only after a long time will return here. Yaakov was kind of a slave in a foreign land, was oppressed there – perhaps then the promise of the Land is to unfold in his time. And for that, bad relations with the people are a bad thing.



#### 6TH ALIYA (35:12-36:19)

G-d affirms the promise of the Land to Yaakov. Yaakov builds altars, traveling south. Rachel dies while giving birth to Binyamin. Reuven lies with Bilha. Yaakov goes to Chevron, to Yitzchak. Yitzchak dies at age 180, buried by Esav and Yaakov.

Yaakov continues walking in Avraham's footsteps, traveling south and building altars. But Yaakov's life differs, tragically, from Avraham and Yitzchak's.

Women have played a dominant role in our history. More than dominant; they steered history. Sarah insisted on the banishing of Yishmael and G-d concurred. Rivka orchestrated Yaakov's receipt of the bracha and that decision was borne out by history.

But Rachel dies. Rachel's death deprives Yaakov of the wise feminine voice that Avraham had with Sarah and Yitzchak had with Rivka. Would Yosef have had that special coat had Yaakov had Rachel's counsel?



#### 7TH ALIYA (36:20-43)

Esav's descendants are enumerated: nations and kings.

As with Yishmael, Esav's family is detailed. This is the end of the story of who is in the Jewish people and who out. The rest of the Torah is the story of Yaakov and his family, all of whom are the Jewish people.



## HAFTORAH OVADIAH 1:1-21

This week's Haftorah taken from the book of Ovadiah describes the punishment that will ultimately be brought upon Edom, the descendant of Esav. This theme relates directly to Esav's conflict with Yaakov which is highlighted in the Torah reading.

The navi Ovadiah is a convert to Judaism and had his own roots in the Edomite people. The Edomites did not offer to help Judea when they were attacked by the Babylonians. Many years later the Edomites, who are associated with the Roman Empire, were responsible for destroying the Second Beit Hamikdash and caused untold suffering and pain upon the Jewish nation.

Although the Roman Empire was one of the most formidable and powerful nations to rule the world, the prophet of Israel reveals the following: "The house of Yaakov shall be fire and the house of Yosef a flame, and the house

of Esav shall become stubble, and they shall ignite them and consume them..."

The Haftorah then describes the division of Esav's land amongst the returning exiles. This memorable haftorah ends with the well known verse: "And saviors shall ascend Mount Zion to judge the mountain of Esav, and the Lord shall have the kingdom." ■



### STATS

8<sup>th</sup> of 54 sedras; 8<sup>th</sup> of 12 in Bereshit.  
Written on 237 lines; rank 11<sup>th</sup>.  
9 Parshiot - 6 Petuchot; 3 Setumot.  
153 pesukim - 4<sup>th</sup> (1<sup>st</sup> in Bereshit), tied with Noach, but more words and letters.  
1976 words - 6<sup>th</sup> (4<sup>th</sup> in Bereshit).  
7458 letters - 6<sup>th</sup> (4<sup>th</sup> in Bereshit).



### MITZVOT

One mitzvah in Vayishlach, one of 3 in the book of B'reishit. The only prohibition of the Torah's 365 in Bereshit - Gid HaNasheh.

## A SHORT VORT

BY RABBI CHANUCH YERES  
RAV, BEIT KNESSET BEIT YISRAEL, YEMIN MOSHE

ואת לאה וילדיה אחרנים ואת רחל ואת יוסף אחרנים (לג:ב)

"And he put Leah and children last, and Rachel and Yosef last." (33:2)

How can Leah and her children be placed "last" if the pasuk describes Rachel and Yosef being placed also "last"?

Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki 1040-1105) explains here that the Pasuk is stressing the beloved endearment for Rachel and Yosef by Yaakov. "Acharon Acharon Chaviv". The ones mentioned last of all are the ones most beloved.

Tosefot Yom Tov (Rabbi Yom-Tov Lipman Heller 1579-1654, Poland) (Dmai 7:3) asserts that in the Prophets the word "Acharon" does not always mean "the last" but instead has the meaning of "next". This can be seen in the prediction of Chaggai, the prophet (2:9) where it states, "The glory of this FINAL Beit Hamikdash will be greater than that of the first." Chaggai was referring to the Second Temple and still relates to it as the "Final" Temple, misleading people to believe that the Second Temple would be the last Temple. Therefore, "last" really means "the next". This can also be seen in Shemot (4:8) when Moshe is assigned the task of bringing "three" miracles before Pharaoh, and yet, the second miracle of turning the water into blood is also referred to as the "last" sign.



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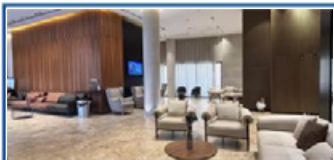
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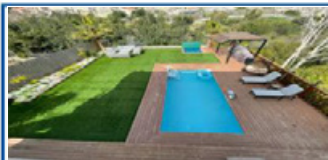
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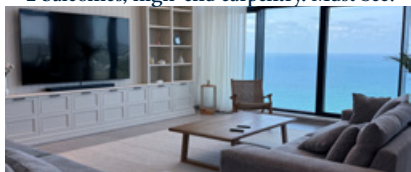
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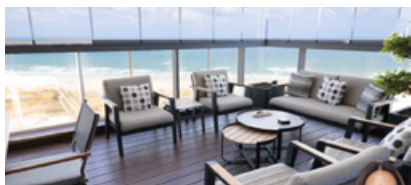
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# THE PERSON IN THE PARSHA

BY RABBI DR. TZVI HERSH WEINREB  
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## “Nameless”

There is something special about meeting up with an old friend that one hasn't seen in years. I recently had just such a special experience, when I spent a weekend in a community where a friend I hadn't seen in ten years resides.

Of course, we spent much of the time catching up with each other's lives. He showed me a book he had just written, the product of many years of research on his part. He gave me the book as a gift, and I opened it to find that it was dedicated to a rabbi who had passed away some years ago, who had made *aliyah* to Israel together with the famed *alter*, or old man, of Slobodka, Rabbi Nossin Tzvi Finkel, in the mid-1920s.

I asked him what his connection was to the old rabbi. He told me that this rabbi was one of those anonymous scholars who can be found only in Jerusalem. He was someone with no official position, who lived in poverty,

but who would gladly teach any young yeshiva student who would ask for time with him. He was almost nameless, and, in the world's eyes, was insignificant, although my friend attributes all of his considerable Talmudic erudition to him. In gratitude, he dedicated his book to this sad soul, who now has a "name."

Reflecting upon this, I soon realized that I too had similar experiences, and that many people have influenced me who are, in a sense, nameless. I recall, for example, the rabbi, diminutive in stature but superlative in pedagogical skill, who was retained by my parents to teach me Talmud during summer vacations. I studied with him intensely in my early teens and then forgot about him until relatively recently, when I came to realize how much of my modest skill in Talmud I owe to him.

In this week's Torah portion, *Vayishlach*, we encounter just such a person. She unobtrusively walked onto the stage of the drama of the biblical patriarchs and matriarchs in the portion we read three weeks ago, *Chayei Sarah*. There we read (*Genesis* 24:59) "... And they sent away Rebecca, their sister, and her nursemaid, and Abraham's servant..." We learn of this nursemaid's existence, but we are not told her name. Indeed, we do not hear of her at all again.

That is, not until this week's Torah portion. This Shabbat, we will read (*Genesis* 35:8), "And Deborah, Rebecca's nurse, died, and she was buried below Bethel under the oak; and the name of it was called the Oak

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of Weeping." We learned that her name was Deborah and that Jacob and his family sorely grieved and mourned for her.

It is left to our imagination, and to the *midrash* and commentaries, to speculate about her activities and relationships during the many years from the time she escorted her mistress to the land of Canaan until her sad demise so many years later.

Our rabbis tell us that she was sent by Rebecca to bring Jacob from his long exile in the land of Haran back to the land of Canaan. After all, when Rebecca encouraged Jacob to flee, she promised him that when it was safe, she would "send for you and fetch you." (*Genesis 27:45*). It was Deborah whom she sent to retrieve Jacob, to bring Jacob back.

Deborah then spent much time, probably many years, with Jacob and Rachel and Leah and their growing family. As is evident from the fact that her death occasioned such profound grief that it is memorialized in this week's Torah portion, she must have been much loved. I always imagine that she served as the grandmother figure for all the sons and the daughter of Jacob who grew up without the advantage of a nearby *bubby*.

For me, as for the old friend with whom I was briefly reconnected this past weekend, Deborah is an archetype of the nameless soul who makes a powerful impact upon us, and who is forgotten for a very long time until we finally remember him and "name" him. Rebecca's nursemaid had no name when we first learned of her existence. Only when she passes on, do we finally learn, under the Oak of Weeping, that her name was Deborah.

The name of my summertime teacher from so long ago? We called him "Rabbi Abramchik," and although I remember him fondly,

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and he clearly was a major influence in my life, I never knew his first name until he passed away several years ago. It was only then that I learned from his obituary that his first name was Yakov.

Perhaps it is of Deborah and of Rabbi Abramchik that the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said in the Name of the Almighty:

"I will give them, in My House  
And within My walls,  
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## Fear or Distress?

Jacob and Esau are about to meet again after a separation of twenty-two years. It is a fraught encounter. Once, Esau had sworn to kill Jacob in revenge for what he saw as the theft of his blessing. Will he do so now – or has time healed the wound? Jacob sends messengers to let his brother know he is coming. They return, saying that Esau is coming to meet Jacob with a force of four hundred men. We then read:

Jacob was acutely afraid and distressed.  
(*Bereishit* 32:8)

The question is obvious. Jacob is in the grip of strong emotions. But why the tautology, the duplication of verbs? What is the difference between being afraid and being distressed? To this a Midrash gives a profound answer:

Rabbi Judah bar Ilai said: Are not fear and distress identical? The meaning, however, is that “he was afraid” that he might be killed. “He was distressed” that he might kill. For Jacob thought: If he prevails against me, will he not kill me; while if I prevail against him, will I not kill him? That is the meaning of “he

was afraid” – lest he should be killed; “and distressed” – lest he should kill.

The difference between being afraid and distressed, according to the Midrash, is that the first is a physical anxiety; the second a moral one. It is one thing to fear one’s own death, quite another to contemplate being the cause of someone else’s. However, a further question now arises. Surely self-defence is permitted in Jewish law? If Esau were to try to kill Jacob, Jacob would be justified in fighting back, if necessary at the cost of Esau’s life. Why then should this possibility raise moral qualms? This is the issue addressed by Rabbi Shabbetai Bass, author of the commentary on Rashi, *Sifte Chachamim*:

One might argue that Jacob should surely not be distressed about the possibility of killing Esau, for there is an explicit rule: “If someone comes to kill you, forestall it by killing him.” Nonetheless, Jacob did have qualms, fearing that in the course of the fight he might kill some of Esau’s men, who were not themselves intent on killing Jacob but merely on fighting Jacob’s men. And even though Esau’s men were pursuing Jacob’s men, and every person has the right to save the life of the pursued at the cost of the life of the pursuer, nonetheless there is a condition: “If the pursued could have been saved by



maiming a limb of the pursuer, but instead the rescuer killed the pursuer, the rescuer is liable to capital punishment on that account.” Hence Jacob feared that, in the confusion of battle, he might kill some of Esau’s men when he might have restrained them by merely inflicting injury on them.

The principle at stake, according to the *Siftei Chachamim*, is the minimum use of force. Jacob was distressed at the possibility that in the heat of conflict he might kill some of the combatants when injury alone might have been all that was necessary to defend the lives of those – including himself – who were under attack.

There is, however, a second possibility, namely that the Midrash means what it says, no more, no less: that Jacob was distressed at the possibility of being forced to kill even if that were entirely justified.

At stake is the concept of a moral dilemma. A dilemma is not simply a conflict. There are many moral conflicts. May we perform an abortion to save the life of the mother? Should we obey a parent when he or she asks us to do something forbidden in Jewish law? May we break Shabbat to extend the life of a terminally ill patient? These questions have answers. There is a right course of action and a wrong one. Two duties conflict and we have meta-*halachic* principles to tell us which takes priority. There are some systems in which all moral conflicts are of this kind. There is always a decision procedure and thus a determinate answer to the question, “What shall I do?”

A dilemma, however, is a situation in which there is no right answer. I ought not to do A (allow myself to be killed); I ought not to do B (kill someone else); but I must do one



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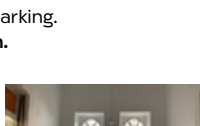
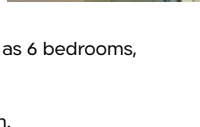
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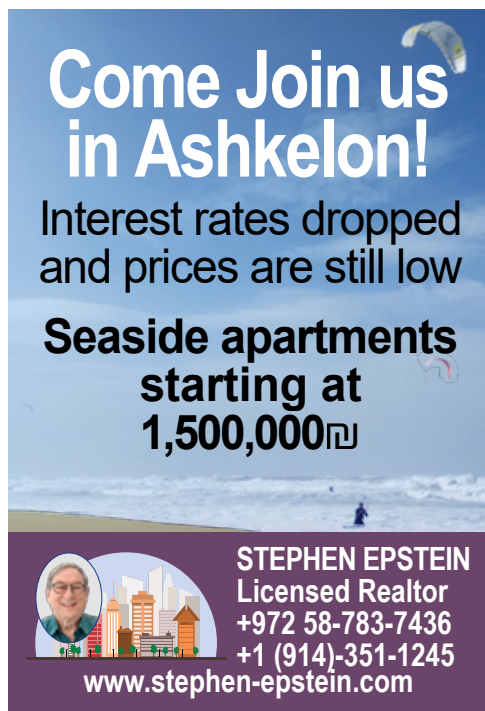
or the other. To put it more precisely, there may be situations in which doing the right thing is not the end of the matter. The conflict may be inherently tragic. The fact that one principle (self-defence) overrides another (the prohibition against killing) does not mean that, faced with such a choice, I am without qualms. Sometimes being moral means that I experience distress at having to make such a choice. Doing the right thing may mean that I do not feel remorse or guilt, but I still feel regret or grief that I had to do what I did.

A moral system which leaves room for the existence of dilemmas is one that does not attempt to eliminate the complexities of moral life. In a conflict between two rights or two wrongs, there may be a proper way to act (the lesser of two evils, or the greater of two goods), but this does not cancel out all

emotional pain. A righteous individual may sometimes be one who is capable of distress even when they know they have acted rightly. What the *Midrash* is telling us is that Judaism recognises the existence of dilemmas. Despite the intricacy of Jewish law and its meta-*halachic* principles for deciding which of two duties takes priority, we may still be faced with situations in which there is an ineliminable cause for distress. It was Jacob's greatness that he was capable of moral anxiety even at the prospect of doing something entirely justified, namely defending his life at the cost of his brother's.

That characteristic – distress at violence and potential bloodshed even when undertaken in self-defence – has stayed with the Jewish people ever since. One of the most remarkable phenomena in modern history was the reaction of Israeli soldiers after the Six Day War in 1967. In the weeks preceding the war, few Jews anywhere in the world were unaware that Israel and its people faced terrifying danger. Troops – Egyptian, Syrian, Jordanian – were massing on all its borders. Israel was surrounded by enemies who had sworn to drive its people into the sea. In the event, it won one of the most stunning military victories of all time. The sense of relief was overwhelming, as was the exhilaration at the re-unification of Jerusalem and the fact that Jews could now pray (as they had been unable to do for nineteen years) at the Western Wall. Even the most secular Israelis admitted to feeling intense religious emotion at what they knew was an historic triumph.


Yet, in the months after the war, as conversations took place throughout Israel, it became clear that the mood among those who had taken part in the war was anything



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but triumphal. It was sombre, reflective, even anguished. That year, the Hebrew University in Jerusalem gave an honorary doctorate to Yitzhak Rabin, Chief of Staff during the war. During his speech of acceptance, he said:

“We find more and more a strange phenomenon among our fighters. Their joy is incomplete, and more than a small portion of sorrow and shock prevails in their festivities, and there are those who abstain from celebration. The warriors in the front lines saw with their own eyes not only the glory of victory but the price of victory: their comrades who fell beside them bleeding, and I know that even the terrible price which our enemies paid touched the hearts of many of our men. It may be that the Jewish people has never learned or accustomed itself to feel the triumph of conquest and victory, and therefore we receive it with mixed feelings.”

A people capable of feeling distress, even in victory, is one that knows the tragic complexity of the moral life. Sometimes it is not enough to make the right choice. One must also fight to create a world in which such choices do not arise because we have sought and found non-violent ways of resolving conflict. ■

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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# Finding The Final Closure

Sefer Ovadya that we read as our haftarah this Shabbat, focuses upon but one theme - the destruction of Edom, the descendants of Eisav, a penalty for the many years of their hatred and mistreatment of Israel, the offspring of Ya'akov, Eisav's brother. The nevu'ah of Ovadya is rather straightforward, depicting the abusive behavior of Edom toward Israel and the eventual destruction of the Edomite kingdom itself.

Interestingly, Sefer Ovadya is the only book in the Tanach that contains but one perek and has the least p'sukim and the fewest words of all other sifrei nevu'ah. Nonetheless, despite its succinct length, there is much for us to uncover in this haftarah - especially regarding **who** this navi was, from **which** family/tribe did he come and **when** did he prophesy.

Chazal suggest that Ovadya was the self-same

individual mentioned in Sefer M'lachim A (chp. 18) as the righteous attendant/palace "administrator" of the wicked King Ach'av. The fact that his one nevu'ah centers upon Edom and the fact that the text never include the name of his father or of his tribe, led our ancient scholars to see Ovadya as an Edomite convert - one who condemned his former nation's cruelty toward Israel [see Sanhedrin 39b].

However, other parshanim (including the Ibn Ezra) regard Ovadya as a prophet who served Israel during the years of Churban Bayit Rishon, and was a contemporary of Yirmiyahu HaNavi. These commentators point to a number of his quotations that echo the words we find in Sefer Yirmiyahu [see perek 49] and see support for their approach in our haftarah's harsh reproach of Edom's treacherous behavior during the Babylonian invasion [verse 11]:

**"[For] the day you stood afar [when] ... strangers captured their (Israel's) wealth and foreigners came to the gates and cast a lottery on Jerusalem - YOU TOO were like one of them"**

The two p'sukim that follow continue in berating Edom for their deceitful behavior against their brother, Israel, when Yerushalayim was attacked - a powerful censure that, logically, would have been spoken during the era of the Churban. Undoubtedly, it was for this reason that, in the prophecies of Yirmiyahu, Amos and Yechezkel, we find the name "Edom" as a general term for the foes of Israel-even those who, according to some

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commentaries, tormented Israel during the second Temple - when the nation of Edom no longer existed!

And yet, Chazal are adamant in stating that this foretold destruction of the nation of Edom could be avoided were she to change her ways and treat Israel with kindness and compassion - as a brother should. In fact, we can read the words of Ovadya himself who, when speaking of the sins of Edom, repeats and emphasizes how their behavior was particularly odious as it targeted the descendants of their own forefather, Avraham, and were, therefore, “brothers” to Israel [see verses 10, 12].

These p’sukim had Chazal resolutely state that this foretold destruction of Edom could be avoided were she to change her ways and treat Israel with kindness and compassion - as a brother should. In fact, Rav Yehuda Shaviv sees the haftarah as a logical closure to the unfinished saga found in the parasha itself. The story of Ya’akov vs Eisav as depicted in the Torah finds the two parting from each other with the promise to reunite at Seir (Breishit 33:14. But that never occurred.

The ultimate reunion of the two, as Rav Shavit sees it, is found in the final verse of the haftarah: when Eisav/Edom reconnects to Ya’akov/Yisra’el only when she is judged for her treatment of Israel and recognizes that “V’hay’ta LaShem Ham’lucha” - the ultimate kingship belongs to Hashem.

Only when the nation of Eisav faces the people of Ya’akov and accepts the universal sovereignty of the G-d of Israel – only then will the incomplete saga find a final closure. ■



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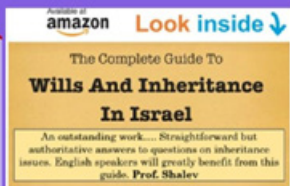
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# The Power of Sincere Prayer

In this week's parasha, we read of the passing of Rachel Imeinu. Rachel's life is short and filled with challenges. She yields her place to her sister Leah, remains childless for many years, and ultimately dies giving birth to Binyamin. Yet, centuries later, the prophet Yirmiyahu (31:10), paints a moving picture of Rachel's eternal role in the destiny of her children:

רַחֵל מְבַכָּה עַל-בָּנֶיהָ... מִנְעִי קוֹלְךָ מִבְּכִי וְעֵינֶיךָ  
מִדְמָעָה כִּי יֵשׁ שָׂכָר לַפְּעֻלָּתְךָ נְאֻמָּה וְשָׁבוּ מֵאֶרֶץ  
אֲוִיב... וְשָׁבוּ בָנִים לְגִבּוֹלָם.

*"Rachel is weeping for her children... Refrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears, for there is reward for your work, says Hashem, and they shall return from the land of the enemy... and the children shall return to their own border."*

Rachel's tears pierce the heavens. God promises her that her cry will not go

unanswered — that her children, scattered and exiled, will one day return home. Many have prayed throughout the generations, and their prayers seemed to go unanswered. Why, then, does God respond to Rachel's cry?

Rabbi Shlesinger, in *Eleh HaDevarim*, references the Gemara in Berachot (32b), which teaches that after the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash, *"the gates of prayer were locked — but the gates of tears remained open."* This refers not only to physical tears but also to inner tears — the deep, wordless cries of the *neshama* (soul). When a person turns to Hashem with complete dependence, with no illusions of self-reliance, those tears reach the heavenly gates that never close. Crying is not a sign of weakness; it is an act of profound faith. It expresses the soul's surrender to God.

Below are a few examples that illustrate the extraordinary power of sincere tefillah.

## KOHEN GADOL'S REQUEST

When the Kohen Gadol completed his sacred service on Yom Kippur, he would offer a unique prayer:

—*"ולא תכנס לפניך תפילתן של עובדי דרכים"*—*"May the prayers of travelers not enter before You."* After the festivals, travelers returning home might pray that it does not rain on their journeys. Yet the nation as a whole prays for rain and blessing. Why, then, was there

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concern that the prayers of a few travelers might outweigh those of the many?

The Saba of Kelm explains that the prayers of the travelers are offered with *absolute sincerity*. They fear for their safety and plead for mercy. Such tefillot, born of genuine need and emotion — “inner tears” — can ascend with great power.

### MOTHER OF KOHEN GADOL'S REQUEST

A second example appears in Makkot (11a). The Gemara relates that the mother of the Kohen Gadol would send food and clothing to those exiled in the *arei miklat* (cities of refuge), lest they pray for her son's death — for only upon the death of the Kohen Gadol could they be released. Why would she fear the prayers of these negligent killers? Because they had no other hope. Their only recourse was heartfelt prayer. Such tefillot, stripped of pretense, can be devastatingly effective.

### CHANA'S PRAYERS

So too we find with Chana, who prayed for a child: “וַתִּתְפַּלֵּל עַל ה' וַיִּכְּזוּ תַּבְּכָהּ” — “She prayed to Hashem and wept bitterly” (I Shmuel 1:10). Her tears were not a failure of faith but its highest expression. She poured her soul out before God — and her prayer was answered.

We, too, pray three times a day. Yet routine

often dulls the heart. The words may pass our lips, but not always our souls. The lesson of Rachel Imeinu, of the travelers, of the individuals in the *arei miklat*, and of Chana is that Hashem responds to sincerity — to the cry that comes from the deepest part of the human heart.

Prayer is not measured by eloquence but by authenticity. When our words are infused with emotion, vulnerability, and truth — when we stand before Hashem as Rachel did, with nothing but tears and faith — our voices are heard beyond all gates. May our own cries rise together with hers, hastening the day when Hashem's promise will be fulfilled: “וְשָׁבוּ בָנִים לְגְבוּלָם” — “*And the children shall return to their own borders.*” May we soon see a complete redemption, and dwell in Eretz Yisrael in peace and joy. ■

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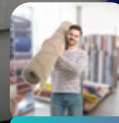
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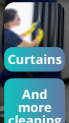
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# Angelic Ambassadors

Our *parashah* opens with Yaakov Avinu sending “*malachim*” to his brother Eisav with a message of reconciliation. “*Malachim*” can be understood to mean human messengers, a delegation of sorts, sent by Yaakov Avinu to greet the brother he hasn’t seen in so many years. Rashi however offers an alternate explanation, the “*malachim*” were actually celestial angels. Yet, why the need for angels? Why would Yaakov opt to send otherworldly beings rather than his own servants or attendants?

The author of *Machshevet Mussar* shares a meaningful explanation. Yaakov Avinu understood that the whole world, including the divine spheres as well as the lower, earthly elements, were created to serve mankind. One must believe, “*bishvili nivra ha’olam*— the world was created for me.” (*Sandhedrin* 37a). With this perspective, it was only natural for Yaakov Avinu to claim the assistance of angels for the dangerous

mission of approaching Eisav. Indeed, we are familiar with *chazal*’s teaching that two angels escort a person to his home from shul on Friday night. When we sing “*shalom aleichem*,” we acknowledge these heavenly beings that were sent to serve and protect us.

“Rabbi Eliezer ben Jacob said: One who performs a single mitzvah acquires for himself an advocate.” (Avot 4:11) Many commentators interpret this “advocate” as a good angel created by the performance of a mitzvah, which then intercedes on the person’s behalf in the heavenly court. Rav Lopian *zt”l* in *Lev Eliyahu* teaches that these angels “go up” to heaven to protect the person, and “go down” to bring positive energy and goodness to his life. It was these such angels, generated from Yaakov Avinu’s mitzvot, that he sent to Eisav. We find this hinted to in the verse, “*Vayishlach Yaakov malachim lefanav*—Yaakov sent angels ahead of him,” (*Bereisheet* 32:4) these angels were continuously present before Yaakov Avinu, to protect and safeguard him from harm.

In *Darash Moshe* Rav Moshe Feinstein *zt”l* asks, why did Yaakov Avinu feel the need to go beyond the natural and use these angels? He responds that from Yaakov Avinu’s perspective, the world of natural and supernatural were both available at his disposal, offering equal opportunity for his use.

Rav Chaim Volozhin *zt”l* in *Nefesh Hachaim*

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explains that when a person decides to do a mitzvah, he generates a holy light that surrounds him and enables him to connect with the Divine. This idea is reflected in the word “*asher kideshanu*—who sanctifies,” that we find in many brachot. A mitzvah elevates us to the highest worlds and generates boundless connection. It is no wonder that the power of a mitzvah can create spiritual angels that become advocates and protectors for those that create them.

If we were to envision how each mitzvah we do creates an angel that envelops and protects us, we would develop a deeper appreciation of each element in our world’s function that is here to serve us. Thus, we would genuinely relate to Rashi’s interpretation and it would be no wonder that Yaakov Avinu tapped into the most obvious recourse available. ■



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## SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR  
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During these Shabbatot of *Chodesh Kislev*, it is interesting to note that many *meforshim* suggest that the various *parshiyot* of this time of year are somehow each connected with, or meant to prepare us for Chanukah.

*Parshat Vayishlach* contains within it, the powerful account of *Yaakov Avinu* wrestling with the mysterious *Ish*, on the night before he is to re-engage with his brother *Eisav*. The *pasuk* tells us:

*Vivateir Yaakov Levado, VaYaaveik Ish Imo, Ad Alot HaShachar- And Yaakov was alone, and a man wrestled with him, until the light of dawn.*

There are many questions and powerful messages that are connected to this verse, but I'd like to specifically address, how could it be, that *Yaakov*, who is traveling with a large entourage of people and herds of cattle and sheep, is suddenly left alone?

**Rashi**, quoting the *Gemara* in *Chulin*, says that *Yaakov* had forgotten some small jars or canisters, and he left his entourage to retrieve those jars.

**Rabbeinu Bechaya** takes this idea a step further. He says our verse could be read

or understood slightly differently, *al tikra levado, eleh lekado*- Do not read that *Yaakov* was alone, rather that he went to retrieve a specific jar or canister that he possessed.

What exactly was this specific canister that *Yaakov Avinu* suddenly went to retrieve?

**Rebbe Meir Horowitz**, the ***Imrei Noam of Dzhikov, zy'a***, offers a very novel explanation. The Rebbe explains that this special container was a jar of olive oil, but not just any jar of olive oil.

*Noach* sent forth a *yonah*- a dove to see if the waters of the flood had subsided. Of course, this *yonah* returned to the *teiva*, with an olive branch in its beak. The olives from the branch that *Noach* received from the dove were made into **pure olive oil**. The oil was given to *Noach's* first born son, *Shem*. *Shem*, otherwise known as *Malchitzedek*, whom the Torah describes as a **Kohein to the Almighty Hashem!** *Malchitzedek/ Shem* sealed this little jar of oil and gave it to *Avraham* as a gift. *Avraham*, in turn, handed it over to *Yitzchak* who passed it down to *Yaakov*. **According to our sages, *Yaakov* forgot some small jars and returned to retrieve them. One of these jars was the oil from the dove that returned to the *teiva*. *Yaakov* prophetically hid this oil at the site of the *Beit Hamikdash* and laid the foundations for the miracle of *Chanukah*.** This is the oil that originated with the dove, the symbol of peace. The Rebbe concludes that *Noach's* name, which comprises the letters *nun* and *chet*, is actually



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an allusion to the words **Nes Chanukah....**

*Yaakov Avinu* , even as he feels alone, as he is about to encounter his brother *Eisav*, with great trepidation, realizes through his *ruach hakodesh*, that he has arrived at the sacred space where the future *Beit HaMikdash* will stand, and he suddenly realizes that he must place that small jar of oil that has been handed down to him, that very jar of oil that *Noach* passed onto *Shem*, and hide it safely away, so that one day, the *Chashmonaim*, will find this oil, and miraculously restore the light of *Torah* in the world, through the *nes pach hashemen*.

The great *Yerushalmi Mekubal*, **Rav Gamliel Rabinovitch**, *shlita* suggests that the entire episode of the *nes pach hashemen* is beyond human comprehension. The *Chashmonaim* find that tiny jar of oil which clearly is barely enough oil to burn for one night, and yet they do not despair! If *Hashem* provided them with that tiny amount of oil at that moment, then clearly it was meant to be that at that moment they should indeed use that oil and kindle those lights; and as result of that determination, they merited to experience and witness the miraculous occurrence of the oil lasting for eight days!

May each of us aspire to emulate *Yaakov Avinu*, to have the capacity in trying times to look inward rather than feeling alone. May we merit to discover our innate spiritual strength, to follow in the footsteps of the *Chashmonaim*, and begin to see the potential light we might bring forth to the world. May we have the fortitude to overcome fear and despair, and to push forward and bring light and continued goodness into our lives and the lives of others, and for subsequent generations. ■




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Rebbe Pinchas of Koretz was both a disciple and friend of the Baal Shem Tov, and was one of those most concerned with ensuring that the holy legacy of the founder of the Chasidic movement be preserved in its purity. Reb Pinchas believed that the lofty teachings of Chasidus and secrets of the Torah ought to be safeguarded, and he opposed any mainstream *Hafatza* or widespread publication. Others, including the Alter Rebbe, Reb Shneur Zalman, felt differently.

One day, while the two tzadikim were together in Mezeritch, they found notes of Chasidic teachings in the garbage. Reb Pinchas pointed at the disrespect shown to the Torah as proof that they shouldn't be so free in spreading the teachings of their beloved Rebbe to those who don't fully understand or appreciate it.

The Alter Rebbe continued to disagree:

"Once there was a great king who had an only son who fell gravely ill. All the great medical experts had given up hope for a cure. A call went out throughout the land, which was answered by a sage who knew of a miraculous remedy for the sick prince: a rare, hard-to-find gemstone contained the elements necessary to heal him. If found, the gem was to be ground into a fine powder, mixed with wine and

administered to the prince to drink.

The King knew that only one of these jewels existed in all of the kingdom, and it was affixed as the centerpiece of the royal crown. Removing



Baal HaTanya zt"l

this gem would mean dismantling the crown, and degrading the symbol of his majesty. While some of those closest to the king were crestfallen that the royal crown would be dismantled, the king was overjoyed, and instructed that they begin to prepare the healing potion. Good news! Salvation, it seemed, was on the way.

At that moment, messengers entered and shared a heartbreaking update: the prince's condition had worsened drastically, so much so that he couldn't swallow. This development seemed to make the sacrifice of the royal gem a moot point; if the prince was in such a state, at least the royal crown ought to be preserved. Nonetheless, the king insisted that they continue preparing the potion: 'Of what value is my crown if my beloved son does not live? Grind up the gemstone and mix the potion right away! Do everything in your power that even a single drop enter his mouth, so that he be healed and live!'"

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**12:20 PM**

Unlocking the Messages of Chazal  
Rabbi Shai Finkelstein

## TORAH TUESDAYS WITH THE WOMEN'S DIVISION

Classes @ Beit Knesset HaNassi, 24 Ussishkin St. Rechavia

**THERE WILL BE NO CLASSES THIS WEEK**

## MODIIN-THE BAIS

Men's Programs in Modiin Yeshivat Hesder Meir Harel,  
Emek Beit Shean 53, Modiin

**10:00AM -2:00PM**

Weekly Kollel Boker-Instructors include  
Rabbi David Fine  
Rabbi Ian Shaffer

Rabbi Aschi Dick  
Rabbi Avi Herzog

**1:00PM- NEW!!!**

Modiin Lunch and Learn with  
Rabbi Aschi Dick  
Masamerica Offices, 28 Dam HaMacabbiim St,  
3rd Floor, Shiur followed by mincha at 1:45pm

**7:30 PM** Men's Safrut in **MODIIN**

Rabbi Phil Schajer

**7:30 PM** Men's Safrut in **BEIT SHEMESH**

Rabbi Elie Levi

### SPECIAL EVENT:

**8:00 PM**

Special Modiin  
Community Shiur with  
Rabbi Yaakov Glasser,  
Kehilat Shaarei Yonah  
Menachem,  
13 Ephraim St., Modiin

# This Week's Inspirational Torah Learning with OU Israel

**WEDNESDAY  
DEC 10**

## COMMUNITY BEIT MIDRASH IN RECHAVIA



### PRE - CHANUKA YOM IYUN

at Bet Knesset HaNassi,  
24 Ussishkin St., Rechavia

**9:00AM**

**Rabbi Joel Kenigsberg** Inside or  
Outside? Where Chanukah's Light  
Truly Belongs

**9:30 AM**

Mixing Meat & Milk with Chanuka  
Candles **Rabbi Dr. Aaron Adler**

**10:15 AM**

Chanuka in Halacha and Hashkafa  
**Rabbi Anthony Manning**

**11:00 AM**

Lighting the Menora with Rav Kook  
**Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider**

**11:45 AM**

Ad Shetichleh Regel: Sharing the  
Miraculous ,Finding Strength from  
Within **Rabbi Sam Shor**

**12:30 PM**

The Role of Women in the Chanuka  
Story **Dr. Deborah Polster**

**THURSDAY  
DEC 11**

## COMMUNITY BEIT MIDRASH IN ARNONA

Classes @ Bet Knesset Shai Agnon,  
11 Rechov Leib Yaffe, Arnona

**9:15 AM**

Parshat HaShavua  
**Rabbi Ari Kahn**

**10:30AM**

Parashat Hashavua  
**Rabbi Baruch Taub**

**8:00 PM**

Halachic Controversies- (the Bais)  
**Rabbi Aschi Dick**  
@ Bet Knesset Ohel Yitzchak,  
Keren Hayesod Street



# TORAH TIDBITS LIVE!

in Pardes Hanna *with* **Rabbi Sam Shor**

Shabbat Parshat Vayeishev | Dec 12-13

## FRIDAY :

**7:30 PM** Oneg Shabbat - Welcoming Remarks  
**Aleeza Ben Shalom**, Torah Tidbits contributor, followed by Tisch, Wine-Tasting, Niggunim & Shiur: *Noach, Yaakov and the Chashmonaim-The Backstory of the Nes Pach HaShemen*. @Ben Shalom Residence, Alon 33

## SHABBAT DAY:

**12:00 PM** Community Kiddush and Shiur: *Sod HaSevivon*  
Followed by Community Lunch @Heichal Yehudit, near 38 Hatzfira St.

## MOTZA'SH:

**7:30 PM** Melava Malka and shiur: *Tashlich in Tevet: Unlocking the Spiritual Potential of Chanuka* @ Neve Michael, near Hadarim St. 43

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Women's Division

# MOTHER-DAUGHTER PRE-CHANUKAH EVENT

Events taking place in multiple locations  
around Israel the week of Dec. 7



Mother-Daughter  
Chavruta Learning

Mini-Shiur

Kahoot  
Competition

Chanukah  
Art Project

- **Pardes Chana** (Klal Yisrael) - Sunday Dec 7
- **Efrat** (Zayit Raanan) - Monday Dec 8
- **Yerushalayim** (Women's Hub) - Monday Dec 8
- **Chashmonaim** (Rimon Shul) - Tuesday Dec 9
- **Beit Shemesh** (Carlebach) - Wednesday Dec 10
- **Ramot** (Ramatayim Tzofim) - Wednesday Dec 10
- **Modiin** (Darchei Tzion) - Thursday Dec 11

ALL EVENTS  
RUN FROM  
7:00-9:30PM



[www.ouisrael.org/events/md-chanukah2025](http://www.ouisrael.org/events/md-chanukah2025)

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## Lighting Our Flame Within: Chanuka & Our Eternal Role in Jewish Destiny



קהילות  
שערי יונה מנחם  
בירושלים - מודיעין

TUESDAY, DEC. 9 @ 8:00PM



A special Community Shiur with  
**Rabbi Yaakov Glasser**, Managing Director for  
Community Engagement at the Orthodox Union

Kehilat Shaarei Yonah Menachem,  
13 Ephraim Street, Buchman, Modiin



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EVENT STARTS

**19:30**



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# NextGen CHANUKAH PAINT NIGHT

IN RAMAT BEIT SHEMESH

**Lighting Our Flame Within: Chanukah  
& Our Eternal Role in Jewish Destiny**

Rabbi Yaakov Glasser,  
OU Managing Director for Community Engagement

**Paint Night!**

Paint a gorgeous Chanukah themed canvas to hang on your wall



**Sunday December 7, 8:00PM**



**Beit Knesset Mercazi, Mishkafayim  
8 Rechov Mordechai Eliyahu**



**30 NIS**



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## Rosh Chodesh Tevet

Women's Seminar in Beit Shemesh

**Tevet: Transformation through Tefilla**



**MRS. BASYA TEITELBAUM**

Words of Introduction by  
OU Beit Shemesh Coordinator



**MRS. KAREN HOCHHAUSER**

Roles, Goals, and Relationships:  
A Study in Chanukah, Asara  
BTevet, and Tefillah



**RABBI ZEV WIENER**

Losing Yourself, and Finding  
Yourself, in Tefillah



**RABBI LEO DEE**

Tefillah &  
Emunah

**Musical Hallel**  
by Yocheved Shull with musical  
accompaniment by Miri Miller



**Monday, Dec. 22  
(ב' טבת)  
9:15 am - 1:00 pm**



**Beit Midrash Torani Leumi  
5 Reuven Street**



**50 NIS,  
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Register at: [ouisrael.org/events/tevet2025BS](https://ouisrael.org/events/tevet2025BS)





OU Israel in partnership with Bet Knesset HaNassi

# Pre-Chanuka Yom Iyun in Rechavia

WEDNESDAY | DEC. 10 | 8:45 AM-1:15 PM

**9 AM** Inside or Outside? Where  
Chanuka's light Truly Belongs

**Rabbi Joel Kenigsberg**

**9:30 AM** Mixing Meat and Milk  
with Chanuka Candles

**Rabbi Dr. Aaron Adler**

**10:15 AM** Chanuka in Halacha  
and Hashkafa **Rabbi Anthony  
Manning**

**11:00 AM** Lighting the Menora  
with Rav Kook

**Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider**

**11:45 AM** Ad Shetichleh  
Regel: Sharing the Miraculous,  
Finding Strength from Within  
**Rabbi Sam Shor**

**12:20 PM** The Role of  
Women in the Chanuka Story  
**Dr. Deborah Polster**

**1:00 PM** Mincha

**50 nis per person for the  
full morning of classes...  
Refreshments will be served**



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**Women's  
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## ROSH CHODESH TEVET



Women's Seminar in Yerushalayim

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**Monday, Dec. 22**

**9:15 am - 1:00 pm**

In loving memory of Mrs. Linda Pruwer-Brachfeld a"h



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**50 NIS,**  
Brunch will be served

Register at: [ouisrael.org/events/tevet2025](https://ouisrael.org/events/tevet2025)



Notification @ all high schoolers

# SAVE THE DATE

## 13/12

### MOTZI SHABBAT

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## Yom Iyun on Daniel, Ezra & Nechemia



**Chana Deutsch**  
Delving Deeper  
into Sefer Daniel



**Zemira Ozarowski**  
From Exile to Renewal: Timeless  
Lessons from Ezra for Our Times



**Leah Feinberg**  
Nechemia's Message:  
A Deeper Look



**BEIT KNESSET HANASI**  
Ussishkin 24



**Thursday, December 11**  
9:30 AM - 1:00 PM



**Sign up**  
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**50 NIS**



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### RABBI GOLDSCHIEDER'S SHIUR WED. 10<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER

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### RABBI ASCHI DICK'S MODIIN SHIURIM FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR

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### RABBI YOSSIE GOLDIN'S SHIUR

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### RABBI BREITOWITZ'S TUE. SHIUR

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### RABBI SHAI FINKELSTEIN TUE. SHIUR

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### RABBI ADLER'S WED. SHIUR

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### RABBI MANNING'S WED. SHIUR

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### RABBI GOLDSCHIEDER'S WED. SHIUR

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### RABBI TAUB'S WEEKLY THUR. PARSHAT HASHAVUA SHIUR

Sponsored by The Jewish Legacy Foundation

### RABBI ARI KAHN'S SHIUR

Sponsored for the 2025-2026 academic year by Rabbi Michael and Jeri Laxmeter for the refuah shleimah of their granddaughter Avigayil Sara bat Shaina Ahrona

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**Wednesdays 12-3pm**

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**RABBI MOSHE TARAGIN**

**RAM YESHIVAT HAR ETZION**

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# Wrestling Toward Strength

Ya'akov spent much of his life wrestling his way out of peril. He entered the world pursued by an older brother who later vowed to kill him, and he fled eastward, seeking refuge in a distant land. For twenty long years he remained concealed in Lavan's home, shielded by Hashem yet surrounded by duplicity.

## AVOIDING CONFLICT

Seven years into his exile, he suffered a crushing betrayal. Lavan swapped the bride he loved for the sister he hadn't chosen. Ya'akov didn't react in anger. He bore the frustration quietly and labored another seven years to marry Rachel.

But the manipulation did not end there. Lavan repeatedly shifted the terms of Ya'akov's wages, reshaping agreements at whim and without consent. Facing a relentless cycle of deceit, Ya'akov devised a quiet solution. He relinquished the entire flock,

asking only for the spotted and speckled—the weak and weathered animals that no shepherd desired. Through this measured retreat he eased the conflict and sidestepped a direct clash.

Eventually, troubling reports began to reach Ya'akov. Rumors circulated among Lavan's family, hinting at growing resentment. Sensing that his position was becoming unstable, Ya'akov once again chose to avoid confrontation. He gathered his household and quietly set out for Eretz Yisrael.

Yet his return was anything but simple. Esav was approaching with four hundred men, still carrying grievances from twenty years earlier. Hoping to ease the tension and prevent hostility, Ya'akov sent a substantial gift ahead, an attempt to calm Esav's anger before the two brothers finally met.

Time and again, when confronted by hostility, Ya'akov chooses a different path. He sidesteps confrontation, seeking peaceful ways to untangle himself from dangerous or volatile situations. He retreats when necessary, offers gestures of goodwill, and devises creative solutions when exploited. He rarely retaliates—and he never meets force with force.

## THE WRESTLER

Until that lonely night at the Yabok. Alone on the far side of the river, separated from his family with no escape and no shelter, he

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is suddenly attacked by a mysterious figure. With nowhere to flee and no option to avoid the encounter, Ya'akov is forced into a struggle he cannot sidestep.

For the first time, he goes on the offensive. He wrestles through the night and prevails, holding his ground until his adversary pleads to be released.

In that moment, everything shifts. The man who consistently evaded confrontation becomes a figure capable of standing firm and fighting when necessary.

His name reflects this transformation. *Ya'akov* evokes holding on to a heel—an image of standing behind another and operating from a position of vulnerability. It also suggests circling around obstacles and navigating challenges indirectly, relying on ingenuity rather than confrontation.

But now he becomes *Yisrael*—a name that signifies struggling with adversaries and prevailing. The man who once maneuvered around conflict is recast as one who can meet challenges directly and overcome them in the open, without retreat or subterfuge.

### QUIET STRATEGIES IN GALUT

Ya'akov's shift—from someone who survived through ingenuity and restraint to someone who could finally defend himself—mirrors the long arc of Jewish history.

For two thousand years, scattered across foreign lands, we seldom had the ability to “fight back.” As a vulnerable minority, facing discrimination and persecution, we had few avenues for active self-defense, political or military.

In difficult moments we relied on resourcefulness to endure. We used connections, negotiations, bribes, payments, and pacifying gestures to deflect hostility and lessen

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danger. And when those measures failed, we moved on, seeking places more welcoming or less threatening. We simply didn't possess the power to stand our ground and protect ourselves.

### RETREATING NO LONGER

All that has now changed. We have a Land of our own and the autonomy to protect it. At last, we can defend ourselves, responding to our enemies not only with words and appeals but with strength. For the first time in generations we possess a Jewish army—an army that shields our people and our homeland.

October 7th was not the first pogrom in Jewish history; it was the first pogrom that was followed by a war. Earlier attacks were followed only by silence and then by the next wave of violence. This time, the Jewish people stood up and fought back.

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Even beyond Israel, Jewish communities have organized politically and socially to defend their rights and confront the tidal surge of Jew-hatred now sweeping across the world.

As history draws nearer to its conclusion, the people of Ya'akov have become the people of Yisrael. For many, this transition is not simple. We grew accustomed to retreat, compromise, and accommodation; for centuries, force was never an option. Now—baruch Hashem—it is, yet some still struggle to adjust. That is the nature of historical change: old reflexes linger even as new realities take shape.

We are living in the Yisrael chapter of Jewish history, not the Ya'akov chapter. The era has shifted, and so must we.

### THE RESTRAINT OF "YISRAEL"

Yet, even Yisrael must navigate future confrontations with care. Strength does not erase the need for judgement. After wrestling with the mysterious figure and emerging victorious, Ya'akov could have allowed confidence to carry him into a direct clash with Esav. He might have abandoned his earlier plan of appeasement and relied solely on force.

But he does not. He measures every step, balancing readiness with restraint. He maintains his strategy: cautious preparation for

conflict alongside gestures meant to defuse it. This balanced approach succeeds. No blood is spilled, both brothers return home, and the crisis recedes—at least for that moment.

Ya'akov was not as fortunate in the aftermath of the crisis in Shechem. This time, his sons seized the initiative, attacking the people of Shechem after the abduction of their sister Dinah. Unlike Ya'akov, who consistently managed danger through strategy and restraint, they felt empowered to respond with force and to resolve the crisis through might.

Ya'akov is deeply troubled by their actions. He rebukes them sharply, uneasy with a path that abandons caution and invites needless peril. Decades later, on his deathbed, he again censures Shimon and Levi as he blesses his children. Their violent response had left a lasting mark on him, standing in contrast to the thoughtful and balanced approach he had always tried to embody.

Just because he has become Yisrael and now possesses the ability to defend himself directly does not mean that force should become his primary response. On the banks of the Yabok, with no escape and no alternative, he had no choice but to fight. But that moment was exceptional, not instructional. It reveals what he *can* do, not what he *prefers* to do.

Yisrael's instinct remains measured and strategic, not impulsively violent. That is why he criticizes his sons for rushing toward aggression in Shechem. Their instinctive reliance on force stands at odds with the careful balance he tried to uphold—a balance between strength and restraint, courage and judgment.

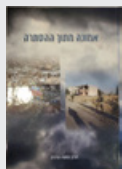
Though we have attained a Yisrael-like capacity to fight back against our enemies, we are not a bellicose people. Our instinct is still to seek peaceful resolution, to negotiate, to find

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common ground. When we are left without alternatives, we defend ourselves with strength and pursue justice against those who harm us. But even “Yisrael”, empowered and capable, often chose appeasement over violence.

As we live through the “Yisrael” stage of history, we must carry his lesson with us. Strength does not cancel the preference for peace. The ability to fight does not diminish the desire to avoid it. Our grandfather Yisrael showed that even when force becomes possible, the wiser path—whenever it can be taken—is the path of restraint and peace. ■



OU Press is honored to partner with Rabbi Moshe Taragin on his new volume in Hebrew regarding the recent war ('Emunah B'toch Hahastara). This remarkable book is also available in English, “Dark Clouds Above, Faith Below”

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## HAFTORAH INSIGHTS

BY REBBETZIN DR. ADINA  
SHMIDMAN  
DIRECTOR,  
OU WOMEN'S INITIATIVE



# Pride and Perception

Have you ever noticed that arrogance doesn't just change how we act — it changes our perspective? It convinces us that our perspective is the only one, and that our assumptions are reality. This was Edom's fatal flaw, as captured by Ovadiah in a single phrase: *וְדָוֶן לִבְךָ הַשִּׁיאָךְ*, *the arrogance of your heart has deceived you*. Their downfall begins not from the outside, but inside. High in their mountain strongholds, they declare: *כִּי יוֹרְדֵנִי אֶרְךְ*, *Who could ever bring me down?* It is not a question — it is blindness disguised as confidence.

Modern psychology affirms this truth. In a well-known 1999 study, researchers David Dunning and Justin Kruger demonstrated that people who are most convinced of their own correctness are often the least accurate

in self-assessment. Their certainty is not a sign of clarity — but of distortion. Arrogance blinds; humility allows perception.

Hashem answers Edom's delusion: *אִם תִּגְבֶּיִה כְּנֶשֶׁר ... מִשָּׁם אֲוִירֶיךָ*, *Even if you rise like an eagle — from there I will bring you down*. Arrogance elevates a person into illusion; humility brings one back to truth.

This message is lived by Ovadiah himself. Born into Edom, he chose humility and faith. Within the arrogance and corruption of Achav's court, he stayed rooted in Hashem, and that grounding gave him clarity and courage. Ovadiah demonstrated that humility is not weakness. It anchors us in reality, opens opportunity for truth, and keeps us connected to others and to Hashem.

Ovadiah ends with the vision that outlasts every empire: *וְהָיְתָה לַה' הַמְּלִיכָה*, *and the kingdom will be Hashem's*. Power shifts, pride collapses, and history turns — but humility before Hashem remains the truest form of strength and the clearest way of seeing. ■

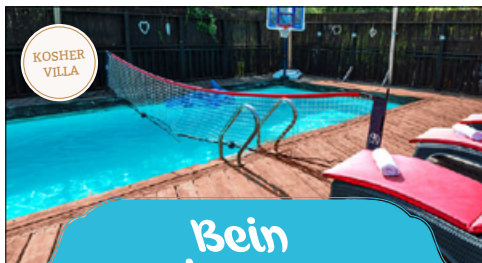
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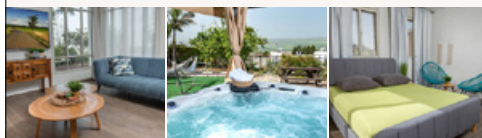
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# The Torah's Timeless Message of Parental Love

In Parshat Vayishlach, we read that when Yitzchak passed away, וַיִּקְבְּרוּ אוֹתוֹ עֵשָׂו וַיַּעֲקֹב וּבְנֵי “Esav and Yaakov his sons buried him” (Bereishit 35:29). It is a short and almost quiet pasuk, yet it reveals something profound. After all the years of conflict and separation, Esav returns to stand beside his brother in honoring their father. Somehow, even after a lifetime of drifting far from his family's path, Esav still felt bound to Yitzchak and to the family he came from. What caused him to remain connected?

Looking back in Parshat Toldot, perhaps we can find the answer. In Toldot, the Torah tells us: וַיֵּאָהֱבֵהוּ יִצְחָק אֶת עֵשָׂו - “Yitzchak loved Esav.” Many commentaries ask the obvious question - why does Yitzchak love Esav? Could Yitzchak not see who Esav was — a man of the field, a hunter, impulsive, even selling his birthright for a bowl of lentil soup? Was this the son to carry forward the spiritual legacy of Am Yisrael?

Yitzchak was not naïve. He knew Esav's nature and saw the pain it caused. When

Esav married two idol-worshipping women from the חֵתִי nation, the Torah says clearly וַתְּהִי־מִנְתָּה לְיִצְחָק וּלְרִבְקָה. “They were a source of grief to Yitzchak and Rivkah.” Yet despite his disappointment, Yitzchak's love for Esav never faded. The Torah emphasizes that love as something constant and deep.

And so the question remains – why? Some explain that Esav “hunted” his father Yitzchak with his words, deceiving him and pretending to be righteous in order to gain his affection and the bracha. **Rabbi Jonathan Sacks**, however, offers a very different and profoundly important explanation in the realm of parenting. He writes as follows -

*“Yitzchak loved Eisav because Eisav was his son, and that is what parents do. They love their children no matter what. This does not mean that Yitzchak thought Eisav was the right person to continue the covenant, or that he was happy with Eisav marrying Hittite women. The text explicitly says he was troubled by this. Yitzchak could see Eisav's true character. But he also knew that a parent must love their child because this is their child. They can still reproach them for their actions. But a parent does not disown their child, even when they are disappointed in them. Yitzchak was teaching us a fundamental lesson in parenthood.”*

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**Rabbi Don Tiomkin** (parenting expert and author of *Boser Melachim*) observes that in previous generations, parenting relied more heavily on rules and discipline. Today, however, those methods alone are no longer effective. Our generation, he writes, must be raised with love. Quoting the Chazon Ish, he explains that our role is *למשכם בעבותות — “to pull them in with ropes of love.”*

**Rav Shlomo Wolbe** adds that the strongest influence parents have in *chinuch* is the love bond itself (*Alei Shur*, vol. 1, p. 260). To be an effective parent, one must begin with genuine love.

Loving our children is something that comes naturally to most parents. However, **Rabbi Yechiel Yaakovson** (parenting expert and author of *אל תחסאו בילד*) warns that many parents assume their children “know” they are loved. But if love is not spoken, shown, and felt, it is often not known at all. He tells the story of a top yeshivah student who would cry whenever he saw a parent show affection to a child — because he had never experienced that warmth himself. We must therefore ensure that our children *feel* they are deeply loved — not for their achievements, but simply because they are our children.

As we know, everything in the physical world has a parallel in the spiritual world. Just as a parent’s love is constant, so, too, Hashem’s love for us is constant. Just as a parent’s greatest desire is that his child should want to be close to him, so too, Hashem’s greatest desire is that we should want to be close to Him. And regardless of whether or not we act in ways that show our desire for closeness with Him, Hashem continues to love us and care for us.

In **Devarim 14:1**, the Torah states: *בְּנִים אַתֶּם*,

*לַה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם*: “You are children of Hashem your God.” **Gemara Kiddushin 36a** brings a debate - Rabbi Yehuda held that this applies only when Jews behaved in a way worthy of being the children of God. However, Rabbi Meir said that it was unconditional: whether Jews behave like Hashem’s children or they do not, they are still called the children of Hashem.

**Rabbi Sacks** expands on this idea: *“The Jewish idea of Avinu Malkeinu, that our God, our King is first and foremost our Parent, is to instil the most profound emotions into our relationship with God. There is bound to be conflict, as all children sometimes conflict with their parents. The relationship can be fraught, even painful, yet what gives it its depth is the knowledge that it is unbreakable. Whatever happens, a parent is still a parent, and a child is still a child. The bond may be deeply damaged but it is never broken beyond repair”.*

Yitzchak’s love for Esav — unconditional, steadfast, and expressive — was not blindness. It was strength, a model for parental love and Hashem’s love for us. And it is precisely because of that love that Esav remained connected even years later. Unconditional love is not uncritical, but it is unbreakable. That is how Yitzchak loved Esav. That is how parents must love their children. And that is how Hashem loves us. ■

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## RABBI AARON GOLDSCHIEDER

EDITOR, TORAH TIDBITS  
RAV, THE JERUSALEM SHUL  
BAKA, JERUSALEM

# Holy and Whole

After a prolonged, arduous journey, Yaakov finally returns home to the land of Canaan (Genesis 33:18). Having escaped from the house of Lavan and survived the encounter with his adversarial brother Esav, he finally can settle into a new chapter of life. The Torah chooses a single word to encapsulate Yaakov's current physical, emotional, and spiritual state: *shalem*.

Rashi noted that, on the whole, Yaakov emerged from all the scrapes and struggles *shalem*, in the sense of intact or unbroken. "He was *shalem* in body, for his limp had healed. He was *shalem* in money, for he lost nothing on account of the tribute. He was *shalem* in Torah, for he forgot none of his learning in the house of Lavan."<sup>1</sup> Despite the stream of never-ending problems—one thing after the next—every aspect of Yaakov's existence in this world remained intact. In fact, he only came out stronger.

Rav Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook expanded upon Rashi's idea. Wholeness in body, finances, and spirit reflects Yaakov's

capacity to live a holistic life. He is now able to weave together the various threads of his life—the physical, financial, and intellectual-spiritual—so that they all share in the pursuit of the noble and the good. Yaakov reaches a stage in life in which he seamlessly integrates all aspects of his life into divine service. He is *shalem* in the sense of being made whole, of synthesizing the physical and the spiritual.<sup>2</sup>



Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook zt"l

We learn from Yaakov that the physical and financial need not be in conflict with the spiritual. To the contrary, these elements are the very foundations of a well-rounded, complete life, a life that is *shalem*. Yaakov embodies the notion that to live religiously is to let the spiritual into every area of our lives.

There is nothing neutral in life; every aspect can be directed to God. From this perspective, the seemingly mundane—eating, sleeping, conducting business—is no less part of God's service than the ritual observances of prayer, Torah study, and giving charity.

The Torah commands the entire Jewish people, "You shall be *tamim* with the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 18:13). Contextually, this is understood to mean that one must have faith in God alone and not engage in

1. Rashi on Genesis 33:18, s.v. שלם.

2. *Ein Ayah, Shabbat*, 2:284.

illicit practices, such as magic, divination, or communing with spirits.<sup>3</sup> *Targum Onkelos*, however, translates *tamim* as *shelim*, the Aramaic equivalent of *shalem*. According to this, *tamim* does not mean “pious” or “innocent,” but “well-rounded.” Perhaps the Torah foreshadows this unique aspect of Yaakov’s character when we are first introduced to him as an *ish tam* (Genesis 25:27).

Impressively, Yaakov was not satisfied with his own spiritual attainment and endeavored to teach it to others. The very same verse which calls him *shalem* tells us that he provided assistance to the city where he settled. The Sages instruct that “he encamped facing the city” (וַיִּחַן אֶת פְּנֵי הָעִיר) (Genesis 33:18) should be understood roughly as “he generously improved the face of the city.”<sup>4</sup> What kindness did he do for the city of Shechem? He established a monetary system, set up a marketplace, or erected bathhouses.<sup>5</sup> These contributions were not merely a reflection of his philanthropy. Yaakov was convinced that the underpinnings of ethical life begin with ennobling every sector of society. He implemented and modeled for others his

3. See, e.g., Rashi and Ramban ad loc.

4. Grammatically, the root is *chet, nun, hei*, but midrashically it is being read as *chet, nun, nun*.

5. *Shabbat* 33b.

conception of an integrated spiritual life.

What drove Yaakov to promote religious values and faith among non-Jews? Apparently, he felt responsible for the world as a whole. Rav Kook writes that part of actualizing our national *shelemut* is the responsibility of disseminating our wisdom to the world:

The strength of the desire to be good to everyone in the world without limitation, both in the amount of good to those in need of it, and in the quality of the good—this is the inner seed of the soul of the Community of Israel. This is the inheritance and the legacy from our ancestors, and this is the secret of the longing for redemption that is in the nation....”<sup>6</sup>

The proposition that we can sanctify every aspect of our lives forms the bedrock of Jewish tradition. For example, financial success need not be a hindrance to spiritual growth. If used properly, money can be its catalyst. The heavy gauntlet Yaakov throws down is to infuse every aspect of our lives with holiness and nobility. ■

6. *Orot Yisra'el*, 1:4.

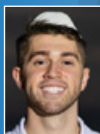


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# Transporting Children Before or After *Shacharit*?

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**Question:** I need to take our kids to daycare in the morning. I can do it either before *davening* or after a pre-*netz minyan*. Which is better?

**Answer:** Personal concerns can significantly affect the best choice for you. These include the impact on your wife's morning, your sleep needs, and the subjective quality of your *tefilla*. Since you do not raise these issues, we will focus on the generic halachic issues, starting with the issue of *davening* before *netz* (sunrise).

The optimal time to *daven Shacharit* is “as *vatikin*” – starting *Shemoneh Esrei* as the sun rises (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 89:1). One can fulfill the *mitzva* as early as *alot hashachar* (72 minutes or more before sunrise), but this is on the level of *b'di'eved* and is recommended only for those in extenuating circumstances, e.g., they must be on the road at the optimal time (ibid. 8). Soon

after *alot hashachar*, there is also a problem that it is, under normal circumstance, too early to recite *Kri'at Shema* and its *berachot* (ibid. 58:1,3), which is to precede *Shemoneh Esrei*. The starting time for *Kri'at Shema* is called *misheyakir*, some 50 minutes before *netz* (with variations due to various opinions and geographical adjustments). What is less clear (see Igrot Moshe, OC IV, 6; Minchat Yitzchak IX, 10) is whether *davening* at any time before *netz* is only *b'di'eved* (see Yalkut Yosef, OC 89:14) or is after *misheyakir* **fine**, and it is just less preferable than *vatikin* (Shut Pri Yitzchak I, 2). “Fine” can come in different gradations (see *Ishei Yisrael* 13:2).

The next question is whether and/or to what degree it is objectionable to get involved in an activity like taking children to daycare before *Shacharit*. Among the things that are forbidden before *Shacharit* is “involvement in one's affairs” and traveling (Berachot 14a; Shulchan Aruch, OC 89:3). Arguably, taking children to daycare is both. However, there are possible leniencies.

Taking care of children, intrinsically, and as help to one's wife, is likely an involvement of *mitzva* (see Halichot Shlomo, *Tefilla* 2:5; Living the Halachic Process, VII, H-1), which is permitted before *davening* (see Mishna Berura 89:36). This may apply to taking to good daycare. Also,

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there are indications that short trips are not considered traveling (see Living the Halachic Process VI, A-1). On the other hand, while simple help in the house with children might not be involved enough to qualify as **involvement** in affairs, presumably taking children to daycare is usually a formal and serious enough chore to be considered involvement. The Rama OC 89:3) cites an opinion that if one recites *Birchot Hashachar* beforehand, it is permitted to do tasks and travel. While we avoid relying on this alone (ibid.), *poskim* factor in reciting *Birchot Hashachar* first regarding borderline cases of activity (see Ishei Yisrael 13:23-24). There is also a possibility that if one has a set time for a *minyan*, then fitting in tasks before that time is permitted (Halichot Shlomo, Tefilla 2:(8)).

Putting our findings into perspective, neither *davening* between *misheyakir* and *netz* nor taking kids to daycare before *davening* is ideal, nor highly objectionable. It is often difficult to find sources and decide between two *b'dieved* situations. (That said, if one must do real work early, he should first *daven* even

before *netz* (Tefilla K'hilchata 3:(63)).) It is logical to consider subjective factors to help decide, and you can change schedules from day to day according to need. It may be worthwhile to consider how likely you are to come late to *minyan* if you take the kids first, or have to leave a little early if you take them later.

After weighing the factors, we suggest the following. If your community is like many, where main *minyanim* are in the pre-*netz* time slot (but *Shemoneh Esrei* is after *misheyakir*), at least during much of the year, and you sometimes attend such a *minyan* for convenience, it seems better to start the day by *davening* first with a clear mind. If you have set as a priority not to *daven* before *netz*, then take the kids first. ■

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**SHOSHANA JUDELMAN**

TORAH TIDBITS CONTRIBUTOR

# The G-dly Soul Is Your Doorway to Connection

I always felt my soul yearning for connection. But I didn't know how to nurture it.

Growing up I was very connected to my Judaism, but not necessarily through doing actual mitzvos. When I was 21, however, I had the opportunity to go to Rabbi Manis Friedman's Bais Chana program in Minnesota for Baalot Teshuva. And it changed my life.

I remember walking into Tanya class and hearing about the concept of the G-dly Soul. As the Alter Rebbe explains, every Jew's G-dly soul is *חלק אלוקי ממעל ממש*.

"Literally a part of G-d Above."

That idea was transformative. Seeing myself as a shining ray of Hashem's light empowered me to grow. It made me feel like I could access a personal relationship with G-d. It gave me the strength to change my lifestyle, to grow closer to Torah and Mitzvos as a way of developing this connection, of feeding the

deeper part of me that is part of Him.

Last week, I was learning Tanya with a group of students and one of them asked if there is significance to the fact that the name "Elokai" is used in this description of the G-dly Soul rather than another name for Hashem.

I had never thought about that before. And it is so important.

Every one of the names we have for Hashem reveals a different aspect of how He interacts with the world. And gives us different access to Him.

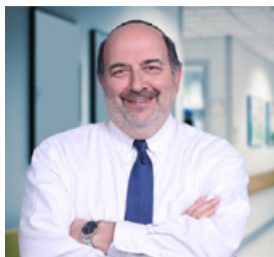
The Tetragrammaton reveals his Infinity and the Oneness of all things. Eh-yeh is the name that empowers us to yearn for personal growth. HaMakom imbues us with the understanding that He is everywhere and in all things. That He is our home.

Elokim is the name associated with judgment and strength. Through this name, Hashem shows His willingness to be revealed within boundaries, in measurement, in the finite beings of nature. And in us.

In Masechet Megillah, Rabbi Yochanan says, "In the place that you find Hashem's greatness you also find His humility". The Alter Rebbe explains that one of the ways we can appreciate Hashem's greatness is in how He allows Himself to also be small and measured.

He knows that we, as finite beings, would

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be overwhelmed and extinguished by the intensity of His full presence. That we can not contain Him in any way.

Except that He enables us to.

In His Infinite Kindness, He allows Himself to be “measured out” into each one of us. As a “bite-sized” piece. That we can feel in a personal way.

Seemingly finite beings holding Infinity.

That is our חלק אלוהי ממעל ממש.

And it makes all the difference.

In this world we are physically separated from each other as souls in bodies, so it feels like we are also spiritually separated. We feel a sense of disconnect, fragmentation, and loneliness. And it can be so painful.

The path of healing is in connection. In the knowledge that we are both Filled by Him and Surrounded by Him. Through His different names we can understand that He is Infinite and Personal at the same time. And although we seem to be separate individuals, each one of us is a ray of Hashem's light, connected at our Source.

In His Greatness, He allows us to know Him through knowing ourselves.

And that is healing.

May each one of us be blessed with the strength to keep seeking relationship with

Him, to know that He Enables and Desires that, and to open ourselves to the doorway to Him inside of us, the חלק אלוהי ממעל ממש. ■

**Shoshana Judelman** is passionate about learning and growing through Chassidus. She gives shiurim to women in many communities around Israel, including Efrat, Elazar, Raanana and Jerusalem as well as at Midreshet Rachel V'Chaya. Shoshana also guides groups at Yad Vashem and leads journeys to Poland and other countries around Europe for JRoots.



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# “Incompletely Complete”: Yaakov’s Struggle and the Torah’s Eternal Embrace of Pain

There is something unexpected about Yaakov’s request at the end of his mysterious nighttime battle. He turns to the very being who has been wrestling him for hours—this shadowy figure representing the forces determined to break him—and asks for a blessing. It is an astonishing move. A person bruised, exhausted, injured, would normally wish only for escape. But Yaakov wants transformation. He wants meaning. He wants wholeness.

The struggle unfolds “עד עלות השחר”—until the rising of dawn. This is not incidental. Night, in Torah symbolism, is the realm of uncertainty, fear, doubt. When you cannot see, you can only feel. It is the darkness of confusion, of not knowing what comes next. It is the space where one must rely on faith alone—אמונתך בלילות. In daylight, right and wrong become more obvious; clarity returns. But at night, we confront ourselves, our demons, our vulnerabilities, with no external bearings to steady us.

This battle—between Yaakov and the mysterious “man,” understood by Chazal as the Satan or the guardian of Eisav—represents the internal struggle between good and evil, between the desire to perfect oneself and the forces determined to pull a person down

spiritually, emotionally, or physically. And it is precisely there, in that darkness, that Yaakov earns the blessing of a new name: Yisrael.

Yet the Torah does something curious. Although Yaakov prevails, he is left limping. And we, his descendants, are forever commanded not to eat from the גיד הנשה, the sinew connected to his injury. Why? If Yaakov ultimately triumphed, why is the sign of his struggle preserved eternally?

After Yaakov parts from Eisav, the Torah narrates a series of journeys: to Succot, to Padan Aram, and then to Shechem, where he purchases a parcel of land from the children of Chamor. And then comes the striking statement: “ויעקב בא שלם”—“And Yaakov arrived intact.”

Rashi comments: שלם בגופו, שלם בממונו, שלם בתורתו—he arrived whole in body, whole in wealth, whole in Torah. Was he miraculously healed? Did he no longer limp? Was his pain gone?

Perhaps externally he looked complete. Perhaps others saw him and thought he had fully recovered. His gait was steady again; his strength restored. From the outside, he was whole.

But the Torah refuses to erase what



happened in the night. The command of גיד הנשה ensures that the injury is remembered forever. The Jewish people will never sit down to a meal without—consciously or not—carrying the imprint of Yaakov's limp.

Why preserve the scar of a wound that healed?

Because this is the Torah's profound psychological truth: triumph does not erase pain. Victory does not undo the suffering that preceded it. Healing does not mean forgetting. Being "complete" does not require being unbroken.

I call this being "incompletely complete."

Yaakov went on. He built, he traveled, he raised his family, he became Yisrael—the father of a nation destined to endure. He arrived shalem, intact. But the Torah holds space for the fact that he once limped.

So, too, for the Jewish people. Our national identity is forged not only through our triumphs but also through our wounds. We suffer losses, we encounter profound pain, yet we emerge with the greatest of victories: faith, continuity, identity, hope. But we do not pretend the injuries never existed. Our completeness contains its fractures. Our wholeness carries the shadows of what broke us.

And so it is with families who endure loss. From the outside, new photos may show smiling faces, expanded circles, renewed life—which are very real and honest. People may comment that a family appears strong, restored, intact. Shalem. Our family will never be whole again in this lifetime. The Torah, in its eternal wisdom, acknowledges that wholeness after tragedy is not the same as wholeness before it. There is a before and an after. There is the part that heals—and the part that remains broken forever.

The mitzvah of גיד הנשה says: I, God, remember your pain. I hold your wound within My law. I will not force you to move on as if nothing happened. Your struggle is etched into the eternal story of My people.

Yaakov becomes Yisrael precisely because he struggled — כי שרית עם אלוקים ועם אנשים — because he fought with the Divine and with man and prevailed. Yisrael is the name of geulah, the name of נצחיות, a name that carries the promise of ultimate wholeness. But it is a wholeness that does not discard the limp.

The Jewish people are forever Yisrael—not because we are untouched, but because we rise, again and again, higher and higher, stronger and stronger, from within the very places we were wounded.

We are, like Yaakov, part of a nation that's incompletely complete—and divinely embraced in that state forever. ■

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ד"ר

# Holiness of the Hebrew Language

At the end of his sefer, Nehemiah bemoans the fact that the children of the Jewish men who had married foreign wives were unable to speak Hebrew. Preserving Hebrew as the language of the Jewish people has always been a fundamental value in Judaism.

The midrash enumerates faithfulness to the Hebrew language as one of the merits that contributed to bringing about the redemption from Egypt. Retaining our unique language is one of the primary factors that distinguishes us from the surrounding culture. Speaking the language of Creation and Revelation serves as a hallmark of Jewish identity and has enabled the survival of the Jewish nation

throughout centuries of exile and dispersion.

The failure of Nehemiah's contemporaries to transmit the Hebrew language to their children was so potentially catastrophic that he highlights it alongside desecration of Shabbat and intermarriage as posing a threat to the continuity of the Jewish nation.

In fact, this failure led to a significant alteration in Jewish practice that still resonates today. The Rambam (Hilchot Tefillah 1:4) cites the verse from Nehemiah to explain the need seen by the Sages to compose a fixed text for prayer. Since the people were unable to express themselves coherently in Hebrew, rendering them incapable of sufficiently praising Hashem and entreating Him to grant their desires, they would abbreviate their prayers. To remedy the situation, Ezra and his court established the eighteen blessings of the silent Amidah so that the entire nation could be equally eloquent in praising Hashem, asking Him to fulfill their needs and expressing their gratitude for His benevolence, even if they themselves were not fluent in Hebrew.

The Hatam Sofer (פרשת שמות; קצת מדרוש notes that in Tanach, Hebrew is referred to as "Yehudit" - the language of Judaism. The designation "Lashon HaKodesh", the holy tongue, was introduced by Hazal only after the Babylonian exile, which had resulted in the assimilation rate that brought about the crisis highlighted by Nehemiah. He questions why in the Babylonian exile the Hebrew language was

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so underused that it was nearly forgotten, while in the roughly two thousand years of exile following the destruction of the Second Temple Jews throughout the diaspora have been able to preserve this same language.

The Hatam Sofer attributes this phenomenon to the concept that lies behind the term “Lashon HaKodesh”. The nature of holy entities is that they resist bonding with the physical world. The Neshama, the divine spark that animates us, resists bonding with the body and acquiesces only under compulsion. The holy Torah, according to the Sages, is easily forgotten if not acquired through intense, focused study and determination. So too the Hebrew language; nevertheless, this quality of the Hebrew language was not appreciated until after the Babylonian exile.

When Hazal realized how easily the language could be forgotten, they recognized its intrinsic holiness and termed it Lashon HaKodesh. Once we became conscious of the holiness of the language, we were able to guard more assiduously against its extinction.

When Yosef identified himself to his brothers in Egypt, he stated: וְהִנֵּה עֵינֵיכֶם רְאוּת... כִּי פִי - המדבר אליכם - You can see for yourselves... that it is indeed my mouth that is speaking to you. The midrash interpolates: You can see for yourselves... that I am speaking Lashon HaKodesh, the holy tongue. The Hatam Sofer explains that Yosef was implying to them that his ability to retain his command of the Hebrew language even while serving as viceroy of the most spiritually corrupt empire attested to his faithfulness to the teachings of his father, and his commitment to Torah study even under the most trying circumstances. Despite everything that had come between them, his fluency in Lashon

HaKodesh served as proof that they were still brothers, still committed to the same values.

In the Talmud Yerushalmi (1:3) Rabbi Meir is quoted as teaching that “Whoever lives permanently in the Land of Israel, eats (even) his profane food in purity, speaks in Lashon HaKodesh and recites Kriat Shema morning and evening is assured of life in the World to Come.” To this inducement to speak Hebrew we might add that as we prepare for the coming redemption and more and more Jews gather in the Land of Israel from all parts of the world, speaking Hebrew affords us a strong sense of shared identity and purpose, contributing to the unity we so long for during this challenging era. ■

**Mrs. Leah Feinberg** is a master educator who taught at the SKA High School for Girls in Hewlett for twenty-one years, also serving as Tanach Department chairperson and New Teacher Mentor. Leah is currently on the faculty of the OU Israel Center and has taught in all three cycles of the OU Women’s Initiative Nach Yomi program

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# “Seeing Through Hashem’s Eyes: Rethinking How We Choose Matches”

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**Ayelet asks:** Aleeza, as a matchmaker and ambassador, I sometimes worry that I might be missing potential matches for my candidates because of my own filter of what I see as “attractive,” or based on what I *think* they would find attractive. How can I make sure I’m not letting my own perspective limit someone’s opportunity for love?


**Aleeza answers:** This is such an important and honest question, and I truly appreciate your self-awareness. The very fact that you’re asking it shows you’re already doing holy work with humility.

We all see the world through our own lenses. That’s how Hashem created us,

each person has their own sense of beauty, attraction, and style. But as matchmakers, we have to remember: *we’re not matching with our eyes alone; we’re matching as an ambassador for someone else and they have different preferences.*


It’s easy to assume, “He won’t like her look,” or “She won’t go for someone like him.” I’ve made this mistake before. The match that seemed “off” on paper, or “not their type” in pictures, often becomes the match that lasts a lifetime. Why? Because what someone else wants or ends up liking isn’t what we may think they will like or isn’t what we prefer. I recently had a client who said yes to a match I was pretty sure they’d say no to because of the photo. But I still chose to present the match to let them decide. And to my surprise they said yes! And P.S. they enjoyed the date and the persons look in person too.

Our job isn’t to predict attraction, it’s to open doors for possibility. When we decide for someone else based on our assumptions, we might unintentionally close a door that is meant to be open. That’s why I remind myself: *I’m not here to judge the wrapping; I’m here to introduce souls.* And yes we should take into consideration someone’s



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preferences and not make matches we know they have asked us to avoid.

Practically speaking, I encourage you to pause before filtering someone out and ask yourself three questions:

Am I judging based on my taste, or based on what I truly know about them and what they want?

Could this person surprise me, if I gave them the option to choose yes or no?

Does this match have merit based on values?

When we match without fear of getting a no, we become a vessel for making a match. You don't have to think every match fits perfectly, you just need to see the potential, present it, and let them decide.

Because at the end of the day, attraction is more fluid than people let on. Our job is to bring good people together, with open hearts and humble eyes.

May the people you set up see the potential in the match you present.

Aleeza ■

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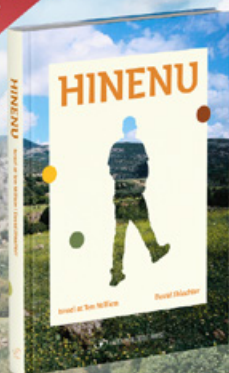
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Yoni thanks Hashem for having the opportunity of having Tziporah in his life, to learn of her caring, patience and happiness, to overcome her challenges. May Tziporah's Neshama be a light onto the world, in a time of darkness, and may her Neshama shine 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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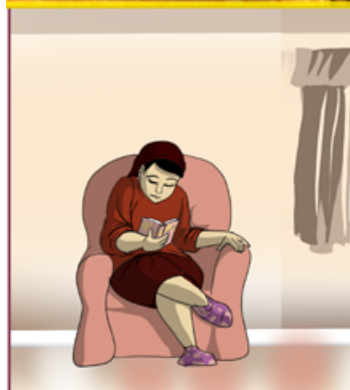


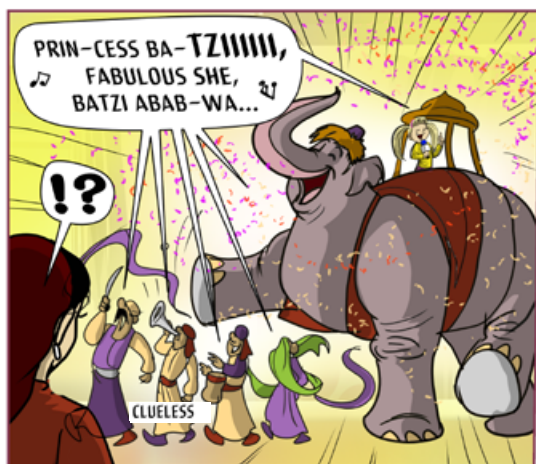
# THE Y FILES

(\*YERUSHALAYIM)

by  
Netanel Epstein

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**ELIAV SABAN**  
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DIRECTOR

וַיִּשְׁלַח יַעֲקֹב מַלְאָכִים לְפָנָיו אֶל-עֵשָׂו אָחִיו  
(בראשית ל"ב:ד')

Would any of us send gifts to someone who's been out to get us? Would we try to show care to someone we're genuinely afraid of?

The parasha opens with Yaakov facing exactly that situation. Esav is coming toward him with a group of men, and it looks like a confrontation is on the way. This isn't sudden. The Torah already told us:

וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו... וְאַהֲרָהָ אֶת-יַעֲקֹב אָחִיו (בראשית כ"ז:מ"א)

Esav has carried this anger for years (וַיִּשְׁטֹם עֵשָׂו) and Yaakov is fully aware of it. Yet instead of hiding or preparing for a fight, he sends messengers right to him. Why?

Rav Tzvi Yehuda HaKohen Kook זצ"ל points us back to the nevuah given before the twins were even born:

"שְׁנֵי גִי'ם בְּבִטְנָה... וְשְׁנֵי לְאָמִים..." (בראשית כ"ה:כ"ג)

Their lives were always going to diverge. They were destined to become two nations with different paths. But right now, what we're seeing is a painful, complicated family conflict and resentment that's been sitting in Esav's heart for a long time. In that light, Yaakov's move (וַיִּשְׁלַח יַעֲקֹב מַלְאָכִים) isn't surrender. Rav Tzvi Yehuda sees it as a deliberate, thoughtful political step.

A step that says: I'm willing to engage, even when you're not.

And that theme feels incredibly relevant today. Our political world, especially in Medinat Yisrael, is complicated and emotional. But beneath the arguments and the noise, many people, even those who disagree fiercely, are trying to build something good for Am Yisrael.

It may look like chaos from the outside. But maybe, like Yaakov and Esav, there's room for connection even where there's tension. Not because we agree, but because we're family.

Sometimes the strongest move isn't to push back harder...but to reach out first, to believe that even complicated relationships can move toward healing, and to trust that unity built with courage can shape a better future.

שבת שלום ומבורך!



**ZVI FISHER**  
10TH GRADE, JERUSALEM

### SHIMON AND LEVI – COURAGE AND RESPONSIBILITY

Parashat Vayishlach presents a difficult and complex narrative involving Dinah and the city of Shechem. After Shechem harmed Dinah, her brothers, Shimon and Levi, sought to defend her. They proposed that the men of Shechem could marry Dinah only if they underwent circumcision. When the men



were weakened from the procedure, Shimon and Levi attacked and killed all the males in the city (Genesis 34:25–26: “On the third day, when they were in pain, two of Jacob’s sons, Shimon and Levi, Dinah’s brothers, took their swords and came against the city while it was unguarded, and killed all the males. They also killed Hamor and Shechem, his son, with the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem’s house and left.”).

Yaakov rebuked his sons, expressing concern about the broader consequences of their actions and the impact on the family (Genesis 34:30: “Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, ‘You have brought trouble on me by making me odious to the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites and the Perizzites. My numbers are few, and they will gather against me and attack me, and I will be destroyed, I and my household.’”). Later, he critiques Shimon and Levi again (Genesis 49:5–7), highlighting a broader concern regarding their approach to conflict.

Commentators differ in their evaluation of Shimon and Levi’s actions. Ramban explains that their intent was to defend Dinah and uphold family honor, yet he emphasizes that their method—slaughtering all the men—was excessive and morally problematic. Rambam,

in Hilchot De’ot (6:1), teaches that a person must act with moderation and wisdom, avoiding extremes even when motivated by anger or a sense of justice.

This narrative offers an enduring ethical lesson: the pursuit of justice requires both courage and prudence. Even when one is certain of the righteousness of their cause, one must carefully consider the consequences of one’s actions. Pirkei Avot (2:1) further instructs that all deeds, whether seemingly minor or significant, must be performed with thoughtfulness and care. Shimon and Levi demonstrate the importance of standing up for what is right; yet, true justice demands balancing courage with responsibility and foresight, ensuring that one’s actions protect and defend without inflicting unnecessary harm. ■





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