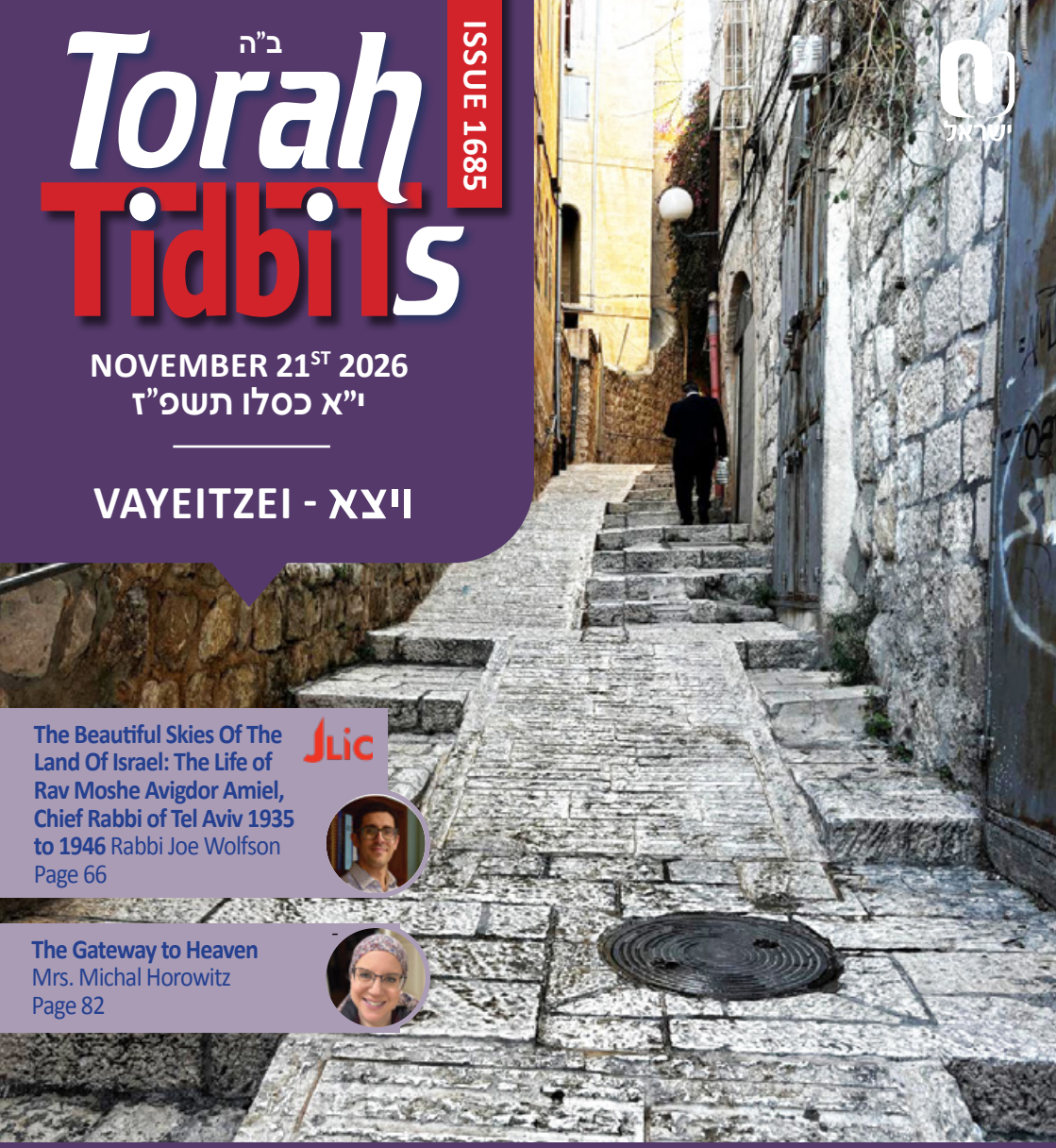
ב"ה

Torah TidbiTs

ISSUE 1685

NOVEMBER 21ST 2026
י"א כסלו תשפ"ז

VAYEITZEI - ויצא



The Beautiful Skies Of The Land Of Israel: The Life of Rav Moshe Avigdor Amiel, Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv 1935 to 1946 Rabbi Joe Wolfson
Page 66

The Gateway to Heaven
Mrs. Michal Horowitz
Page 82

וַיִּשָּׂא יעקב רגליו וילך ארצה בני־קדם

בראשית כ"ט:א׳

YERUSHALAYIM SHABBAT VAYEITZEI ZMANIM
CANDLES **4:02 PM** • HAVDALA **5:16 PM** • RABBEINU TAM **5:54 PM**

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IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Last Opportunity to Say Kiddush Levana until: Mon Nov 23



COVER PAGE

by **David Hochhauser, Beit Shemesh**

The photo was taken in the עיר העתיקה when there weren't too many people around. No matter how many times I've been there I always love wandering around and taking photos. Check out my collection on iStock.

Torah Tidbits is proud to share a photo each week on the cover from our readers! It is an honor to showcase the immense talent from across the country.

Send us your best photos and give us the opportunity to highlight your story.



Everyone is invited to submit!
Please email to aarong@ouisrael.org

CANDLE LIGHTING
AND HAVDALA TIMES



	VAYEITZEI		VAYISHLACH	
	Candles	Havdala	Candles	Havdala
Yerushalayim/Maale Adumim	4:02	5:16	3:59	5:15
Aza Area (Netivot, Sderot et al)	4:20	5:19	4:18	5:18
Beit Shemesh/RBS	4:21	5:17	4:18	5:16
Gush Etzion	4:18	5:17	4:16	5:15
Raanana/Tel Mond/Herzliya/K.Saba	4:18	5:17	4:15	5:16
Modiin/Chashmonaim	4:18	5:17	4:16	5:15
Netanya	4:17	5:17	4:15	5:15
Be'er Sheva	4:20	5:19	4:18	5:17
Rehovot	4:18	5:18	4:16	5:16
Petach Tikva	4:02	5:17	3:59	5:16
Ginot Shomron	4:17	5:16	4:15	5:15
Haifa / Zichron	4:06	5:16	4:04	5:14
Gush Shiloh	4:16	5:15	4:14	5:14
Tel Aviv / Givat Shmuel	4:18	5:18	4:16	5:16
Givat Zeev	4:21	5:16	4:19	5:15
Chevron / Kiryat Arba	4:18	5:17	4:16	5:16
Ashkelon	4:20	5:19	4:18	5:18
Yad Binyamin	4:19	5:18	4:17	5:16
Tzfat / Bikat HaYarden	4:08	5:13	4:06	5:12
Golan	4:14	5:13	4:11	5:12
Nahariya/Maalot	4:04	5:15	4:02	5:13
Afula	4:15	5:15	4:13	5:13

Rabbeinu Tam (Jerusalem): Vayeitzei - 5:54 PM • Vayishlach - 5:52 PM

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

Daf Yomi: Bechoros 57

OTHER Z'MANIM



JERUSALEM
Ranges 11 days Wednesday - Shabbat
Nov. 18 - 28 | 8 - 18 Kislev

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	5:16-5:24
Sunrise	6:10-6:18
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	8:47-8:52
Magen Avraham	8:09-8:14
Sof Zman Tefila (According to the Gra and Baal HaTanya)	9:39-9:44
Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	11:24-11:26
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	11:54-11:56
Plag Mincha	3:32-3:30
Sunset (Including Elevation)	4:42-4:39

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DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

RABBI AVI BERMAN
Executive Director, OU Israel | aberman@ouisrael.org

Parshat Vayeitzei begins with Yaakov leaving his parents' home in Be'er Sheva to go to his uncle Lavan's house in Charan. We know that every word in the Torah is precious and teaches us something. So why does the Torah need to tell us where he was coming from, when it could just tell us where he was going? Rashi comments (based on Bereshit Rabbah 68:6) that it is because "the departure of a righteous person (*tzaddik*) from a place leaves an impression." Even leaving Be'er Sheva had significance.

This is both a positive and negative thing. Sometimes a community has a tremendous *tzaddik* in its midst, and if the *tzaddik* moves on, suddenly there is a void and nobody knows how to deal with the situation. The community loses its spiritual momentum, and eventually it begins to dwindle. There are other times, however, that a *tzaddik* leaves a place and others step up to the plate and fill the void. That community, propelled by the impression of the *tzaddik* and the leaders who now have picked up the mantle, rises higher and higher. Rashi does not tell us what kind of impression was left in Be'er Sheva, I believe, because he wanted to teach us that each situation is very different.

This past *motzei Shabbat*, standing on Har Herzl, I heard Rav David Bagno, the Rabbi of Kehillat Mishkan Shilo in Ramat Shilo, Ramat Beit Shemesh, tell over a well-known story. Somebody once came over to Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l to ask him whether it was appropriate to travel abroad to visit the graves of *tzaddikim*. Rav Shlomo Zalman looked at him and said, "Why do you have to go abroad to visit the graves of *tzaddikim*? You have Har Herzl, which is full of *tzaddikim*!" He was talking about the burial places of IDF soldiers who gave up their lives to defend the Jewish people.

Unfortunately, over the last three years, hundreds of *tzaddikim* have been buried in military cemeteries around the country, more than 240 of them on Har Herzl itself. One of those *tzaddikim* is the reason I was standing there that night: Binyamin Meir Airley HY"D. I did not have the privilege of knowing Binyamin, who by every account was a holy *neshamah*, when he was alive. After his death, I got to know his parents, Jen and Rob Airley, who are very special people.

The connection really started a few days after the Airley family got up from *shivah*. OU Israel had brought over a mission of women from North America to give *chizuk*

ישראל
Mazal Tov to
Rabbi Avi & Pnina Berman and family
on the birth of their granddaughter
daughter to Shlomo & Tamar
Great-granddaughter to
Feivy & Rachel Leah Berman
and Alex & Daniella Kuflik

to widows, and to mothers and fathers and siblings who had lost their loved ones. Our mission was packed, with lots of people and an extremely busy schedule, and one of the things we did was go over to Jen and Rob's home in Ramat Shilo.



I will never forget that visit. It was all about us coming to give them *chizuk* after losing their son. But after spending over an hour in their house, it was so clear that every single person who walked into that home, hearing from Jen and from Rob and speaking to the siblings, walked out with a tremendous amount of *chizuk* themselves. We heard wonderful stories about Binyamin. But we also saw the tree on which such an incredible apple grew. The strength, the devotion, the Torah, the connection to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, the *emunah* that everyone described in Binyamin clearly came from his parents.

Since then, Jen Airley has become a regular source of inspiration across our OU Israel programs. Whether that be at our Women's Division, including this past Rosh Chodesh Kislev or NCSY events inspiring teenagers, including their recent Yom HaAliyah event. She writes for Torah Tidbits, including an article just a couple of weeks ago. Jen has truly become part of the OU Israel family.

So it was no surprise that when Nina Broder, our Director of Social Media, came over to me several months ago and told me she thought we should do this year's Tisha B'Av video with Jen Airley, it was such a natural fit. Jen and I spent two days filming, running around the country to create the content for our video, "Beit HaMikdash: In the Making," and I got to see firsthand what kind of holy mother raised Binyamin.

And then I keep seeing her in communities around the world where I go to speak. It's a funny kind of phenomenon. I was there when she spoke in Florida. I was there when she was in New York and New Jersey. Most recently I was there when she was in Toronto. When I would visit those communities and *shuls*, I would hear people talk about her amazing speeches and how much they got from them. For some of them it was a Shabbat morning talk in *shul*. For others it was a Thursday night *hafrashat challah*. For others it was a Sunday morning breakfast, or an evening in somebody's house with a group of women who needed *chizuk*.

Jen and Rob have taken the loss of their *tzaddik* Binyamin Meir and created an impression. They have done it by telling over his story, and by showing all of us that if *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* decided to take a *tzaddik* like Binyamin Meir away from them, it is not going to go in vain. Listening to their children speak at the *azkarah* on Har Herzl, marking three years since

Binyamin fell, I heard his sister Sarah talk about everything that has grown since: the grandchildren of Rob and Jen who have been born and named after Binyamin, the *yishuvim* that have been started in his name, the many children outside the family who have been named Binyamin after him, and the many good deeds that people have taken upon themselves because of his passing.

So many families who have lost loved ones here in Israel have grown and inspired others in the memory of their parent, brother, sister, son, daughter, friend. I am seeing so many people doing incredible things in memory of the *tzaddikim* who were taken from them.

It is clearly something we took from our forefathers. In last week's *parsha*, we find Yaakov Avinu cooking lentils. Chazal tell us that this is the traditional food of mourners, and he was making it to comfort his father on the day that Avraham Avinu passed away. He was going to make an impression. We constantly mention "*Elokei Avraham, Elokei Yitzchak ve'Elokei Yaakov,*" the God of our forefathers, because we want to connect ourselves to those who came before us and gave us a direction, and never to forget their incredible attributes.



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SCAN TO BOOK

That is why so many of us have taken additional *mitzvot* upon ourselves. Not speaking *lashon hara*, bad speech and gossip. Being more careful with kosher eating. Taking care with concentration in *davening*, especially not to talk during *davening*. Being nicer to the people around us. Lighting Shabbat candles. Putting on *tefillin* every single day. These incredible things that people are doing really come from a place of us becoming better people because of the passing of a *tzaddik*.

Rashi had said an impression is left in the city when a *tzaddik* leaves. Rashi calls what the *tzaddik* takes with him when he leaves is "the glory and the radiance and the splendor of a place." That may be true. But sometimes it forces those who remain to become better. In this situation, because of the passing of the *tzaddik* Binyamin Airley and the other *chayalim*, we have not stayed in the same place. We are trying to become better every single day.

In addition, Rob and Jen decided to build a center in Tzfat called Beit Binyamin, where countless groups of soldiers, bereaved families and *miluim* families are able to go and rejuvenate and receive strength. I hear from Rav Shmuel Eliyahu, the Chief Rabbi of Tzfat, how many groups are going there, and how many times he is asked to come and speak to them. I hear from Jen and Rob how many times they go up there and speak to the groups themselves. And I hear from my own teams, whether it is Frontline Support, our program for English-speaking *chayalim*, or the Zula, how many of our groups are going up there, and how many people are being inspired *le'ilui nishmat* Binyamin. It really gives me an incredible feeling. Our

enemies may have killed the physical body of Binyamin, but the spirit of Binyamin has only gotten stronger and stronger since they took him physically away from us.

Be'ezrat Hashem, may no more graves of *tzaddikim* be added, whether of soldiers, police, civilians, or anyone who gave their lives for this country. But let us continue learning from these *tzaddikim* and make sure their impression lasts. Let us think of ways to thank families who have lost loved ones and risen higher and inspired others to rise higher, for taking such sadness and tragedy and making the world a better place.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,

Rabbi Avi Berman
Executive Director, OU Israel



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Hilchot Shabbat Q&A

with Rabbi Eli Ozarowski



QUESTION: Is it permitted to move a phone or alarm clock whose alarm has gone off and continues ringing to another room, where it will not disturb anyone?

ANSWER: Some poskim prohibit moving a phone or alarm clock simply to remove the disturbance, while others permit moving it to another location.

EXPLANATION: Objects whose primary use is for activities that are prohibited on Shabbat are generally classified as *kli shemelachto l'issur* (utensils primarily used for prohibited activities). Such objects may not ordinarily be moved on Shabbat, but there are two exceptions: A) *Tzorech Gufo* (when the object itself is needed for a permitted purpose); B) *Tzorech Mekomo* (when one needs to use the place where the object is located). When moving an object for either of these purposes, one may carry it directly to any other location, provided that one does not put it down along the way (Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 308:3).

The *poskim* disagree whether removing an object simply because its presence is bothersome is considered *tzorech mekomo*. Some maintain that this does not qualify as a legitimate need for the object's location, and therefore one may not move it for this reason (*Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchatah* 20:10, citing *Tehillah L'David*; see also R. Pinchos Bodner, *The Halachos of Muktza,* p.41 concerning a *muktzeh* item left on the table that one wishes to remove). However, other *poskim* consider the disturbance caused by a ringing alarm to be a sufficient reason to move it, and permit doing so under the allowance of *tzorech mekomo* (*Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchatah* 28:34; *Orchot Shabbat* 19:27).

According to the lenient opinion, one may move the phone or alarm clock directly to another room or location where its ringing will not be heard, without putting it down along the way. However, one must take care not to press any buttons, accidentally activate the phone's screen, or change its settings while moving it. One may also certainly not turn off or snooze an electronic alarm on Shabbat.

These leniencies apply only if the phone or alarm clock is considered a *kli shemelachto l'issur*. However, a smartphone may be considered *muktzeh machmat chisaron kis* (*muktzeh* due to its great value) for some people, if its owner is particularly careful not to move or use it for other purposes (see Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 308:1; Piskei Teshuvot 308:4; Peninei Halacha 23:4). If so, moving it even for *tzorech mekomo* is not permitted.

Rabbi Eli Ozarowski serves as editor of the Tzurba M'Rabanan English halacha series, as well as the editor of the written material for the Semichas Chaver halacha program. He is also the author of the OU's Torat Imecha Halacha Series for women and a translator for the Steinsaltz Mishna series. Rabbi Ozarowski received semicha from the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) and holds an M.A. from the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration. He lives in Mitzpeh Yericho with his wife, Zemira, who serves as Director of the Women's Division at OU Israel, together with their nine children. Rabbi Ozarowski gives many shiurim in the community and is also frequently consulted on halachic matters.

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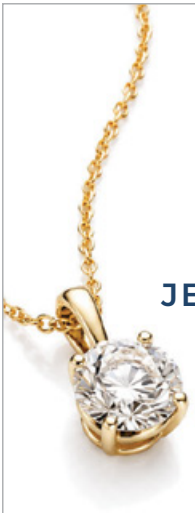


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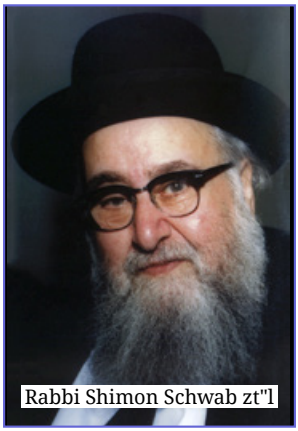


RABBI SHMUEL SILBER
Executive Vice President, Orthodox Union

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Enhancing Jewish Life

When Life Doesn't Go According to Plan

It was the dawn of a new and exciting age. The era of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs paved the way for Twelve Tribes and the beginnings of the Nation of Israel. However, Yaakov's familial circumstances were far from idyllic. There was ongoing tension in the household. This was most clearly expressed in Leah's naming of her children:


Rabbi Shimon Schwab zt"l

Leah desired to be close to Yaakov. She desperately pined to feel loved. She knew she was not the intended or desired spouse. She knew the intensity of the love shared between Yaakov and Rachel and yearned for that same level of marital connectedness. With the birth of each child Leah secretly hoped that this would be the event that would create marital closeness with Yaakov.

"And Leah conceived and bore a son, and she named him Reuben, for she said, "Because the Lord has seen my affliction, for now my husband will love me." And she conceived again and bore a son, and she said, "Since the Lord has heard that I am hated, He gave me this one too." So she named him Shimon. And she conceived again and bore a son, and she said, "Now this time my husband will be attached to me, for I have borne him three sons; therefore, she named him Levi" (Genesis 29:32-34).

Yet something changed with the birth of her fourth son. "And she conceived again and bore a son, and she said, "This time, I will thank the Lord! Therefore, she named him Judah, and [then] she stopped bearing." (Genesis 29:35) Yehuda's name makes no mention of her pain or desire for Yaakov's attention. The first three children's names all reflected this anticipatory desire for greater spousal connection and yet now she utters just a simple statement of gratitude to God. What changed? Furthermore, why didn't Leah express her gratitude to God upon the birth of her older children?

Rav Shimon Schwab (1908-1995) explains this profound transformation in one word - acceptance. Leah spent the first few years of her married life in incredible pain over her second-tier status. Yaakov loved Leah, as the Torah states, "... and he also loved Rachel more than Leah ... (Genesis 29:30)" – he just loved Rachel more. For there to be harmony in a marriage a wife must know that she is most important and a priority in her husband's life. Leah knew she was loved, she knew Yaakov cared for her, but she also

knew she was not the most important person in his life. Leah's pain was so acute that it was reflected in the naming of her children. During what should have been a time of incredible joy, all Leah felt was pain. This pain overshadowed and eclipsed the feeling of blessing that should have been present at the birth of her children.

But then something changed. Leah's circumstances had not changed. What changed was her relationship with those circumstances. She could continue measuring her life by the love she wished she had, or she could begin appreciating the blessings and possibilities of the life she had been given. Leah chose the latter.

Leah chose to accept her circumstances and realized that although she may not be the primary wife, she would become the dominant matriarchal influence within the Abrahamitic family. The future *kehuna* (priesthood from the tribe of Levi) and monarchy (from the tribe of Yehuda) would emanate from her. When Yehuda was born, Leah had already accepted the reality of her circumstances and her new role. As a result of this acceptance, Leah was finally able to appreciate the beautiful life blessings God had conferred upon her.

We start out with a vision of how we expect life to turn out. We have dreams and aspirations and when we close our eyes we can even see how each of these dreams will materialize. Sometimes, they do, but more often than not, life does not turn out the way we expected. Life does not always go according to plan. Whenever possible we must exert incredible effort to bring our dreams and life vision to fruition. However, there are moments when we must accept that the life we want is not the life that we have. We must sometimes accept that some dreams do not and will not come true. And it is in those very moments we must make a decision: will I spend all of my energy lamenting that which is not, or will I devote myself to maximizing that which is?

Even if the story doesn't have a fairy tale ending, we can find happiness, meaning, and fulfillment. ■

Rabbi Shmuel Silber has served the Orthodox Union (OU) as its Executive Vice President since November 2026. As the executive vice president, Rabbi Silber is responsible for representing the OU's vision on both Torah and public policy, and providing hashkafic and halachic guidance within the organization and beyond. Prior to joining the OU, Rabbi Silber served for 23 years as the rabbi of Suburban Orthodox Congregation Toras Chaim, building it into one of Baltimore's most vibrant and dynamic kehillahs. Rabbi Silber is also the founder and dean of the Institute for Jewish Continuity (IJC), which provides contemporary Torah learning with Chassidic influences for adults at all levels. As the Founding Rabbi of the Berger Towers community in Katamonim, Jerusalem, Rabbi Silber oversees the community's rabbinic leadership and hashkafic direction. Rabbi Silber received semicha from the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary at Yeshiva University and holds a master's degree in secondary Jewish education from the Azrieli Graduate School.

In loving memory of
our beloved mother
Rachel Gutman a"h
רחל בת יצחק הלוי ע"ה
אשת חיל ואשת חסד
on her yahrzeit י"א כסלו

May the Torah learning
in this issue be לעילוי נשמתה

Greatly missed by her
children and grandchildren
Tzippy Grunstein, Eli Gutman,
Tova Hoffman,
Frieda Brodsky and families







OU... BEYOND KASHRUT

The OU Israel Business & Professionals Network

The OU Israel Business & Professionals Network (BPN) brings together accomplished English-speaking professionals in Israel to learn together, build meaningful connections, and expand their networks. Grounded in Torah values, BPN supports Anglo Olim in making the most of their talents, helping one another succeed, and contributing to Israeli society. Its events create space for professional ideas and shared values to meet in a welcoming community.

At its recent Lunch and Learn, more than 25 professionals gathered to hear tech and operations executive Josh Wolff speak on "The Pursuit of 'More': Ambition, Success & a Meaningful Life." Drawing on his years of business experience Josh explored questions that resonate well beyond the workplace. He also brought ideas from the Gemara, offering an engaging opportunity to consider how ambition and success can fit into a meaningful life. A special thank you to Edo Pollack at EisnerAmper for hosting the event and providing a delicious lunch.

BPN looks forward to bringing professionals together for more opportunities to learn, connect, and grow. To stay in the loop about upcoming events, email Rabbi Yair Hindin at **bpnetwork@ouisrael.org.**

Each week, we share one OU Israel initiative empowering lives and communities in our homeland, supporting English-speaking *olim* in their *klita* and supporting Israel's most vulnerable teens to rebuild trust, confidence, and a future.

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ALIYA BY ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY

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PARSHAT VAYEITZEI

1ST ALIYA (28:10-22)

Yaakov flees the Land of Israel. He dreams: a ladder with angels, G-d at the top. G-d reiterates to Yaakov the promise of the Land of Israel and of numerous descendants. And that He will protect Yaakov and bring him back to the Land. Yaakov makes a monument at that spot and declares that upon his safe return he will come back and make this spot a house of G-d.

Yaakov has a dream. Angels ascend and descend the ladder. G-d assures Yaakov that he will receive the Land and return in peace to the Land.

While we tend to focus on the intriguing imagery of the angels, the emphasis of this story is the reassurance that Yaakov will return in peace.

But, hold on, why was he allowed to leave the Land? His father Yitzchak was not. When it was time to find a mate, Eliezer was made to swear that Yitzchak would not leave the Land. Yitzchak's wife must be brought to him, in the Land. And Yitzchak was commanded directly by G-d not to leave the Land in the famine; not to take the path well-trodden to the bread basket of Egypt.

Why is Yaakov treated differently and allowed to flee the Land?

Yaakov's life is in contrast to Yitzchak's. In one way, he carries on the legacy of Avraham and Yitzchak; he is promised the Land. But he flees the Land.

The Ramban introduces a notion he calls "maaseh avot, siman l'banim". He notices events that occur to the Avot echoing years later in other events in Jewish history.

But perhaps that expression could be seen differently. That the lives of the 3 avot create story lines that are paradigms of different stages in Jewish history. Not just repeated in a story in Tanach, but paradigms of the sweep of Jewish history.

Formative. Continuity. And builder.

Avraham's life is formative. He journeys to the Land. He is the formative generation of the Jewish people. The discoverer. The pioneer. The trail blazer. Innovator. The seeker of the new life in the new place.

Yitzchak preserves. Continuity. Never leaves the Land. Does what his father did – the wells, the pact with Avimelech, two children.

Yaakov is complicated. Born in the Land. But leaves. His life becomes a life of hard work, building wealth and building a family. He is not brought a wife, but finds one. Lifts the heavy stone off the well. Works for his wife for 7 years. Works for Lavan. Long days of endless toil and travail. And later, endures tragedy. His dear wife Rachel dies. Yosef is killed, or so he thinks, by a wild animal.

Leaves the Land, returns to the Land, leaves again when he reunites with Yosef, never to return.

Perhaps these paradigms are to teach us how to read Jewish history. There will be Avraham eras – discovery, new lands,

formative, optimistic, honored, respected. Though "ger v'toshav". Resident aliens; residents but not in our home.

Yitzchak eras. Carrying on the traditions of the father. Preserving but not pioneering. Settled but not seeking. Blessed but not blazing new paths.

And Yaakov eras. Unsettled. Exile, return, exile. The wandering Jew. Successful, only to pack up and move again. Toil. Industrious. Accomplished. Yet suffering.

Yaakov's life differs radically from both Avraham and Yitzchak. His life of wandering, of success, of exile, of suffering creates a paradigm of the life of the Jew in exile.



2ND ALIYA (29:1-17)

Yaakov arrives in Charan. He converses with shepherds at the well. They are waiting for a crowd of them to remove the stone over the well. He inquires of Lavan and is told: that is Rachel, daughter of Lavan, coming now. Yaakov removes the heavy stone of the well, gives Rachel water. He tells her he is Rivka's son. Rachel runs to tell her father; Lavan runs to greet Yaakov. Yaakov stays with them for a month.

If Yaakov is looking for a sign that he is taking up the legacy of his family, continuing their legacy, here it is. The first person he runs into is Rachel!

But not following in his father's footsteps. But in his mother's. This story is an exact parallel to Eliezer finding Rivka at the well.

Except in reverse. Rivka drew the water for Eliezer and his camels; Yaakov draws the water for Rachel and her animals. Rivka was superhuman and drew water for 10 camels (@100 liters per camel); Yaakov is superhuman and removes the massive stone by himself. Eliezer asked Rivka who she was; Yaakov tells Rachel who he is. Rivka ran home to her mother; Rachel runs home to her father. Eliezer was seeking a wife for Yitzchak and returning to Israel; Yaakov is seeking family but not returning. Yet.



3RD ALIYA (29:18-30:13)

Yaakov loves Rachel. When Lavan inquires how he can compensate Yaakov for his work, Yaakov offers to work 7 years to marry Rachel. At the end of that time, Lavan makes a celebration. He gives Leah to Yaakov. In the morning Yaakov realizes. Lavan remarks that here we don't switch younger and older. Yaakov marries Rachel and works another 7 years. Leah has 4 children: Reuven, Shimon, Levi, Yehuda. Rachel is upset, as she is barren. She gives Yaakov Bilhah, her maidservant. She has Dan and Naphtali. Zilpah, Leah's maidservant has Gad and Asher.

Yaakov toils for 7 years for the right

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to marry Rachel. A striking contrast to Yitzchak, whose wife Rivka is brought to him by Eliezer, with no effort on his part at all.

The switch of Leah for Rachel is an obvious parallel. A sinister parallel. My father couldn't see and I tricked him; it was night and I couldn't see and I was tricked. I, the younger, took the place of the older. Here, the older, Leah, takes the place of the younger.

Yaakov must be thinking "I got what I deserve". But how should he interpret this Divine punishment? In spite of the blessing of his father and in spite of the assurance from G-d that He would return him to the Land of Israel, maybe Yaakov is having some niggling uncertainty. Am I getting a message that Divine judgement has rendered me undeserving of those blessings?



4TH ALIYA (30:14-27)

Reuven brings jasmine, a fertility enhancer to Leah. Rachel asks for it and in exchange Leah conceives and has Yissachar, followed by Zevulun. Rachel bears Yosef. Yaakov asks Lavan permission to return home.

And another perhaps sinister echo. 11 of the sons of Yaakov and his daughter Dina have been born. The bearing of 12 children is an echo of those *excluded* from the Jewish people. Nachor had 12 children, Avraham 8. Yishmael had 12 children, Yitzchak only 2. Yaakov has 12 children. Is he following in the footsteps of those not a part of the Jewish people? Nachor and Yishmael?



5TH ALIYA (30:28-31:16)

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

This description of Yaakov's cleverness in animal husbandry is curious. What is its place in the story?

It could be that this enormous wealth is another indication that he follows in his father's footsteps: Avraham had great wealth, Yitzchak was blessed with "meah shearim", a 100-fold bounty of agriculture. And now Yaakov too is blessed.

Or perhaps it is an answer to Yitzchak's blessing. Yitzchak loved Esav because he had ציד בפיו – cunning. Yitzchak thought: we are on the cusp of building the Land of Israel. We need a leader with cunning. He thought Esav had that.

But Esav had chicanery; deception and folly. Real leadership demands resourcefulness, imagination, ingenuity, problem solving. Yaakov here is proving himself capable of the type of resourcefulness needed to lead his people; just what Yitzchak was looking for.



6TH ALIYA (31:17-42)

Yaakov and the family leave without telling Lavan. Rachel steals Lavan's idols. Lavan pursues. G-d tells him not to harm Yaakov. Lavan berates Yaakov for his deception, not allowing him to kiss his children. Were it not that G-d instructed him otherwise, he would be justified in harming Yaakov. He searches for his idols but does not find them. Yaakov is fed up. He berates Lavan for his lack of appreciation of all of

Yaakov's hard work, changing his wages 10 times. But G-d saw my oppressive work and rewarded me.

Another sinister echo. In the prophecy to Avraham that his children would be exiled in a foreign land and afflicted, the Hebrew word for affliction is "eenu". And this affliction would be for 400 years. And then they would return with great wealth. Yaakov uses that very word to describe his hard work for Lavan "G-d saw my hard labour – an'ee". Perhaps, Yaakov wonders, I am that Jewish people. Foreign land. Afflicted. I am here 20 years, a long time – seems like 400. Leaving with great wealth.

Oh, how difficult it is in real time to see which prophecies are being played out.



7TH ALIYA (31:43-32:3)

Lavan and Yaakov part amidst a parting ceremony. A marker and stones are placed as testimony that Lavan will not approach Yaakov, nor Yaakov approach Lavan. Lavan returns home. Angels encounter Yaakov as he returns to the Land.

The angels greet Yaakov. Angels when he left and angels when he returns. Another sign of Divine favour that he will continue the legacy of the Jewish people.

Yaakov perceives conflicting indicators: of favour and disfavour, of parallels and contrasts, of promises and punishment.

Perhaps this description of the life of our forefather, the forefather for whom our people is named, Yisrael, perhaps this creates a paradigm of Jewish experience. Jewish experience is promises and uncertainty. We see favour and disfavour. We have prophecies but perhaps are undeserving.

Yaakov, the recipient of a dream of prophecy, even Yaakov is uncertain of his fate. The Jewish people receive many prophecies. Knowing with certainty when those prophecies are playing out is oh so elusive. Especially those of us who are privileged to walk in our Land, we need to be vigilant against overzealous certainty. If Yaakov lived with uncertainty, we too would be wise to temper our zeal with caution. Certainty is not the stuff of Yaakov's life. We need to be vigilant to exercise prudent caution when it comes to seeing our history as the fulfillment of prophecy.

HOSHEA 11:7-12:14

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

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

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

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

STATS

7th of 54 sedras; 7th of 12 in Bereishit.
Written on 235.3 lines, ranks 12th Vayeitzei is one single very long (closed) Parsha. It's being a S'TUMA fits with the fact that it is a continuation of the To-l'dot story. It is the Torah's longest closed parsha, and second only to the open parsha that is all of Mikeitz (254.6 lines).
148 pesukim - rank: 6th (3rd in Bereishit).
2021 words - rank: 4th (3rd in Bereishit).
7512 letters - rank: 5th (3rd in Bereishit).

MITZVOT

None of the 613 mitzvot are in Vayeitzei This is one of 17 mitzva-less sedras, 9 of which are in Sefer Bereishit, 3 in Shemot, none in Vayikra, 2 in Bamidbar, and 3 in Devarim.



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BY RABBI CHANOCH YERES
Rav, Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

ויעקב הלך לדרכו ויפגעו בו מלאכי אלקים (לב:ב)

"And Yaakov went on his way, and **the angels met him**." (32:2)

Why here do the angels of G-d come to greet Yaakov while at the beginning of the Parsha when Yaakov leaves Charan, it is **Yaakov who encounters** G-d and experiences the angels in a dream, "Vayifgah BaMakom" (28:11)?

The Zohar resolves the issue by expressing the idea that once a man and woman ascend to Holy Matrimony, G-d blesses such a married couple. When Yaakov left Charan, he left as a single individual and therefore it is Yaakov who needs to encounter G-d and His angels in a dream. However, upon returning, Yaakov is now married with a wife and family. Now, as being blessed in marriage, it is the Divine Presence which goes out to meet Yaakov. Yaakov is greeted here by G-d's angels in broad daylight and awake and not in some nightly dream while asleep.

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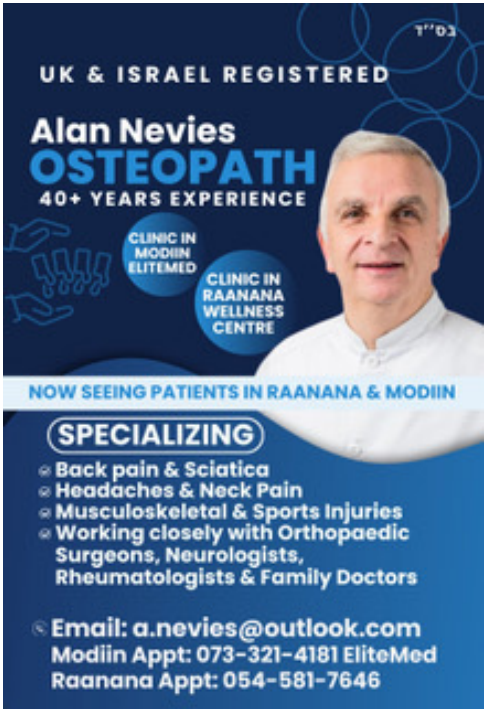
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THE PERSON IN THE PARSHA

BY RABBI DR. TZVI HERSH WEINREB
OU Executive Vice President, Emeritus

"The Thankful Jew"

He may or may not have been an anti-Semite, but he sure was an abrasive personality. He was my seat mate on an Amtrak train, returning to Baltimore from New York some years ago.

As I recall, it was at the end of a particularly long and grueling day for me. I had a series of rabbinical meetings, delivered a talk during lunch which provided me no opportunity to eat, and was involved in an unsuccessful attempt to keep the marriage of a young couple from breaking up. I was looking forward to the respite of some quiet time on the return trip to my home in Baltimore, but even that luxury was denied to me that evening.

I sat down, as I always try to do, in the window seat. This fellow entered the railroad car and walked past me in search of a seat for himself. There were several seats that he could have chosen, but for some reason he returned to where I was sitting, glared at me, and sat down with a gesture of dissatisfaction.

I immediately sensed that I would not experience the peaceful train ride that I had anticipated. I tried burying my head in the book I was reading, but that was not sufficient insulation from my neighbor's insistence upon conversation.

"You are obviously Jewish," he began. "Your yarmulke, for one thing, is a dead giveaway. Plus, I see that you are reading a Hebrew book."

Of course, I admitted to being Jewish and slanted my book in his direction so that he could verify that it was indeed in Hebrew. I asked him, as I typically do in such conversations, whether he was Jewish.

I can only describe his instant response by saying that he snorted. "Look, buddy," he growled. "I've got my bunch of problems and burdens, but being Jewish is thankfully not one of them."

I was at a loss as to what to say next, but there was something about his use of the word "thankfully" that prompted me to comment to him: "But surely you have other things to be thankful for besides not being Jewish."

He seemed to be taken aback, having expected some defensive statement on my part, or perhaps some indication that I was offended. I was hoping that I succeeded at changing the topic from my Jewishness to his life and the things he had to be thankful for.

May the Torah learned from this issue be dedicated l'iluy nishmat our beloved father, grandfather, and great-grandfather

Pinchas Eedel ben Moshe z"l
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on his 10th Yahrtzeit כסלו ז'

He continues to be missed!

It worked. That is, at least for a while. He went on to say that he didn't have much to be thankful for, although he was happily married, had several children, and held a well-paying job. He also insisted that these beneficial facets of his life were merely the result of good fortune and did not call for any expression of thanks on his part.

He then pressed on with his almost obsessive interest in my Jewishness. "You seem to be proud of the fact that you are a Jew. Why? What is it about you Jews that makes you want to wear your Jewishness on the outside? Why do you dress so differently, and why you persist in reading those old-fashioned books in that outdated language?"

I was about to launch into a major lecture but restrained myself from doing so, knowing full well that my efforts would be in vain. As I hesitated, pondering my next move, he surprised me.

"Forget those questions," he said. "Instead, give me an answer to the following question. It is one that I've asked many Jews before, but none were able to give me a satisfactory answer. My question is: What does the word 'Jew' mean? What is its origin, and what is its significance?"

Once again, the word "thankful" proved useful. I responded that the word "Jew" in English is related to the word "Jude" in German, which in turn derives from the Hebrew word "Judah," one of the ancestors of the Jewish people.

I then asked him whether or not he was familiar with the Bible, particularly the Old Testament. His face, which up until this point projected hostility, suddenly took on a different aspect. His facial muscles seemed to relax at first, and then his eyes clouded over with tears.

"Are you kidding? I was the child of a preacher whose father was a preacher before him. We read from the Bible at the dinner table and studied it regularly every single day. I grew up resenting the Bible and all that it stood for, although I remember much of it against my will. I guess one can't forget words that were ingrained in him since his childhood."

I now had my opening. And this is the connection to this week's Torah reading, *Parshat Vayetze* (*Genesis* 28:10-32:3). "Then you must remember the stories of *Genesis*. Do you recall the passage in which Leah names her children? Do you remember the name she gave to her fourth son?"

The words came out of his mouth as they would from a recording: "*Genesis* 30:35: And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, 'This time I will praise the Lord.' Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she ceased bearing."

He looked at me with a big grin, his face finally indicating a small measure of friendship. "Impressive, wouldn't you say? I remember every word. I even remember Grandpa explaining that 'Judah' sounds like the Hebrew for 'praise.'"

I responded by congratulating him for his excellent memory and further remarked that he had his old Grandpa to thank for his biblical expertise. I indicated

לעילוי נשמות

אברהם בן צבי ז"ל

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On his 29th yahrzeit 4 Kislev

Mark & Livia Rottenberg

that Leah's reaction to her fourth child's birth was usually translated in our tradition as, "This time I will *thank* the Lord".

"Now you have your answer. We are called Jews because of our ancestor, Judah, whose very name means to praise, or to thank. By definition, the Jew is a person who feels thankful, who expresses gratitude for all his blessings to the Almighty, who provides those blessings to other humans without whose help those blessings would never be realized."

He didn't seem convinced. "Why then," he pressed on, "is it so hard to feel thankful and ever so much more difficult to express it?"

I told them that to answer that question, I would have to give him a further lesson in the Hebrew language. I explained to him that the word *hoda'ah*, while it is the Hebrew word for thanks, it is also the Hebrew word for admission or confession. I went on to explain something to him that I had learned in the writings of Rabbi Isaac Hutner, who taught that when we are thankful to another person, we are in effect admitting that we couldn't do it alone but were dependent upon the other person for the favor.

Gratitude to God entails the recognition of one's own insufficiency and the confession that without God, we would not have achieved that which we are grateful for.

"It is difficult to be thankful," I concluded, "because it is difficult to admit to ourselves that alone we are inadequate and must always rely upon the Divine or the human to achieve whatever we wish to achieve in life. We don't like to admit that we need another, that we can't 'go at it alone.' "

At that point, the train was fast approaching Wilmington, Delaware. My companion was about to get off. He didn't say goodbye and certainly did not thank me for my words.

But he did give me a small bit of satisfaction. He said: "You're different from other Jews. You actually make sense."

I spent the rest of the train ride pondering the adequacy of my responses to this stranger and feeling thankful to the Almighty for giving me the words I needed to earn this dubious compliment. ■

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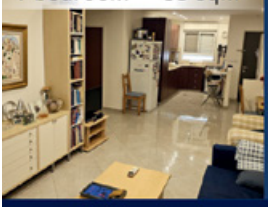
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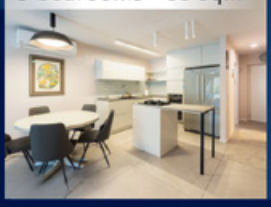


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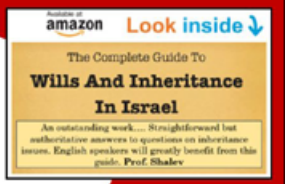
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Leah's Tears

We sometimes forget that the phrase Keriat Ha-Torah does not simply mean "reading the Torah." In Biblical Hebrew the verb *likro* means not "to read" but "to call". The phrase *mikra'ei kodesh*, the "festivals", "Jewish holidays", or *"chaggim"* literally means "holy convocations," days on which the people were called or summoned together. Every seven years – in the command known as *hakhel* – the king was commanded to "read aloud [*tikra*] this Torah before them in their hearing [*be-aznehem*]." In the historic gathering of those who had returned from Babylon, Ezra "read [the Torah] aloud [*vayikra*] from daybreak till noon, in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand, and all the people listened attentively [literally, the ears of all the people were directed] to the book of the Torah."

Keriat Ha-Torah therefore means not reading but *proclaiming* the Torah, reading it aloud. The one who reads it has the written word in front of him, but for the rest of the gathering it is an experience not of the eye but of the ear. The Divine word is something heard rather than seen. Only with the spread of manuscripts, and then (in the fifteenth century) the invention of printing, did reading become a visual rather than auditory experience. To this day the primary experience of Keriat Ha-Torah involves listening to the reader declaim the words from the Torah scroll, rather than following them in a printed text. We miss some of the most subtle effects of Torah if we think of it as the word seen rather than the word heard.

There are many differences between sound and sight, and one has to do with time. We can see - but not hear - a sentence at a single glance. Listening, more than seeing, is a process extended through time. Halfway through a sentence, we can guess what will come next, but we cannot be sure until we actually hear the words. That is why, for example, jokes are more powerful when heard rather than read. Crucial to a joke is the element of surprise. If we can guess the punchline, the joke is simply not that good. Listening, we are kept in suspense. Reading, we can go directly to the final sentence.

To give one biblical example: when Joseph is in prison, Pharaoh's butler and baker both have dreams. The butler tells Joseph

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what he saw, and Joseph gives it a favourable interpretation. "Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your position." Emboldened by the good news, the baker tells Joseph his own dream. Joseph's interpretation begins with the same words, "Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head," but he then adds, "from the rest of you [*me'alecha*]; he will hang you on a tree." This is humour at its blackest. The reason for its presence in the Joseph story does not concern us here, but the point is this: the Torah is written to be read aloud, and several of its literary devices depend on this fact, one above all, namely the power of the next word to confound our expectations, based on what we have heard thus far. Sometimes the outcome is humorous, at others the opposite, but in either case the device allows us to sit up and pay attention.

One of the most striking examples occurs in this week's sedra. Jacob, in flight from Esau's anger, has travelled to the house of Laban. Upon arrival he meets Laban's younger daughter Rachel and falls in love with her. Laban proposes a deal: work for me for seven years and I will give her to you in marriage. Jacob does so, but on the wedding night Laban substitutes Leah for Rachel. The next morning, when Jacob discovers the deception, he protests, "Why did you deceive me?" Laban pointedly replies, "It is not the done thing in our place to give the younger before the elder" (a reference, intended or otherwise, to Jacob's deception of Isaac, a case of the younger taking the blessing of the elder, Esau). Laban agrees, however, that in return for a further seven years' labour, Jacob may marry Rachel. He will not have to wait until the seven years are complete, but he must, however, wait for

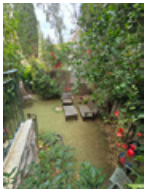


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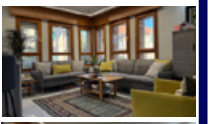
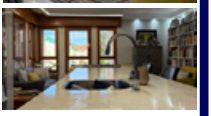
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seven days until Leah's wedding celebration is complete (an early example of a custom we still keep: the week of *sheva brachot*). The seven days pass. Jacob marries Rachel. We then read the following:

He also [*gam*] married Rachel, and he also [*gam*] loved Rachel... *(Bereishit 29:30)*

The implication at this point is clear. The repeated word *gam*, "also," leads us to believe that the two sisters are equal in Jacob's eyes. The story of the deception has – or so we must suppose on the basis of what we have so far heard – a happy ending after all. Jacob has married both. He loves them both. The sibling rivalry that is so pronounced a theme of Bereishit (Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau) seems to be reaching a positive resolution. It is possible to love two siblings equally. The next word sends our expectation crashing to the ground:

...more than Leah *(Bereishit 29:30)*

This is an ungrammatical construction. The words "also" and "more than" do not belong together in the same sentence. Either one loves X and also Y, or one loves X more than Y, but not both. The effect – like a sudden discord in the middle of a Mozart symphony – is strident and shocking. Jacob does not love the two sisters equally. He may love them both, but his passion is for Rachel. The next verse contains an even sharper discord:

God saw that Leah was hated [*senuah*]. . .

This is a phrase that cannot be understood literally. The previous verse has just said that Leah was not hated but loved. The commentators and translators wrestled with this difficulty. Ramban (on his second interpretation) and Radak read the word *senuah* not as "hated" but as "[relatively] unloved." Yet though the text is semantically strange, is it psychologically lucid. Leah knew that Jacob's heart was elsewhere. She may have been loved but she felt the lesser love as a rejection. The words "God saw" mean that God felt her sense of humiliation. Laban's deception had human consequences, and they were tragic. Leah weeps inwardly for the husband she acquired through her father's wiles, whose love is for someone else.

Only now, perhaps, do we understand the significance of the Torah's first mention of Leah:

Laban had two daughters; The elder was called Leah and the younger was called Rachel. Leah had weak (*rakot*) eyes, but Rachel was beautiful and lovely. (Gen. 29:16-17)

The word *rakot* could mean many things: beautiful (Targum, Rashbam), weak (Ibn Ezra), or sensitive (Netziv suggests that Leah was unable to go out with the flocks because the bright sunlight hurt her eyes). The ambiguity is deliberate. Only rarely and sparingly does the Torah give us physical descriptions of its characters, and always for a reason that will eventually be disclosed (so, for example, we hear in 2 Samuel 14 about Absolom's hair; four chapters later we discover why: it became caught in a tree, which led to his death).

The meaning of the phrase "Leah's eyes were *rakot*" is (as Rashi, Radak and various midrashic traditions explain) "Leah was easily moved to tears." She was emotionally vulnerable. She had none of the resilience that might have carried her through her husband's attachment to her younger sister. She was thin-skinned, sensitive, attuned to nuance, easily hurt. She knew she was

Jacob's lesser love, and it caused her pain.

The subtlety with which all this is conveyed is remarkable. The Torah has sketched Leah's portrait in a few deft strokes, each of which we will only hear if we are listening carefully. Nor has this been done for the sake of description. Rather, it has set the scene for the drama that is about to unfold – and once again we find it done with the utmost brevity and delicacy. In fact, unless we are paying the closest attention we will not notice it at all.

What follows next is, on the face of it, a simple account of the birth of four children. Beneath the surface, however, these verses are as eloquent as any in the entire Torah:

When God saw that Leah was unloved, He opened her womb, but Rachel remained barren. Leah became pregnant and had a son. She named him Reuben, saying: "The Lord has seen (*ra'ah*) my affliction. Now my husband will love me." She became pregnant again and had a son. She said, "The Lord has heard (*shama*) that I am unloved, so He has given me this son also," and she named him Shimon. She became pregnant again and had a son and said, "Now that I have borne him three sons, my husband will become attached (*lavah*) to me." Therefore he named the child Levi. She became pregnant again and had a son. She said, "This time I will praise (*odeh*) the Lord," so she named him Judah (Yehudah). She then ceased having children. (Gen. 29:31-35)

Read superficially, these verses are no more than a genealogy, a list of births, of the kind of which there are many in Bereishit. As soon as our ear is attuned to Leah's plight, however, we listen more carefully, and what we hear is heartbreaking.

Leah is pleading for attention. Each of the

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names of her first three children is a cry to her husband Jacob – to see, to listen, to be attached, to notice her, to love. Significantly, it is she, not Jacob, who names three of the children. (The exception is Levi. The commentators who emphasise the plain sense of the text - Rashbam and Radak - assume that Jacob is the "he" who names Levi. Rashi, whose commentary goes deeper, says, on the basis of Midrashic tradition, that it was an angel. Rashi has understood that a key fact about the four births is the absence of Jacob.)

Sadly, the lack of relationship between Jacob and Leah at the birth of her children is carried through in the years to come. Jacob's relationship with Reuben, Shimon, and Levi breaks down completely (with Reuben after the episode of Bilhah's couch, with Shimon and Levi after the incident with Shechem). On his deathbed he curses them instead of blessing them. Yet it is from Levi that Israel's spiritual leaders will eventually come (Moses, Aaron, Miriam, and eventually the *kohanim* and *levi'im*), and from Judah will come its kings (David and his descendants).

It is not only Leah's cry that Jacob does not hear. He fails equally to respond to Rachel's distress when she sees her sister having children while she has none:

May the Torah learning in this issue be in loving memory of and לעילו נשמת my mother

Esther Goldstein ע"ה

לע"נ אסתר בת אהרן צבי ע"ה

on her 20th yahrzeit י"א כסלו

Harriet Goldstein-Mark and family

Aware that she had borne Jacob no children, Rachel became jealous of her sister. To Jacob she said, "Give me children! If not, let me die!" Jacob grew angry with Rachel, and said, "Am I in place of God, who has kept you from having children?" (Gen. 30:1-2)

The Sages noticed a parallel between Jacob's words here and Joseph's at the end of Bereishit when the brothers fear that once their father is dead, Joseph will take revenge. Joseph comforts them, saying, "Do not be afraid. Am I in the place of God?" Joseph uses the same words his father had said before he was born, but to the opposite effect: to bring comfort. Using this contrast to maximal effect, the Sages said about Jacob's reply to Rachel:

Said the Holy One, blessed be He [to Jacob]: "Is that the way to answer a woman in distress? By your life, your children will one day stand before her son [Joseph, who will answer them, Am I in the place of God?]."

What is going on in this intense and sometimes tragic drama between Leah and Jacob? Jacob is unlike the other patriarchs. If the word that comes to mind in relation to Abraham is *chessed*, kindness, and to Isaac *pachad*, fear, the idea that characterises Jacob is struggle.

Already in the womb he struggles with his brother. He competes with him for the birthright and the blessing. The defining scene in his life is his wrestling match at night with an unnamed adversary. Both his names – Jacob, "he who grasps by the heel," and Israel, "he who struggles with God and man and prevails" – convey a sense of conflict.

While Abraham and Isaac represent modes of being, Jacob stands for becoming. The gifts he has, he has fought for. None has

come naturally. Jacob is the supreme figure of persistence. He is the man who said to the angel, "I will not let you go until you bless me." More than Abraham and Isaac, Jacob is the person who wrestles with life and refuses to let go.

The Torah describes him as an *ish tam*, sometimes translated as "a simple man", but better understood (according to R. Samson Raphael Hirsch) as "a single-minded man". The prophet Micah associated him with truth – "You give truth to Jacob, kindness to Abraham." Jacob's life embodies the fact that truth must be fought for with single-minded determination. It rarely comes without a struggle and the pain of experience. What is the truth at stake in Jacob's life?

There are many, but one is a truth about love. One of the most striking facts about the Jacob narrative is the frequency with which the word "love" appears. It figures once in the story of Abraham (Gen. 22:2), twice in the life of Isaac (Gen. 24:67, Gen. 25:28, though there are also three references to Isaac's love of a particular kind of food: Gen. 27:4, Gen. 27:9, Gen. 27:14), but seven times in the case of Jacob (Gen. 29:18, Gen. 29:20, Gen. 29:30, Gen. 32:20; Gen. 37:3, Gen. 37:4; Gen. 44:20-22). Jacob loves more than any other figure in Bereishit.

But through painful experience, Jacob must learn a truth about love. There are times when love not only unites but also divides. It did so in his childhood, when Isaac loved Esau and Rebecca loved Jacob. It did so again when he married two sisters. It did so a third time when he loved Rachel's child Joseph more than his other sons. What Jacob learned – and what we learn, reading his story – is that love is not enough. We must also heed those who feel unloved. Without that, there will be conflict and tragedy. That requires a specific capacity – the ability to listen, in Jacob's case, to the unspoken tears of Leah and her feeling of rejection, made explicit in the names she gave her sons.

I began by pointing out that the Torah was a text intended to be read aloud and listened to. It is the single greatest expression of faith in a God we cannot see, but only hear. Judaism is supremely a religion of the ear, unlike all other ancient civilisations, which were cultures of the eye. This is more than a metaphysical fact. It is a moral one as well. In Judaism the highest spiritual gift is the ability to listen – not only to the voice of God, but also to the cry of other people, the sigh of the poor, the weak, the lonely, the neglected and, yes, sometimes the un- or less-loved. That is one of the meanings of the great command *Shema Yisrael*, "Listen, O Israel." Jacob's other name, we recall, was Israel.

Jacob wrestles with this throughout his life. It is not that he has a moral failing. To the contrary, he is the most tenacious of all the patriarchs – and the only one whose children all become part of the covenant. It is rather that every virtue has a corresponding danger. Those who are courageous are often unaware of the fears of ordinary people. Those of penetrating intellect are often dismissive of lesser minds. Those who, like Jacob, have an unusual capacity to love must fight against the danger of failing to honour the feelings of those they do not love with equal passion. The antidote is the ability to listen. That is what Jacob learns in the course of his life – and why he, above all, is the role-model for the Jewish people – the

nation commanded to listen.

How beautiful it is that this message – one of the deepest and most subtle in the Torah – is conveyed in a series of passages whose meaning does not lie on the surface of the text but discloses itself only to those who listen to what is going on beneath the words: the unspoken cry, the implicit appeal, the unheard tears, the unarticulated pain. Those who wish to learn to listen to God must learn to listen to other people – to the *kol demamah dakah*, "the still, small voice" of those who need our love. ■

Rabbi Sacks zt"l was the Former Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth. These weekly teachings 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 for more.



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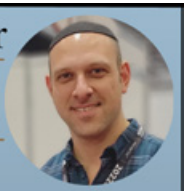
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The answer is hidden within a section of Parshat Vayeitzei that is often glossed over. The Torah spends nearly fifty verses detailing Yaakov's complex livestock arrangement with Lavan. Yaakov agrees to keep only the discolored sheep, those that are striped (*akudim*), dotted (*nekudim*), or speckled (*v'vrudim*).

This raises an obvious question: Why does the eternal Torah devote so much space to Yaakov's sheep? What life-changing lesson were the Avot passing down to us through their chosen profession of serving as a shepherd?

TWO FLAWED APPROACHES TO OUR FLAWS

When dealing with personal flaws, humans typically fall into one of two extreme traps:

- **The White Sheep (Whitewashing):** Pretending to be perfect. Like Lavan, whose name literally means "white", these individuals overcompensate externally to project a flawless facade while concealing internal corruption.
- **The Black Sheep (Giving Up):** Identifying completely with the negative. These individuals highlight their flaws as excuses never to change, declaring, *"This is just who I am, and I can never improve."*

Both approaches completely stall growth. You cannot fix what you pretend doesn't exist, nor can you repair what you believe is hopelessly broken.

THE SECRET OF THE SPECKLED SHEEP

Yaakov rejected both the pure white and pure black sheep, choosing instead the spotted and speckled flock. These sheep represent a Jew committed to growth: someone who honestly acknowledges their imperfections but refuses to let those flaws define who they are.

- ***Akudim* (Stripes):** Consistent habits or ingrained patterns that need work.
- ***Nekudim* (Small Dots):** Daily minor slip-ups, such as small white lies or

distractions during davening.

- ***V'vrudim* (Speckles):** Major character challenges like anger or jealousy that periodically surface.

How do we turn the black and white sheep, those who resist growth, into striped, spotted, and speckled sheep willing to change? And how do we convince ourselves that we, too, can change?

To transform the flock, Yaakov placed peeled wooden sticks before the sheep. He stripped away the dark outer bark, revealing the pure white wood beneath. Each stick served as a mirror, conveying a powerful message: At your core, your *neshama* is pure and holy. Your flaws and sins are merely an outer layer of bark. They are not who you are, and they can be peeled away.

BELIEVING IN YOUR INNER LIGHT

Children are often afraid of the dark, but adults are frequently afraid of the light. Admitting that our essence is pure white is scary because it brings responsibility, it demands that we rise up and fulfill our true potential.

Rav Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin taught a revolutionary principle: Just as a person must believe in Hashem, he must also believe in himself, in the untainted, divine core within his soul. Sin is never your true identity; it is merely an external distraction.

When we stop whitewashing our mistakes and stop declaring ourselves failures, we unlock the secret of Yaakov's sheep. By seeing the pure white core within ourselves while actively working on our spots, speckles and stripes, we can break free from any rut and return home to Hashem! ■

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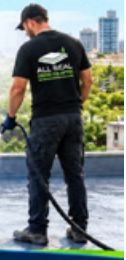
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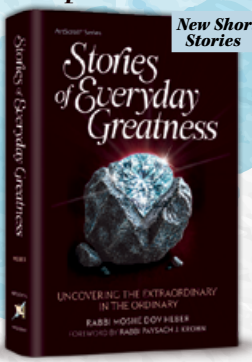

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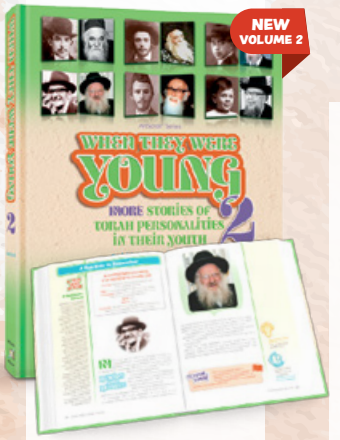
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Like a Few Days - Yaakov's Love for Rachel

The Torah describes Yaakov's years of labor for Rachel:

וַיַּעֲבֹד יַעֲקֹב בְּרָחֵל שֶׁבַע שָׁנִים וַיִּהְיוּ בְעֵינָיו כְּיָמִים אֲחָדִים בְּאַהֲבָתוֹ אֹתָהּ

Yaakov served for Rachel seven years, and they seemed in his eyes like but a few days because of his love for her.[1]

The commentators ask an obvious question: usually, when one longs intensely for something, time feels longer, not shorter. What is the intended meaning of the term used in the pasuk above, "they seemed in his eyes like but a few days"?

The *Baalei HaTosafot* explain that the Torah does not mean the years passed quickly. It was not about quantity. Rather, it means that every effort, every sacrifice, every moment of labor felt worthwhile. Compared to the greatness of Rachel Imeinu, seven years were insignificant. True love transforms sacrifice into privilege. The period was not shortened, but felt worth it every day.

This resembles the famous insight regarding the source of *kiddushei kesef (using money to get married)*, derived from Avraham's acquisition of *Me'arat HaMahpelah*.[2] Doesn't it seem a bit peculiar to derive a lesson about a marriage transaction from the acquisition of a burial plot? Couldn't Hazal have selected a more positive parallel? Perhaps the connection is as follows. If you had asked Efron who got the better deal, he would have said, What do you mean? He gave me four hundred shekel for a cave. I completed the deal of the century. I sold an empty plot of land for the highest price per square meter ever! If you had asked Avraham, he would have said, I was able to acquire the entrance to Gan Eden for a few shekels. What a bargain!

Each party felt that they got the best deal of their life. And that's what marriage is about. Each spouse should look at the other and say, What a deal I got!

Every moment in a relationship is not always rosy. Misunderstandings are bound to occur. When they do we should recall the way

1. Bereishit 29:20

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2. The Talmud derives a gezera Shava. קיחה קיחה משדה עפרון . With respect to Avraham's acquisition of me'arat hamachpela it states: כסף השדה קח ממני. In connection with marriage it states: כי יקח איש אשה – the use of the verb קח appears in both verses and thus are connected. See Kiddushin 2a

Adam dealt with Hava. After Hava ate from the forbidden tree man's punishment was destined as the Torah dictates: *With the sweat of your face, you shall eat bread*.[3] In the very next *pasuk*, Adam named his spouse "Hava." He did not reprimand her or blame his punishment on her wrongdoing; rather, he called her "*Hava, em kol hai*" – "the mother of all." Adam placed everything into perspective. If we recognize and appreciate what we have rather than focusing on what we lack, we will experience happiness with our spouse.

In a healthy marriage, each spouse should feel: *I received far more than I gave.* That was Yaakov's feeling regarding Rachel: *they seemed in his eyes like but a few days.* Every sacrifice was small compared to the greatness of what he gained.

Perhaps this is one of the deepest lessons of Parashat Vayeitzei and of marriage itself. Yaakov Avinu teaches us that love is not measured by how little one gives, but by how meaningful the relationship becomes. When something is truly precious, sacrifice no longer feels like sacrifice. Time, effort, patience, and compromise are transformed into expressions of gratitude and privilege.

In a world that constantly encourages people to focus on what they are missing, the Torah teaches the secret of enduring happiness: to focus on the gift standing before us. Yaakov looked at Rachel and felt that seven years were *like a few day*s. Adam looked at Hava after the greatest failure in human history and still called her t*he mother of all life.* Greatness in relationships comes from seeing the blessing more than the burden, the privilege more than the price.

Perhaps that is why the Jewish home is called a *bayit ne'eman b'Yisrael* - a faithful home in Israel. A Jewish marriage is not built merely on emotion, but on appreciation, commitment, perspective, and the ability to recognize the infinite value within another human being.

When husband and wife each feel, *I received more than I gave,* their home becomes more than a partnership; it becomes a dwelling place for the Divine Presence. Through such homes, the Jewish people continue the legacy of Yaakov and Rachel and build a strong future based on love, sacrifice, and gratitude. ■

3. Bereshit 3:19





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Set in Stone

The image of stones seems to be a recurring motif throughout our *parashah* this week. First, we meet Yaakov Avinu, fleeing the wrath of his brother Eisav, on the way to his uncle Lavan's home. He takes stones and places them around his head before he goes to sleep; he then dreams of angels ascending and descending a ladder that stretches up to the heavens. Upon awakening, he takes the stone and sets it as an altar; he pours oil over it and pledges one tenth of his future assets to Hashem.

In the next scene, Yaakov Avinu encounters a group of shepherds who are waiting to take a huge stone off the well so they can water their flocks. As he sees Rachel Imeinu approaching, he lifts the stone with unusual ease and allows the shepherds access to the water. Finally, at the end of the *parashah*, Yaakov Avinu and his family gather stones in a heap, calls it *"Gal-ed,"* and mark the separation between Yaakov and Lavan. Let us explore the significance of these stones and what they symbolize.



Rav Moshe Breslover, in his work *L'machar Atir*, offers a beautiful insight. In his blessings to the tribes at the end of his life, Yakov Avinu describes himself as, *"Avir Yakov mi'sham ro'eh even Yisrael*— the Mighty One of Jacob; from there he sustained the rock of Israel..." *(Bereisheet* 49:*24)* Rashi teaches that *even*, rock, incorporates the words *av* and *ben*, father and son, the letter *bet* connecting both the beginning and end of the word. The rock signifies continuity and *binyan*, building the future. Indeed, this is one of the reasons given for putting a stone on a *matzeivah*, indicating that one's legacy continues far after his passing. Our *parashah* this week is the section that chronicles the building of the Jewish people; these three episodes stand for three distinct aspects of building a family.

The first phase is having a vision. One must conceptualize and anticipate the kind of family he wants to have. Yaakov Avinu, as the Ramban notes, took the stones from the place of the *Akeidah*, representing deep devotion and faithfulness to Hashem. It is these stones that he put beneath his head. This symbolizes his lofty thoughts and his vision for the family he hopes to raise. The ultimate vision is when these stones form into one unit, collectively serving Hashem in harmony.

The next phase is expanding one's family. The Abarbanel suggests that the well is

emblematic of the fruitful woman and the stone blocking its opening symbolizes infertility. Through his *yichud lev* and determination to build *Am Yisrael*, Yaakov Avenue unblocks the well, and the tribes are born.

However, the last phase is the most crucial, wherein the Jewish people solidify their identity and their commitment to their vision. At this point he builds a mound that sets a clear demarcation between his family and that of Lavan. It is a testimony that the Jewish people are "*am l'vadad yishkon*," a nation that dwells alone, protected from surrounding cultures and influences.

Rav Elchanan Samet in *Pirkei Elisha* notes that this mound plays a significant role later in Jewish history. This is where Achav, king of Israel is killed in the battle of *Ramot Gilad*, the very same place where Yaakov Avinu clearly marked a separation. Achav was the first king to blur the lines between the Jewish people and the other nations, hence, his death occurs specifically in this place. It is also not coincidental that Na'aman, who killed Achav, was told by the prophet Elisha to immerse in the Jordan river to rid himself of leprosy. The Jordan river marks the border between Israel and her neighboring countries. The war with Aram was not simply a political war, it was a war that was meant to remind the Jewish people of their identity and to be loyal to their reality as G-d's people.

We live in a world where outside cultures permeate our lives in multiple arenas. It is essential that we remember our holy vision for our families and demonstrate our uniqueness with pride, projecting our mission to increase Hashem's glory wherever we can. ■



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MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23

7:00 pm	**Women's Division** Dorot Choir	**Hadassah Jacob**	1 Diskin St., Rechavia
8:30 pm	Semichat Chaver Program	**Rav Elyada Goldwicht**	Bet Knesset Ohel Yitzchak, Keren Hayesod St. (The Bais)

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24

9:15 am	**Women's Division** Torah Tapesteries	**Shira Smiles**	Beit Knesset Hanassi, Ussishkin 24
9:20 am	Vayishlach: The Saving of the 400	**Rabbi James Kennard**	**Community Beit Midrash Program** Kehilat Nitzanim, 3 Asher St., Bakaa
10:10 am	Rambam: Letters and Introductions	**Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz**	
11:25 am	P'shat in the Parsha	**Rabbi Shmuel Goldin**	
12:20 PM	Unlocking the Messages of Chazal	**Rabbi Shai Finkelstein**	

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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24 (CONTINUED)

10:00 am - 2:00 pm	**Weekly Kollel Boker** Instructors include: Rabbi David Fine, Rabbi Ian Shaffer, Rabbi Aschi Dick, & Rabbi Avi Herzog	**The Bais Men's Programs in Modiin** Yeshivat Hesder Meir Harel, Emek Beit Shean 53, Modiin
1:00 pm Shiur followed by Mincha at **1:45 pm**	Modiin Lunch and Learn with **Rabbi Aschi Dick**	Masamerica Offices, 28 Dam HaMacabbiim St, 3rd Floor

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25

9:15 am	Rav Soloveitchik on the Parsha	**Rabbi Dr. Aaron Adler**	**Community Beit Midrash Program** Beit Knesset HaNassi, 24 Ussishkin St., Rechavia
10:20 am	Contemporary Issues in Halacha and Hashkafa	**Rabbi Anthony Manning**	
11:25 am	Building Character and Midot: Rav Kook on Pirkei Avot	**Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider**	
12:30 pm	The Turbulent Nineteenth Century of European Jewish History	**Dr. Deborah Polster**	

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26

9:15 am	Parshat Hashavua	**Rabbi Ari Kahn**	**Community Beit Midrash Program** Bet Knesset Shai Agnon, 11 Leib Yaffe St., Arnona
10:30 am	From Text to Tachlis	**Rabbi Jeremy Perlow**	
8:00 pm	Halachic Controversies (The Bais)	**Rabbi Aschi Dick**	Bet Knesset Ohel Yitzchak, Keren Hayesod St.

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ALIZA BACK

Yerushalayim Coordinator, OU Israel Women's Division

Words of Introduction



RABBI YITZCHAK BREITOWITZ

Tevet and the Three Days of Darkness

10:15 AM



MICHAL WEINSTEIN

Finding Light: A Story of Loss, Faith, & an Impossible Miracle

11:30 AM



DINA SCHOONMAKER

Spiritual Messages of Chanuka

12:15 PM



9:15 AM- HALLEL WITH AVIGAIL SCHEINFELD

Thursday, December 10
9:15 am - 1:00 pm

Beit Knesset Hanasi
Ussishkin 24

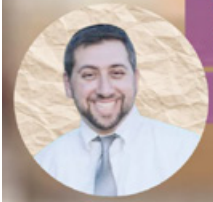
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Pre-Chanukah

Leil Iyun

Monday, November 30, 2026

7:00 p.m. Rabbi Joel Kenigsberg

Introductory Remarks

Rabbi Sam Shor

Illumination and Inspiration:
Unlocking the Power of Chanuka

7:45 p.m. Rabbi Leo Dee

Lighting Up the Darkness

Rabbi Kenigsberg



Rabbi Shor



Rabbi Dee



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ישראל Women's Division OU ISRAEL

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ZEMIRA OZAROWSKI
Director,OU Israel Women's Division
Words of Introduction



RABBI AVI BERMAN
Executive Director, OU Israel
The Inner Meaning of Chanukah



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Becoming Brighter: The Slow Glow of Self Growth



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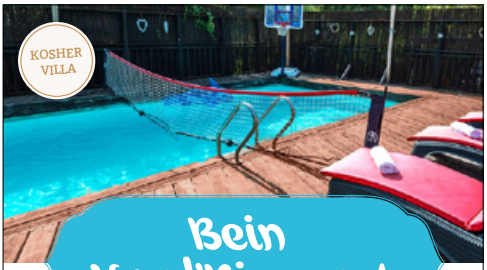


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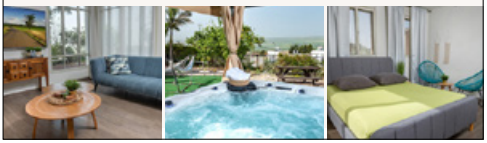
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BADERECH

RABBI JUDAH MISCHEL
Executive Director, Camp HASC
Author of Baderech series

L'chaim!

The year 1804 saw the famous "Zhlobener Wedding", also known among chasidim as "the Great *Chasuna*". A granddaughter of the Alter Rebbe, Reb Schneur Zalman of Liadi zy'a married a grandson of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, the Kedushas Levi zy'a. The historic wedding lasted from Friday through the end of Shabbos.

During the wedding meal, the Alter Rebbe poured a shot of vodka and said *l'chaim* to his *mechutan,* the *tzadik* of Berditchev: "*L'chaim heilige mechutan! Hashem* should bless us *b'gashmiyus* and *b'ruchniyus*, material well-being and spiritual success!"

The Kedushas Levi was taken aback by the Alter Rebbe's toast, and responded with a look of wonderment: "My dear *mechutan,* how can this be? *Gashmiyus* before *ruchniyus?* Should a blessing for physical well-being precede a blessing for spiritual success?"

The Alter Rebbe explained: "Yes, indeed!



Is this not what we find clearly in the Torah, When Yaakov Avinu awoke from his dream of angels ascending and descending celestial ladder? His prayer was just that: "If He gives me bread to eat and clothes to wear . . and I return in peace . . *then* Hashem will be my G-d." He mentioned *gashmiyus* — bread and clothing — before *ruchniyus*, returning to Hashem!

Seemingly unconvinced, the Berditchever pressed on. "But how can we compare our *gashmiyus,* our physical needs, to Yaakov Avinu's *gashmiyus*?"

The Alter Rebbe replied with a smile: "And tell me, dear *mechutan*, how can we compare our *ruchniyus*, our spiritual state, to *Yaakov Avinu*'s level of *ruchniyus*?"

"And Yacov awakened from his sleep, and he said, "Indeed, the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it...!"(28:16) Declaring "How awesome is this place; surely it is the gate of Heaven," Yaakov Avinu draws close to Hashem in prayer. This is also hinted in the words, *Vayifgah Bamakom*, "and he had an encounter with *haMakom*," the Omnipresent.

What does Yaakov pray for during this awesome encounter with Hashem? Directly after the dream vision of angels descending and ascending to Heaven, after a Divine revelation of historical magnitude, Yaakov simply and humbly davens for the basics:

רפואה שלימה
לדוד בן שרה

Beged lilbosh, lechem le'echol, "If Hashem will provide me with a garment to wear, bread to eat...." Shouldn't he have prayed for something of cosmic spiritual import at such a moment, perhaps that Moshiach come immediately?

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov urges us to make fulfilling physical needs a spiritual experience, and not to fall prey to a superficial understanding of Creation. That which can be seen, touched, measured and physically experienced is not merely 'earthy', while study, prayer and meditation are 'Heavenly'. Some people eat, sleep and fulfil their bodily needs in order to have the strength to study Torah and meditate. Others, who are more spiritually aware, study Torah in order to know how to eat, sleep and live.

Each of us are a *Neshama b'Guf*, a Heavenly soul temporarily carried about within an earthly body, in order to fulfil our mission in this world. Our basic, 'worldly', physical needs are therefore holy, and meeting these needs brings honor to Hashem, for this is a fulfilment of His will.

So often we compartmentalize our "religious" and "spiritual" endeavors, and imagine that our workday, our household chores, shopping or commute, to be necessary but "mundane". The students of the Baal Shem Tov help us to see our lives in a more expansive way — we are instructed *B'chol Derachecha, Da'eihu*, to "Know G-d in *all* your ways"(Mishlei, 3:6) Living with this recognition, even every simple *gashmiyusdik* task becomes suffused with meaning, *ruchniyus*, and cleaving to G-d.

L'chaim L'chaim! May Hashem help us to live with this awareness, and may He provide for us *b'gashmiyus* and *b'ruchniyus*!

"Master of the World,

Grant me the wisdom to reveal the harmony of my body and soul.

Let their oneness be revealed in my devotion to You.

My soul perceives Your light — let my body discern it too.

My soul calls out Your praise — let my body sing it too...."

— Reb Nosson of Breslov, *Lekutei Tefillos*

Excerpt from newly released **Baderech: Along the Path of the Torah**, (Mosaica Press) ■

Rav Judah Mischel is executive director of Camp HASC, the Hebrew Academy for Special Children. He is the founder of Tzama Nafshi and the author of the "Baderech" series. Rav Judah lives in Ramat Beit Shemesh with his wife Ora and their family.





SIMCHAT SHMUEL

RABBI SAM SHOR
Director, Torah Initiatives, OU Israel

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

The Torah tells us:

וַיִּפְגַּע בַּמָּקוֹם וַיָּלֶן שָׁם כִּי־בָא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וַיִּקַּח מֵאַבְנֵי הַמָּקוֹם וַיָּשֶׂם מְרַאֲשֹׁתָיו וַיִּשְׁכַּב בַּמָּקוֹם הַהוּא

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

The ***Midrash*** in ***Breisheet Rabba***, offers an interesting interpretation of this *pasuk:*

Rav Nechemia Amar- Natal gimmel avanim- Rav Nechemia said he took 3 stones.

The chasidic work, ***Pardes Yosef,*** authored by **Rav Yosef Pacanowski *hy'd*** ***(as cited in Iturei Torah),*** who perished in the Lodz Ghetto, interpreted our *midrash* as follows:

"Perhaps the three stones mean that Yaakov rested upon the three foundational ideas, the three pillars that sustain the world: Torah, Avoda, and Gemilut Chasadim. HaKadosh Baruch Hu, orchestrated that he should rest upon three stones, to instill within Yaakov Avinu's conscience, that these three fundamentals will sustain him, his descendants, and the entire world."

Just a few verses later we read:

וַיַּשְׁכֵּם יַעֲקֹב בַּבֹּקֶר וַיִּקַּח אֶת־הָאֶבֶן אֲשֶׁר־שָׂם מְרַאֲשֹׁתָיו וַיָּשֶׂם אֹתָהּ מַצֵּבָה וַיִּצֹק שֶׁמֶן עַל־רֹאשָׁהּ:

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

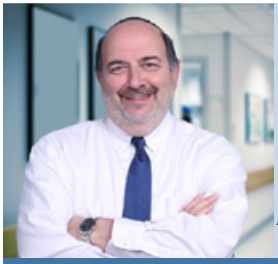
The ***Rashbam***, sees no contradiction between our two verses:

He took from the stones- he took one of the stones lying around in that location, as testified to in the subsequent verse, when the Torah speaks of את האבן, *"the stone."*

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

It is written: "And he took from the stones of the place, *and placed them under his head, and lay down in that place to sleep" (Breisheet 28:11).* ***And (a few verses later) it is also written:*** *"And Yaakov rose up early in the morning,* ***and he took the stone*** *that he had placed under his head, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it" (Breisheet 28:18). The first verse indicates that Yaakov took several stones, whereas the latter verse indicates that he took only one stone.*

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Rabbi Yitzchak says: *This* ***teaches that all those stones gathered to one place and each one said:*** *Let* ***this righteous man place his head upon me.*** *And it was* ***taught: And all of them were absorbed into one*** *large rock.*

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

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

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

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

The Rebbe's powerful insight continues to ring loud and clear, nearly eighty years later. Now, perhaps more than ever, there is a need for the Jewish People to unite and come together as one, as we secure our future here in *Artzeinu Hakedosha.*

Yehi Ratzon, May each of us heed these beautiful teachings from the *Pardes Yosef,* and the Rebbe of Husiyatin *zt'l,* and may we merit to see that unity, built upon *Torah, Avoda* and *Gemilut Chasadim,* bring us to ultimate redemption and tranquility for the entire world. ■





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וַיִּפְגַּע בַּמָּקוֹם וַיָּלֶן שָׁם כִּי בָא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ... (כ"ח:י"א)

He came upon a certain place and stopped there for the night, for the sun had set....

רש"י: "כִּי בָא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ" - הָיָה לוֹ לִכְתֹּב וַיָּבֹא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וַיָּלֶן שָׁם, כִּי בָא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ מַשְׁמַע שֶׁשָּׁקְעָה לוֹ חַמָּה פִּתְאוֹם, שֶׁלֹּא בְּעוֹנָתָהּ, כְּדֵי שֶׁיָּלִין שָׁם:

"For the sun had set." – It should have written, "The sun set and he tarried there all night," but the words "he tarried there all night because the sun set" imply that the sun set suddenly – not at its proper time – in order that he should tarry there overnight.

"Vayifga bamakom vayalen sham ki va hashemesh." On a simple level, the phrase "ki va hashemesh" seems unnecessary. Of course the sun set, and that is why he went to sleep. The Torah could have written more plainly, "vayavo hashemesh vayalen sham." The sun set, and he lay down. Instead, the pasuk is phrased more dramatically, as if the setting of the sun is the cause of his stopping, not just the background to it.

Rashi explains that the sun set prematurely to force Yaakov to stop. The sun sets in order to halt Yaakov. He is about to continue on his journey, but night falls earlier than expected, forcing him to remain in that place.

Chazal describe different versions of how this unfolds. In one version, Yaakov has already passed the site of Yerushalayim and begins to retrace his steps. In another, the distance itself is bridged, and the place comes toward him. Either way, the result is the same: He is brought to this location and held up there.

This is not simply a matter of convenience. It is necessary that Yaakov sleep in this place, daven there, recognize "beis Elokim v'zeh sha'ar hashamayim," and that he experience the vision of the "sulam mutzav artzah." These are formative moments for him and his descendants, the Jewish people. For them to occur in the right place, the natural order is adjusted. Even the sun's movement is adjusted to the needs of Jewish history.

At this point in Sefer Bereishis, once the Avos have been chosen, the world itself begins to move in relation to that story. The cosmos itself now serves a purpose centered on the emergence of Am Yisrael.

The adjustment here is striking. In Tanach, we are more familiar with the sun being held back, as in the days of Yehoshua, to allow a battle to be completed.2 In Yehoshua's time, the sun was held back to help win a war. Here, the sun sets early simply to ensure that Yaakov sleeps in a particular place. Yet that night will shape

Jewish history. Where he lies down, what he sees, and what he understands about that place will shape everything that follows.

There is an earlier hint of this in the story of Avraham, when Rashi describes Hashem intensifying the heat of the day so that travelers would not come and Avraham could rest.3 But that is an adjustment within the natural pattern, a hotter day within a system that already includes heat. Here, the sun itself sets ahead of time. The order of day and night is altered so that Yaakov will stop exactly where he must.

A STONY PILLOW

...וַיִּקַּח מֵאַבְנֵי הַמָּקוֹם וַיָּשֶׂם מְרַאֲשֹׁתָיו וַיִּשְׁכַּב בַּמָּקוֹם הַהוּא: (כ"ח:י"א)

...And he took from the stones of that place, he put them under his head and lay down in that place.


Rav Yehuda Amital zt"l

רש"י: "וַיָּשֶׂם מְרַאֲשֹׁתָיו" - עֲשָׂאָן כְּמִין מַרְזֵב סָבִיב לְרֹאשׁוֹ, שֶׁיָּרֵא מִפְּנֵי חַיּוֹת רָעוֹת; הִתְחִילוּ מְרִיבוֹת זוֹ אֶת זוֹ, זֹאת אוֹמֶרֶת עָלַי יָנִיחַ צַדִּיק אֶת רֹאשׁוֹ וְזֹאת אוֹמֶרֶת עָלַי יָנִיחַ; מִיָּד עֲשָׂאָן הַקָּבָ"ה אֶבֶן אַחַת, וְזֶהוּ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וַיִּקַּח אֶת הָאֶבֶן אֲשֶׁר שָׂם מְרַאֲשֹׁתָיו:

"He put them under his head." – He arranged them in the form of a drainpipe around his head for he was afraid of wild beasts. They (the stones) began quarrelling with one another. One said, "Let this righteous man rest his head upon me," and another said, "Let him rest it upon me." Immediately, the Holy One, blessed be He, made them into one stone! This explains what is written (Bereishis 28:18), "And he took the stone that he had put under his head" (Chullin 91b).

My Rebbe, Rav Amital, offered a fascinating interpretation of this Midrash. He understood the quarrel between the stones as a metaphor for the competing needs of different people within a community, each seeking attention and recognition.

Each stone represents a different person, with different needs, different perspectives, and different expectations. And each one feels that their voice should be the one that is central; that their need is the most pressing; that their view should take priority.

Life as part of a community is complicated. When you're dealing with many people, you're dealing with many legitimate needs, and they don't always align. You can't always satisfy everyone, and you can't always create perfect harmony. There are tensions and competing claims, and they don't easily resolve.

When you're younger, you imagine that a community can function in a way where everyone is fully satisfied, where everything can be balanced. Over time, you

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realize that it's not so simple. There are many "stones," many voices, and they don't naturally come together.

Rav Amital explained that Yaakov's concern was whether a single person, lying there alone, could possibly carry all those needs, all those "stones." But once they merge into a single stone, a single collective, once there is a shared framework, those differences can begin to be reconciled. Within that larger unity, what cannot be contained by one person can find its place.

So far, Rav Amital understood the stones as representing different people within a community. But he also offered a second interpretation, applying the same Midrash to the competing demands within our own personal lives. Life presents us with many "stones," many directions that call for our attention and our commitment. You cannot place your head on all of them at once.

The head represents decision, focus, and the place where a person rests his identity. Even in yeshiva, we experience this in small ways. Should I invest more in Gemara learning or in Tanach? In *iyun* or in *bekius*? Those are modest tensions, but they are only a preview of what awaits later.

As life unfolds, the choices become heavier. Time is limited, and the demands are real. How much does a person invest in family, in Torah, in the broader needs of Am Yisrael, in personal growth, in professional responsibility? These are not conflicts between good and bad, but between competing goods. Each "stone" has a claim. Each one says, "place your head here." And the frustration of not being able to do everything can weigh heavily.

Rav Amital taught that this tension is not a failure: It is part of being human. Even Yaakov Avinu stands before multiple claims that cannot all be fulfilled at once. The Midrash reminds us not to expect a life without conflict. On the contrary, conflict often signals that a person is reaching for something meaningful. The task is to navigate that tension honestly and with balance, knowing that no resolution will be perfect.

This is a familiar Rashi, one we heard when we were young and perhaps passed over quickly. Rav Amital returned to it and uncovered its depth. Rav Amital used this familiar Rashi to teach us about the difficult choices we face as individuals and the challenge of holding a community together.



LEAH AND YITZCHAK

וַתַּהַר לֵאָה וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ רְאוּבֵן כִּי אָמְרָה כִּי רָאָה ה' בְּעָנְיִי (כ"ט:ל"ב)

Leah conceived and bore a son, and named him Reuven; for she declared, "For God has seen my affliction."

רש"י: "וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ רְאוּבֵן" - רַבּוֹתֵינוּ פֵּרְשׁוּ, אָמְרָה רְאוּ מַה בֵּין בְּנִי לְבֶן חָמִי שֶׁמָּכַר הַבְּכוֹרָה לְיַעֲקֹב, וְזֶה לֹא מָכָרָהּ לְיוֹסֵף וְלֹא עֵרֵעַ עָלָיו, וְלֹא עוֹד שֶׁלֹּא עֵרֵעַ עָלָיו אֶלָּא שֶׁבִּקֵּשׁ לְהוֹצִיאוֹ מִן הַבּוֹר. (ברכות ז):

"And [she] named him Reuven." – Our Rabbis explained it thus: she said, "See (ראו) the difference between (בין) my

son and my father-in-law's son, who himself sold the birthright to Yaakov and yet wished to kill him afterward. This (my son) did not sell it (his birthright) to Yosef, yet he did not raise any protest to him being regarded as the first-born. And not only did he not raise a protest, but he even wished to take him out of the pit and rescue him from death" (Berachos 7b).

When Leah names Reuven, we understand her intention simply: Hashem saw my suffering. Rashi, based on the Gemara in Berachos, offers another interpretation: Leah is asking us to notice the difference between Reuven and Esav.

Leah, with ruach hakodesh, understands that Reuven will lose the bechorah to Yosef. The details will unfold later, but she already sees the direction. And she frames it as a comparison: Look at the difference between my son and my father-in-law's son.

Her father-in-law is Yitzchak, and his bechor is Esav, being the first twin to emerge. When Esav loses the bechorah, he responds with anger and violence. Leah says that her son will be different. He will also lose the bechorah, but he will not become destructive. He will not turn against his brothers. He will even try to save Yosef from the pit. He will not succeed, but he will try. "Re'u ma bein bni l'vein ben chami."

The comparison between Reuven and Esav also creates a surprising parallel between Leah and Yitzchak. Rashi is careful in the language. She speaks of "ben chami," my father-in-law's son, not her mother-in-law's. That choice is revealing. One would expect her to identify with Rivkah; instead, she identifies with Yitzchak.

Leah and Yitzchak live within conditions they do not control. Yitzchak plans to give the berachos in a certain way, yet events shift around him. Leah is brought into a marriage she did not choose and remains secondary in Yaakov's emotional world.

Yaakov and Rachel appear to occupy the center of the story, while Leah seems secondary. Yet Leah becomes the primary mother of the family. Yitzchak likewise plays a decisive role despite events unfolding differently from what he had planned.

We all encounter circumstances we cannot control. The question is whether we continue struggling against them or invest our energies where we can make a difference. What is beyond me, and where can I act? Where can I build? Where is my place? Some people spend their lives chasing to control what will not change. Others recognize the boundary and invest their strength where it can bear fruit. Leah does this, Yitzchak does this. Within the limits imposed upon them, they create something lasting.

Leah and Yitzchak could not control all the circumstances of their lives, but they built something lasting within those limitations. ■



Rabbi Moshe Taragin's latest sefer entitled: **Echoes of Rashi** is available at: taraginbooks.com.

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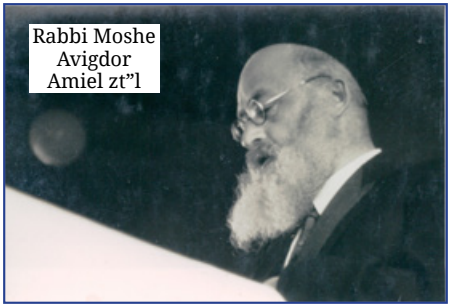


RABBI JOE WOLFSON
Rabbi and Co-Director of JLIC TLV

The Beautiful Skies Of The Land Of Israel: The Life of Rav Moshe Avigdor Amiel, Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv 1935 to 1946

The election for Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv in 1935 was arguably one of the most exciting moments in Tel Aviv's rabbinic history.

The city was growing fast, absorbing successive waves of immigration and the search for a new chief rabbi for a Jewish population approaching 100,000 would clearly be an appointment of significance for 'the first Hebrew city' in two thousand years.


Rabbi Moshe Avigdor Amiel zt"l

One of the finalists was the 29 year old Rabbi Soloveitchik who made the journey from Boston for what would be his only visit to Eretz Yisrael. The other was Rav Herzog, then chief rabbi of Ireland, and shortly after the chief rabbi of the Yishuv after Rav Kook's passing and future chief rabbi of the State of Israel. Neither of them got the job.

Instead it went to Rav Moshe Avigdor Amiel - until then the Chief Rabbi of Antwerp - who would go on to serve as Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv until his death in 1946 aged 64. In contrast to the two unsuccessful candidates, both of whom are remembered as giants of the Jewish 20th century, history has not been kind to Rav Amiel - his name is at best vaguely familiar and his Torah is known by only the very few.

Yet his biography - as a *lamdan*, as an active participant in the battle of ideas, and as an institution builder - is remarkable. Born in 1882 near Grodno he studied under a who's who of Eastern European giants - Rav Shimon Shkop in Telze, Rav Chayim Soloveitchik in Brisk, Rav Hayyim Ozer in Vilna - and received semikha from the Rogochover and the Ohr Sameach aged 18.

Unlike much of his rabbinic milieu he became a committed religious zionist and an active figure in Mizrachi circles - a commitment expressed not only in his magnificent sermons and programmatic essays on democracy, socialism and Zionism, but also as an institution builder. Upon his appointment in Tel Aviv he founded Yeshivat Yishuv HaHadash, a high school combining serious religious studies with secular education that became the model for the future Bnei Akiva high school network. His ambitious attempt to launch a Torah U'Madda style rabbinical

seminary was unsuccessful due in large part to the furious opposition of another student of Rav Hayyim Ozer who had moved to Israel at around the same time, the Hazon Ish. A potential YU or Hildesheimer style rabbinic training institute in 1940s Tel Aviv is undoubtedly one of the most intriguing 'what ifs' of an alternative history of Israeli Judaism.

An excerpt from his *Derashot El Ami*, published in 1936, in which Yaakov's ladder becomes a poetic image capturing the magic and pull of Eretz Yisrael, gives a sense of his Torah and personality.

'A ladder rooted on the ground but whose head is in the heavens'. The land is so very small, but how great and wide are the heavens above it. The land was destroyed and became mournful, desolate, and even despised, but they did not destroy its heavens, and the heavens above the Land of Israel — how beautiful they are and how radiant! There are no heavens like the heavens of the Land of Israel, and when you come there, they draw your heart and your soul as if by magic cords, and against your will you must lift your eyes upward, calling to you, "Know what is above you." And on the other hand, the heavens there are so close to you, that you hardly feel the distance between you and them, and it seems to you that you can easily climb up to them by way of this ladder'.

Reading this passage one gets a sense of the poetry and possibility that the young yishuv possessed for those such as Rav Amiel who moved to Tel Aviv in this period. The notion of the skies remaining unviolated even as the land below is desolate, becomes for Rav Amiel, a symbol for the role of Eretz Yisrael in world history. He continues:

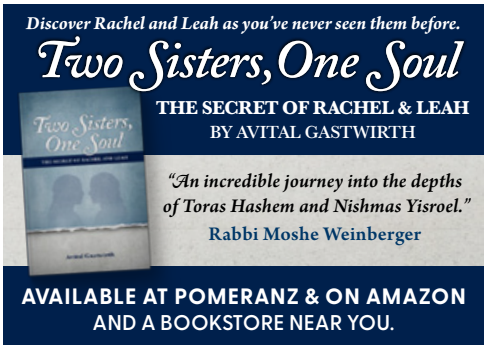
The ladder which reaches to the heavens — this is the Land of Israel's meaning for the whole world. Here is the cradle of almost all the great faiths and if all the great kingdoms have fought over it from time immemorial, they have not fought over the land itself, but over the heavenliness in it.

Yet the image of the ladder contains a critical message for the young yishuv. Rav Amiel concludes:

We too must remember this verse well: Every ladder must have a grip both from below and from above, and if the grip from above slips, the ladder falls and breaks completely. And it is a pity that while we now strive to improve the place where the ladder grips from below, we are letting it slip from its grip above, which is "and its top reaches to heaven"...

Not only the physical but also the spiritual building up of the land is key to the Zionist project - so that Israel may be rooted on the earth but that her head may reach the heavens. ■

Rabbi Joe Wolfson is the rabbi and co-director of JLIC TLV — a new, vibrant community serving young religious olim in Tel Aviv, generously supported by the Mayberg Foundation. He and his wife, Corinne, both grew up in the UK and served as directors of JLIC NYU in downtown Manhattan from 2015 to 2022.





RABBI AARON GOLDSCHEIDER
PIRKEI AVOT SERIES
Editor, Torah Tidbits

Rav Kook on Pirkei Avot: Make for Yourself a Master (Pirkei Avot 1:16)

"Make for yourself a Rabbi" (Pirkei Avot 1:16)

Rav Chaim Volozhin emphasizes the importance of having a rabbi or teacher whom one can readily consult with questions of Jewish law. In addition, if one does not have a rabbi to consult and simply adopts the stringent view whenever one is unsure of the correct halachic ruling, this too is ill-advised. This is precisely the message expressed in the continuation of the Mishnah: "...do not tithe excessively through approximation." It is imperative to have a teacher available. (Ruach Chaim, 1:16)



Rabbi Shlomo Elyashiv zt"l (The Leshem)

CONVERSATIONS AND INTERACTIONS

The Talmud (Sukkah 21b) emphasizes that even the mundane and casual interactions one has with a rabbinic personality or teacher should be treated as opportunities to learn and glean inspiration. "Even the conversation of Torah scholars requires analysis, as it is stated [regarding the righteous]: 'Which brings forth its fruit in its season and whose leaf does not wither'" (Psalms 1:3).

The Talmud understands the verse to suggest that, with regard to a Torah scholar, not only is his primary product, his fruit, significant, but even the seemingly incidental matters that emerge from his conversations, his leaves, are significant.

Rav Kook adds a beautiful insight regarding the above Talmudic passage and the verse used as a prooftext. There is a natural outgrowth of the scholar's deep learning and righteous ways, such that even his mundane conversations and actions are filled with great wisdom and lessons from which one should be sensitive enough to learn:

"There is a spiritual principle called 'the simple conversation of Talmidei Chachamim/Torah Scholars must be studied' (Sukkah 21b). A conversation is something that grows naturally without any forced effort from the person. This can be compared to a plant in the field that grows in a natural and general way. Therefore, this is the explanation of 'simple conversations of Talmidei Chachamim must be studied.' When people are continuously immersed in the words of

the Torah, their simple conversations also become words of Torah. This happens on its own without any forced effort…" (Kevatzim Yad Kodsho 1, Pinkas Rishon L'Yaffo 56, translated in *The Spiritual Wisdom of Rav Kook*, Schwartz, p. 62)

WHEN TO BASK IN THE TZADIK'S LIGHT

In a beautiful teaching, Rav Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook highlights another dimension of the need to have a spiritual master and explains why the honor given to such an individual is so important. The Talmud makes the enigmatic statement that, "One is not required to show kavod (show deference/honor) to who is greater on the road, nor on bridges, not when one's hands are soiled." (Berachot 46b–47a).

Why would there be an exception to showing honor in the above-mentioned circumstances?

Rav Kook suggests that this passage expresses a more comprehensive understanding of the reverence one should have for rabbis. A Jew extends honor to a sage not merely because that individual deserves respect and admiration for his scholarship and righteousness. More importantly, says Rav Kook, by honoring a rabbi or great individual, one opens one's heart and mind to that teacher's wisdom and righteous actions. To honor another individual is to allow their presence to become a source of inspiration and a spark of motivation.

Rav Kook explains that the three examples in the Talmud represent scenarios in which a person cannot readily receive inspiration because he is distracted and unable to focus on the master's example. When traveling on the road, one is concerned with one's own safety and must pay close attention to the path ahead. Similarly, when crossing a



bridge, especially one that is less sturdy or narrow, one must concentrate on watching one's steps. Just as one is not permitted to study Torah when one's hands are soiled, so too, soiled hands symbolize a situation in which one is not open-hearted and receptive to being influenced by one's teacher. (Ain Aya, Chapter 7, piska #12)

Kavod HaTorah, the honor one extends to great sages and teachers of Torah, should not be a form of honor that makes one feel belittled or diminished because of one's own limited talents or capabilities. Quite the reverse: the honor one gives great masters serves to ennoble and elevate one's own spirit. Showing esteem and reverence for exceptional personalities spurs a person to pursue greater heights and attain more elevated levels in their own service of God.

GIVING GIFTS TO THE KOHEN

The Talmud asks the question: "Why is the portion of Sota juxtaposed with the portion of terumot and tithes (Bamidbar chapter 5). They are juxtaposed to tell you: Anyone who has terumot and tithes and does not give them to the priest, will ultimately require the service of the priest by means of his wife." (Berachot 63a).

What is the connection between the laws concerning a wife suspected of an immoral relationship and the giving of tithes to the

kohen? They seem to be unrelated laws.

Rav Kook suggests that this passage highlights the idea that when one fails to interact with the kohen, who represents the inspirational figures in our religious lives, one can easily begin to slip in one's observance. This slippage can affect the entire household until, God forbid, it can even lead to immoral behavior.

The gifts we give to the kohen are not merely a way to support him in his role of administering the service in the Beit Hamikdash and serving as a teacher in the community. Rav Kook argues that the many gifts given to the kohanim - 24 in all - allow for regular interaction and serve as contact points meant to strengthen the religious commitment of the giver. Being in the presence of great people, engaging in conversation with them, and simply spending time in their company can help bolster one's commitment to and love of Judaism. (Ain Aya, Berachot 9, #318)

RAV ARYEH CONSULTED HIS MASTER

Rav Aryeh Levin was known as the "father of prisoners" for his visits to members of the Jewish underground held in the Central Prison of Jerusalem, in the Russian Compound, during the British Mandate. He would often visit during the week and pray on Shabbat morning in the prison alongside the prisoners. His Shabbat visits were especially meaningful and heartwarming to the inmates. After prayers, he would often stop at the homes of their parents and family members to relay that their son or sibling was doing well.



It is less well-known that Rav Aryeh would often make another stop after visiting the prisoners. The prisoners frequently asked him questions in the area of halacha, and at times these questions were complex, involving intricate matters of Shabbat and kashrut law.

Rav Aryeh was an exceptional talmid chacham and could certainly have addressed these questions himself. Nevertheless, he would go to the home of his esteemed brother-in-law, Rav Zvi Pesach Frank, and present these queries to him. The honor and reverence Rav Aryeh showed Rav Zvi Pesach Frank, and indeed all the gedolei Torah of his time, were legendary. Rav Aryeh truly epitomized the teaching: "Make for Yourself a Master."

LOVE FOR TALMIDEI CHACHAMIM

Throughout his life, Rav Aryeh yearned to be close to great Torah scholars, and he formed strong bonds with them (*A Tzaddik in Our Time*, p. 132). Rav Aryeh developed close relationships with some of the most eminent rabbis of Jerusalem, such as Rav Chaim Berlin, Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer, and, of course, Rav Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook.

He also attached himself to one of the unique and saintly personalities living in Jerusalem. For a period of three years, Rav Aryeh would go every night to visit the master of Kabbalah, Rav Shlomo Elyashiv. Neither cold, wind, nor rain would stop him from making the journey, and he would always stay for hours at a time. Rav Elyashiv

emigrated to Israel in 1922. His primary work, *Leshem Shevo Veachlama*, is considered one of the most exceptional expositions on Kabbalah in contemporary times.

His son, Rav Chaim Yaakov, recalled: "On a number of occasions I went along with my father. My father entered an inner room, and I, being quite young, remained in the anteroom for about two hours. Returning home I asked my father: 'What did the two of you learn?' He replied: 'That great and holy scholar studied and delved into the sacred volumes, while I stood on the side holding the candle in my hand. When he needed a particular volume I handed it to him…I do not know how I deserve such a great privilege as to serve this man of holiness.'"

Rav Chaim Yaakov commented that, in his father's exquisite humility, he concealed the fact that he had studied the secrets of Kabbalah with the eminent sage.

When Rav Elyashiv died, however, Rav Aryeh wrote a short biography of the scholar of mysticism (privately published as a booklet; second edition, Jerusalem, 1935) and divulged a little more about the learning they had shared: "…Rav Elyashiv finally permitted me to come night after night and read to him from his sacred volumes. Thus I would always spend several hours, and though I lack any human understanding of this wisdom of truth (i.e., Kabbalah), nevertheless, as I sat in his presence I felt myself as if in an entirely different world…"

Here again, Rav Aryeh humbly presented himself as comprehending very little. However, those who knew Rav Aryeh intimately and were familiar with his mastery of Torah were also aware of his extensive knowledge of the esoteric teachings of Kabbalah. (*A Tzaddik in Our Time*, pp. 400–401)

The above episode remarkably exemplifies the humility of a student who opened his heart and mind to absorb his master's teachings and receive his spiritual light.

A CHASSIDIC INSIGHT

The famed Noda B'Yehudah, Rav Yechezkel HaLevi Landau, once asked Rebbe Shmelke of Nikolsburg, a great Torah scholar and disciple of the Chassidic Maggid of Mezeritch, why he devoted precious time away from his Torah studies to travel and visit his teacher. Rebbe Shmelke answered with a novel interpretation of our Mishnah: Appoint for yourself a teacher who will help you overcome your doubts… in faith. A teacher is one who not only provides knowledge but also strengthens one's faith in God and in one's own potential. (*The Pirkei Avos*, Artscroll, p. 48)

This beautiful Chassidic insight captures Rav Kook's message regarding the importance of honoring a rabbi. The act of extending honor and acclaim opens the channels through which the teachings and spiritual influence of one's master can deeply enter the heart and soul of the disciple.

AN ADORING DISCIPLE

The following are a few powerful examples of Rav Kook's expression of love and devotion to his rabbinic role models:

When the young Avraham Yitzchak Kook, then an eighteen-year-old Talmudic student in Smargon, heard of the passing of Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, founder of the Lithuanian Mussar movement, he rent his garment, removed his shoes, and sat on the ground in ritual mourning. And when Rav Salanter's premier disciple, Rabbi Yitzhak Blaser (known as "Reb Itzeleh Peterburger" after his rabbinate in the Russian imperial capital), was hospitalized in Jaffa, Rav Kook walked

to Sha'arei Zion Hospital rather than ride in a wagon. Rav Kook explained that, when paying a visit to someone of Reb Itzeleh's spiritual stature, it was fitting to set out on foot as a pilgrim. (*The Legends of Rabbah Bar Bar Hannah*, Naor, p. 214)

Rav Kook married the daughter of Rabbi Eliyahu David Rabinowitz-Teomim. Sadly, not long after their marriage, Rav Kook's wife passed away from an illness. Rav Kook later remarried his wife's first cousin but remained deeply bonded to his first father-in-law, also known as the Aderet. One of the first works Rav Kook wrote after settling in Israel was entitled *Eder Hayakar*. The book was written as a tribute to his saintly father-in-law and celebrates a life devoted to Torah study, compassion, and remarkable service of the Almighty.

Rav Kook's choice to write a book that lovingly captured the spirituality of this saintly figure is a beautiful articulation of the Mishnah's teaching: "Make for yourself a rabbi."

The heartwarming anecdotes above exemplify the esteem and admiration one should show exceptional rabbinic personalities and demonstrate how this adoration serves to uplift and enrich one's commitment to Torah and mitzvot.

RAIN, SUN, AND A PARENT'S LOVE

Rav Chaim Shmulevitz, in one of his classic mussar shmuessen (talks), discussed the uniqueness of the teacher-disciple relationship. He cited a dramatic episode from the Talmud in which the eminent students of Rabbi Eliezer visit their rebbe as he approaches death and express their adoration for him and the remarkable impact he had on his students.

"You are more valuable than a drip of rain," said Rebbe Tarfon.

"You are more valuable to Israel than the sun," said Rebbe Yehoshua.

"You are more precious to Israel than a father and mother," said Rebbe Elazar ben Azarya. (Sanhedrin 101a)

The great Rosh Yeshiva of the Mir, Rav Chaim Shmulevitz, taught that each sage pointed to another dimension of the unique relationship between teacher and student. The rain brings growth to a seedling. The Rebbe is able to recognize the student's potential and provide the nourishment needed for growth.

The sun provides the constant light that a plant needs for its growth and health. Similarly, the Rebbe's warmth and guidance over the long term are essential for one's well-being and spiritual development.

Perhaps the most significant relationship is that between parent and child. When a rebbe or teacher serves in the profound role of a mother or father figure, it becomes a relationship in which support and love are non-negotiable. Through this bond, the student is assured that the love they receive is everlasting and unconditional. (*Sichos Mussar, Reb Chaim's Discourses*, Artscroll, pp. 268–269) ■





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RABBI NACHMAN (NEIL) WINKLER
Faculty, OU Israel Center

A Faithful Nation

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


Rav Mosheh Lichtenstein

Although we might see nothing unusual with that statement, Rav Moshe Lichtenstein reveals to us important insights that are uncovered in the prophetic words of Hoshe'a. To begin with, it is highly unusual to find a review of patriarchal stories in the books of the nevi'im. Although we might find the mention of the personalities of our Avot or Imahot, we almost never read of the events or episodes that our patriarchs experienced. The fact that the final chapters of Sefer Hoshe'a (Hoshe'a 9-10; 12-13) DOES do that makes it quite unique. And WHY he does that requires a look at our haftarah.

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



Yishayahu, Rav Lichtenstein suggests, often fought against idolatry when Israel chose another "deity", believing that the different "god" was more powerful and therefore, should be worshipped. But

Hoshe'a battled against an idolatry that led Israel from one 'divinity" to another, causing the nation to constantly search for... another to save them from one threat or another. It was a faithlessness that denied their past and ignored all that Hashem had done for them in exchange for ...anyone. It was pure disloyalty to G-d.

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

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

Indeed, we have the right to read this haftarah of rebuke with pride and not with shame. We have learned what Hoshe'a's generation did not. These past years prove that we have learned well to sacrifice. Simply, because...we are a faithful nation. ■

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Kiddush With a Delayed *Seuda*

QUESTION: As a rabbi in a *kiruv* setting, I make *Kiddush* after *Musaf* and drink a *revi'it* of wine, and people start eating. I, on the other hand, am too busy talking to people to eat, for around an hour. Does this lack of eating compromise the *Kiddush* for me or, retroactively, for the community?

ANSWER: The simplest good news for you is that the *revi'it* of wine you drink itself suffices as a "*seuda*" to validate the *Kiddush* (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 273:5). But even if you had not eaten/drunk enough immediately, the delay might not be as harmful as it seems. True, the Rama (OC 273:3) instructs that one must eat "*l'altar*" (generally translated as right away) and that failure to do so can disqualify the *kiddush*.

On the other hand, the Rama tempers the need for immediacy by saying that if one had in mind to eat right away, the *Kiddush* is valid even if the eating was delayed. You can try to analyze whether you qualify for this leniency. Do you decide not to eat until the congregants leave, or does it depend on that week's social dynamics?

Also, many *poskim* say that *l'altar* in this context is quite a while. The Tzitz Eliezer (XI:26) cites opinions that the cut-off point to eat is the same as how long one has to make a *beracha acharona* on food eaten, which is normally 72 minutes. The Ginat Veradim (OC 3:20) says that as long as one eats in the same place, even a longer wait than that does not disqualify the *Kiddush*. His proof is from the *Seder*, which starts with *Kiddush* even though the meal is much later. The Tzitz Eliezer hereby deflects the proof – at the *Seder*, one immediately starts a framework of practices that includes the meal, so that is considered right away in that unique situation. Nevertheless, he gives prominence to those who rule that one is *yotzei* even if he ate at the place of the *seuda* only after an hour or two, all the more so in regard to daytime *Kiddush*, which is only of Rabbinic origin.

Let us consider situations where it is



unclear if you fulfilled *Kiddush*'s *seuda* requirements, including if you are not certain which opinion you want to follow. Since daytime *Kiddush* does not requires only a *beracha* of *Borei Pri Hagafen* and since many people have the *minhag* to anyway repeat *Kiddush* before they start their main meal, you have little reason not to repeat the *Kiddush* if there is any doubt. The only question would be if you are eating in the same place you had the *Kiddush* and you had planned to drink more wine, as in such cases another *Borei Pri Hagafen* is not mandated (see Living the Halacha Process II, B-4). (If you made a *beracha acharona* on the wine, as likely prudent (see ibid.), then it is quite clear you can make another *Borei Pri Hagafen* – details beyond our present scope). According to many (see this column, Vayeira 5785), though, the main part of daytime *Kiddush* is to drink wine in the context of the meal, so drinking again without the *beracha* could be significant.

It is important to point out that even if you would not have fulfilled *Kiddush*, this does not affect the *Kiddush* of the community, who indeed were *yotzei* with you. The Shulchan Aruch (OC 273:4) states clearly that one who is not going to be eating in the place of the *Kiddush* can make *Kiddush* on behalf of those who will eat there. The Rama (ad loc.) says that this applies even in the day, when the only *beracha* made is on the wine. (See Living the Halachic Process III, C-3 regarding a case where the one making *Kiddush* before nightfall has not yet accepted Shabbat.) Admittedly, the Shulchan Aruch (ibid.) says that one is supposed to do this only if the people he is doing it for are not capable of making *Kiddush* themselves, which makes your system look questionable. However, not all agree with this limitation, and it is quite accepted that it is only a matter of preferability, as *b'di'eved* it works either way (Mishna Berura ad loc. 20). In your setting, probably many people would have trouble making *Kiddush*, and it is traditional for the *rav* to make the *Kiddush*.

In summary, the way you make *Kiddush* is fine on multiple grounds. ■

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בס"ד

Yearning for Yerushalayim

Why, if Yechezkel serves as the Navi of the Exile, do so many of his early prophecies focus on Yerushalayim? The elders of the diaspora gather in his home to hear his prophecies of the catastrophic events in Yerushalayim and are subjected to horrific descriptions of the desecration of the Beit HaMikdash and the withdrawal of the Shechinah. Yechezkel suffers through the demanding conditions of the symbolic acts imposed upon him by Hashem to concretize the reality of the impending Churban in the minds of his audience. We expect Yechezkel to urge the exiles to establish roots and strengthen their community in the diaspora, building upon the guidance provided by Yirmiyahu in his letter to the exiles and assuring them that the future of the Jewish people depended on them; yet the focus of both the Navi and the people remains on Yerushalayim.



Rav Abraham Isaac Kook zt"l

In Mizmor 137 of Tehillim, the psalmist expresses the despair of the people in Bavel when asked by their captors to sing songs of Tzion on foreign soil. Malbim maintains that this mizmor speaks of the time of the Persian conquest, by which time the Jews had become comfortably settled in Bavel. Seventy years after the prophecies of Yechezkel, the devastated exiles had been transformed. They owned prosperous farms and vineyards and were lauded as skilled goldsmiths and craftsmen. Despite their material success, they still cried in remembrance of Yerushalayim. They remembered the holy atmosphere that pervaded the city, the sanctity of the Beit HaMikdash and the Temple Service and the awareness of the Shechinah, Hashem's constant Presence, in their midst. In the diaspora, said the exiles, how can we sing the songs that were inspired by prophecy, by daily miracles, by the divine revelation



in the Beit HaMikdash? How can we sing the songs of divine service, infused with the glory of the Torah, in a strange land? It's impossible to forget the spiritual wealth of Yerushalayim, of which we are currently deprived! Material prosperity cannot fill the spiritual void created by the Churban and exile.

In Orot Eretz Yisrael, Rav Kook zt"l teaches that the more one feels the spirit of impurity of the lands outside Israel, the greater the indication of his inner perception of the holiness of the Land of Israel; this inner sense will not leave us even while in the diaspora. In fact, the opposite is true - the strangeness, the sense of foreignness and alienation, that one feels in Chutz La'aretz strengthens one's spiritual desire for the Land of Israel and its holiness even more. When individuals who feel this spiritual connection join together to form a community, as did the Jews in Bavel surrounding Yechezkel, the hope for salvation is palpable and the process of redemption is hastened.

The community to whom Yechezkel prophesied established a paradigm for us, the exiles of the Second Temple. They created a paradigm of memory that refuses to be erased, engendering within us a sense of longing, of yearning for a Mikdash we were never privileged to see but that figures largely in our collective imagination. No matter where we are geographically, we feel a common sense of displacement and loss. The Jewish soul aches longingly for its home.

This longing is the point of the exile. In the Torah portion we read on Tisha B'Av, Moshe Rabbeinu informs us that when we sin and are exiled from the land, we will seek Hashem in the diaspora. When we do so sincerely and wholeheartedly, we will succeed in finding Him. Later in the sefer, in Parashat HaTeshuvah, Moshe Rabbeinu returns to that theme and teaches that once we return to Hashem, He will gather us from all the lands to which we have been dispersed and return us to our homeland, the homeland with which we have identified throughout centuries of galut. My daughter shared with me that when she first learned the section of Orot cited above, describing the longing of the Jewish soul for Tzion, she felt so validated that she practically shouted to her chavruta, "That's it, that's exactly how I felt before we made aliyah!" May we merit to be infused with the same passionate longing, prompting us to seek Hashem, and may we find validation in the ingathering of the exiles and the rebuilding of the Mikdash, speedily in our days. ■



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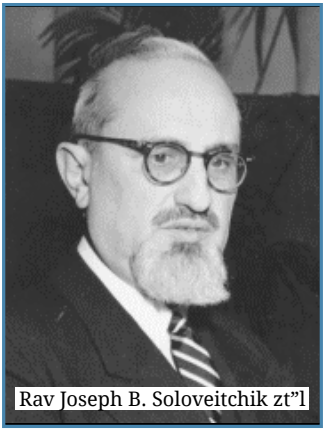
NISHMAT



MRS. MICHAL HOROWITZ
Torah Educator
Presenter for OU Women's Initiative

The Gateway to Heaven

In Parshas Vayeitzei, the Torah turns its focus to the life of Yaakov Avinu. It is in this parsha that Yaakov marries Leah and Rachel, Zilpah and Bilhah, and fathers twelve children. Eleven of his sons are born, as well as his daughter, Dina, born to Leah. Yaakov works for Lavan for twenty years - fourteen for his wives and six for his flocks - and at the end of these years, begins to make his way back to Canaan.


Rav Joseph B. Soloveitchik zt"l

The parsha opens, however, with Yaakov far from successful or wealthy. He is running away, having been sent away by his mother and his father. By the command of his parents, he is running: both from the wrath of Eisav, as well as going to find a wife. As the parsha begins, Yaakov departs from Be'er Sheva, heading towards Charan. He is alone, night has fallen, and in order to sleep safely, he surrounds his head with twelve stones as a layer of protection against the forces of nature that might be.

The *pasuk* tells us that "*he encountered the place and he slept there*" (Bereishis 28:11). During this sleep, Yaakov has one of the most famous dreams in the Torah.

וַיַּחֲלֹם וְהִנֵּה סֻלָּם מֻצָּב אַרְצָה וְרֹאשׁוֹ מַגִּיעַ הַשָּׁמָיְמָה וְהִנֵּה מַלְאֲכֵי אֱלֹקִים עֹלִים וְיֹרְדִים בּוֹ - *And he dreamed, and behold! a ladder standing on the ground and its top reached to heaven; and behold, angels of G-d were ascending and descending upon it* (28:12). At the top of the ladder, Yaakov sees a vision of the *Ribbono Shel Olam,* Who tells Yaakov *that He is the G-d of his fathers, and that the land upon which Yaakov lies will be given to him and his children*. Furthermore, Hashem promises Yaakov *that his children will be like the dust of the earth, will burst forth in all directions, and all the families of the earth will be blessed through his seed*. Additionally, *Hashem promises to be with him, guard him wherever he will go, and return him back to this land* (28:13-15).

Upon waking, Yaakov immediately exclaims: אָכֵן יֵשׁ ה' בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וְאָנֹכִי לֹא יָדָעְתִּי,



behold, Hashem is in this place, and I did not know! (28:16). Rashi comments: **שֶׁאִם יָדַעְתִּי, לֹא יָשַׁנְתִּי בְּמָקוֹם קָדוֹשׁ כָּזֶה**, *for had I known,* ***I would not have slept in a place as holy as this***. Yaakov is afraid and he says: *how awesome is this place, this is none other than the house of G-d and* שַׁעַר הַשָּׁמָיִם, *the gateway of heaven* (28:17).

In this beautiful Torah narrative we have many layers and messages. We learn of an amazing incident in the life of our third patriarch, we journey with him through his majestic vision, we are reassured, as he is, by the Divine promise and we encounter a transcendental place on earth that is the gateway to heaven.

Additionally, Yaakov himself, when realizing the inherent sanctity of the place where he slept, immediately declares "***had I known G-d was in this place, I would not have slept***."

We can suggest that the Torah is teaching us a deep and powerful, timeless and relevant lesson. Of course, an *eved Hashem* must behave properly *at all times and in all places,* with dignity and according to the letter - and the spirit - of the law of *Torah u'mitzvos*. However, there must be a *heightened sense of awareness* of being in the presence of Hashem when we stand before Him, in His holy place, where the *Shechina* is more manifest.

Perhaps we have forgotten - or never even truly appreciated - the truism of Yaakov's words, as they apply to our day and time. Is it the case that the holy city of Yerushalayim - the center of the world, the *makom ha'Mikdash*, the place of *ha'sharas ha'Shechina* - has become a place like any other place...? R"L.

We sleep, we eat, we socialize, we see the sights, we converge on the Kotel plaza like we do at various social gatherings, we shop, walk the shuk, taste the foods, tour and fill the city with our presence. But do we recognize in Whose Presence we stand?

Of course, wherever we find ourselves, we must eat, sleep, wash, etc, and take care of our physical needs. This is certainly what Hashem wants, and expects of us. But when one is in the *inner chamber of the palace*, any person with a sense of *kavod* understands that before the King, one's behavior is different (see Ramban to Vayikra 18:24-25). *Kal v'chomer ben beno shel kal v'chomer, lifnei Melech Malchei ha'melachim, HKB"H*.

It behooves each one of us to consider our behavior, speech and actions, social interactions and appreciation (or lack of) of the holiness that permeates all of Eretz Yisrael, and especially *Yerushalayim Ir Ha'kodesh*. How would we all complete the sentence that Yaakov himself declared: "Had I known G-d was in this place, I would not have...."?

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, the Rav zt'l, teaches that, "*Hashra'at ha-Shekhinah*, the reality of the Divine Presence, is a continuous process in Eretz Yisrael; it is part of the climate. Just as there are different kinds of climates, cold climates and warm

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climates, similarly there are climates completely devoid of the Divine Presence and climates very conducive to it. Just as it is natural to get up in the morning and see the sun shining or hear the rain falling, so it is natural in Eretz Yisrael to get up in the morning and find the *Shekhinah*. Just as one who walks out in the rain must get wet, and one who walks out in the sunshine must feel warm, so too, one who lives in Eretz Yisrael must feel and absorb the *ruah ha-kodesh*, must simply be saturated with *kevod Elokim*. Certain places where the prophets thousands of years ago had conversations with *Ha-Kadosh Barukh Hu* are still endowed with the potential of *hashra'at ha-Shekhinah* for everyone.

"Those who want to can receive it, even today. Anyone who is in Eretz Yisrael and kisses the stones the prophets walked on merits to share in the Divine Presence regardless of whether he is a great rabbinic scholar or not. The gates of Heaven are open to Zion. Anything that emerges or comes down from the gates of Heaven comes down to Zion. ***There are special windows in Heaven that are only open to Zion***. (Emphasis added.) "*The eyes of the Lord, your God, are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year* " (Deut.11:12)... No other land in the world can imitate this quality. All one needs to do is open oneself up to the divine flow, which is like dew or a stream coming down upon the land from Heaven" (*The Lord is Righteous in All His Ways*, p.308-309).

וַתִּלְבַּשׁ אֶסְתֵּר מַלְכוּת וַתַּעֲמֹד בַּחֲצַר בֵּית־הַמֶּלֶךְ הַפְּנִימִית נֹכַח בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ, *and Esther donned regal garments, and she stood in the inner court in the house of the King, opposite the King's house* (Esther 5:1).

Yaakov did not know that G-d was in this place, but we - after millennia of *mesorah*, history, destiny and experience - do know. Let us strive to behave in a way that demonstrates that in the inner chamber of the King, we don royalty and behave like a queen.

בברכת בשורות טובות ושבת שלום

Michal Horowitz is a Torah educator who lectures nationally throughout the United States, as well as internationally. Thousands of her shiur recordings are available online. She is a regular presenter for the OU Women's Initiative and the author of Abled: Living With a Disability, a Torah View (Mosaica Press). Michal lives in Woodmere, NY, with her family.

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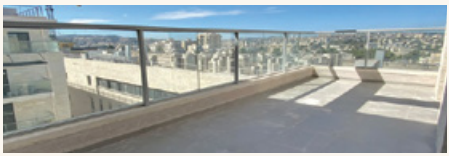
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Beyond the Headlines

KEEP DIGGING

Fourteen-year-old Nathan Schlanger is the son of Rabbi Eli Schlanger of blessed memory. Rabbi Eli was a devoted and active Chabad shaliach, who was murdered almost a year ago in the terror attack at Bondi Beach in Australia, while lighting Chanukah candles for the Jewish community.

In an address to participants at the International Conference of Chabad-Lubavitch Emissaries in New York last week, Nathan said the following:

"When my father met someone for the first time, he would greet them as if they were an old friend. But a few minutes later, when he said goodbye, they really *were* old friends. That's who he was.

"I remember him taking me with him to hand out matzah before Pesach, door to door. I was 10. I saw that some homes didn't have a mezuzah, and I decided to change that. I raised money, and then together with my father, we put up 120 new mezuzahs on the doors of Jewish homes. I remember that at the end of that campaign, he said that I wasn't just the son of a *shaliach*, I was a *shaliach* myself. At the time, I didn't really understand what he meant. Now, I think I understand.



"This week's Torah portion tells about the wells in the Land of Israel. After Avraham passed away, the Pelishtim blocked up the wells he had dug. So, Yitzchak dug them again, and the Torah tells us something fascinating: Yitzchak gave the wells the same names that Avraham had given them. Why does that matter? Yitzchak could have given them new names. But no, he wanted to continue what his father had started. He kept the same names. I think there's a message here for all of us. Each of us has a unique mission, but we are continuing the work of the generations before us. That's what my father taught me.

"Chassidus teaches us something important about digging wells. When you dig a well, the water is already there. You don't create the water. You just have to dig until you reach it. It's waiting. And that's what a Chabad shaliach does. The water is life; it is our soul. Every person we meet has a soul inside them. Sometimes it's easy to see, and sometimes you have to dig deeper, but the soul is always there. Our job is to help bring it out.

"That's what my father and I did when we

handed out matzah and put up mezuzahs. That's what you, the *shluchim*, do all over the world, every day. And that's what you'll do when you light giant menorahs this Chanukah in front of hundreds of thousands of people. You'll help the soul inside come out.

"My father dedicated his life to digging wells, and sometimes, just like in the Torah portion, there are enemies who try to fill up those wells. Last Chanukah, on Bondi beach in Australia, they tried to stop Abba's *shlichus*. I remember what my father always told me: 'When they attack us, be more Jewish, act more Jewish, and appear more Jewish.' They couldn't stop his *shlichus*, and they can't stop my *shlichus* because those wells are still there, and there are still so many more Jews waiting for someone to come and help them. That's what Yitzchak did after Avraham passed away. He didn't give up. He went and dug the wells again. And that's what I want to do too. That's what I take from the Torah portion, and that's what I take from my father. Avraham dug, Yitzchak dug again, and we will keep digging, until the complete Redemption. Tatty, I will keep digging, in your name."

And then 7,000 people in the hall in New York rose to their feet and applauded him.

May we all keep digging wells until we reach the sweet water.

THE UPSIDE OF A CLOGGED AIR CONDITIONER

When Moshe Katzav, a Jerusalem air-conditioning technician, came to fix our clogged air conditioner, he had an unexpected explanation for the problem.

"It's a sign that we're building up the Land of Israel," he declared with a broad smile.



"More and more people are calling me because their air conditioners aren't cooling properly. And I tell them it's because they're sucking in all the dust from Jerusalem's construction sites. Isn't it amazing? Everywhere you look, they're building new neighborhoods, apartment buildings, and a light rail system. Even the air conditioners can feel it!"

Katzav says colleagues in other Israeli cities are reporting similar problems, all thanks to the construction boom.

Of course, dust, noise, and clogged air conditioners are hardly pleasant. But as Katzav reminded me, they're also signs of a country that's growing and developing.

Sometimes, even an air conditioner in need of repair can give us reason to celebrate. ■



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Everyone Can Make a Match

ALEEZA BEN SHALOM
Director of Jewish Continuity, World Mizrachi

Shagririm Balev
Friends set up friends

לעילוי נשמת **מאיר יצחק בן יוסף אליהו הכהן ז"ל**

Too Many Fish in the Sea?

Gavri asks:

Aleeza, I really enjoy your column. What do you think of the phenomenon that men are sent many resumes at the same time? Is this a healthy way for them to choose the best option or is it harmful?

Aleeza answers:

Is receiving many suggestions at once healthy for men? It depends on what happens next. A man who can thoughtfully consider a few suggestions, choose someone to meet and give her his attention may handle it well. Another man may feel overwhelmed and face analysis paralysis, unable to make a decision. And yet another man may become overly picky and keep thinking, "Let me see who else comes in before I decide, maybe the next one will be better."

That last one concerns me. Because there will always be FOMO (fear of missing out) on someone better.

And receiving lots of suggestions can create the impression that there are so many options. Honestly, there are many options, just not many that are on target. We don't need more options. We need good options.

So we have a problem. And it's not the man's fault that he's got suggestions it's ours! I mean the collective "we" who are sending the suggestions. That one side of the issue.

The other issue is, who is managing the flow of suggestions?

Often, nobody.

One matchmaker sends a resume. A neighbor sends another. His mother's friend forwards one too. Each person thinks they're helping, and nobody knows what he already has, whom he's considering or whether he's currently dating someone.

We have a system that encourages sending suggestions. This is good, this is how we help make dates happen. But, we have a flaw in the system...we send suggestions without necessarily knowing if someone is even available.

Can we change that? Yes.

I'd start by asking before sending: "Are you available to consider a suggestion?" That one question could prevent a lot of unnecessary circulation of dating resumes and prevent a pile up too.

Additionally, the man needs a simple boundary. If someone sends him a résumé without inquiring if he is available first, he can simply reply back and say, "thank you, for sending this resume over, however I'm not available to review it at this time. I'm not available means that he's not available. We don't know if he's dating somebody else or if he is reviewing other resumes, and it doesn't really matter. The follow-up to his

message should be a simple thank you for letting me know, and I'll check in with you in 30 days. It's perfectly reasonable to check back in. This way a resume is not sent out unless somebody is available to review it and give an answer.

This week I dealt with this same scenario. I met a guy a few months back and just thought of a great idea for him. I sent a message asking if he was available to date. He thanked me and wrote back that he was currently dating somebody. I thanked him for letting me know, and I never sent the resume. Now my only issue is that I have to write my idea down or I'll forget who I had in mind. And I need to mark my calendar to follow up in 30 days to see if he's still unavailable.

Remember it needs to be the right person at the right time. And clearly he's not available, so it's not the right time.

I'd also say that a man that is reviewing one or two resumes is also not available. If you already has a few ideas in front of him, we don't need to put more options out.

He should first make a decision about what's in front of him before reviewing anyone else new. It's simple sales psychology. If I go to buy a pair of shoes and I have two options, I'll probably pick one of the two. But if I have three options, I'll probably walk out without any. Same could be said about resumes.

Another way to manage too many resumes is to have someone else receive dating resumes for you. It's often a parent, but it could also be a shadchan or someone else they trust. This person is the gatekeeper to receiving suggestions and only sends one over at a time or not more than two when they know that the man is available and not busy reviewing resumes.

Is the goal is to make sure men have resumes one at a time? Is this realistic? If I'm being honest, probably not. But perhaps instead of a stack of resumes, one may only see one or two. Perhaps we can make a difference in the system by asking if someone is available before we send a resume.

I know this seems like obvious advice, and yet we aren't operating like this today.

And for those of you who are pushing resumes out there and trying to make dates happen, I know you might not like this advice. Because your goal is to get her resume in front of him, ASAP.

But the truth is, it's not helping anyone if he's flooded with suggestions and can't properly review them.

Let's try to slow the flow. Let's work as one big team and repair the system one step at a time.

May we have the emunah and patience to change the system for the greatest good and make a match.

Blessings, Aleeza ■

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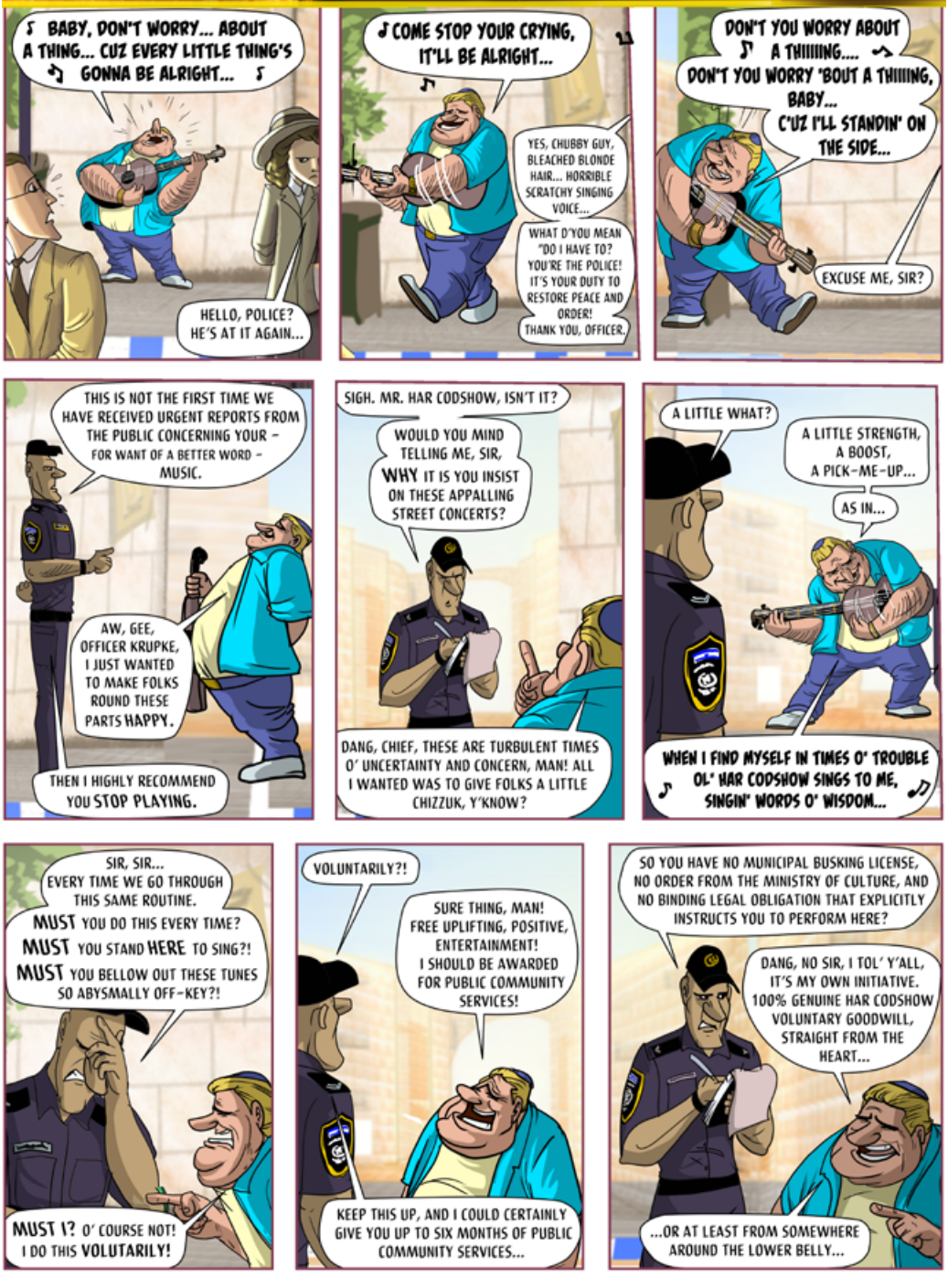
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THE Y FILES
(*YERUSHALAYIM)

by Netanel Epstein

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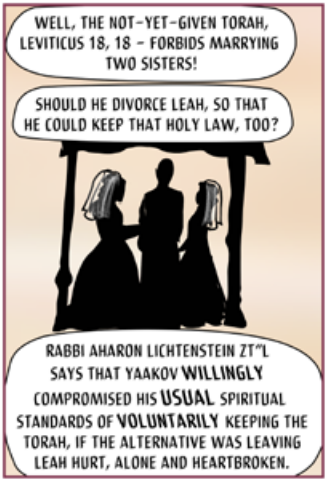



I SEE...
100% VOLUNTARY GOODWILL, NO OBLIGATION...
WELL, THAT CHANGES THINGS, NOW... THIS REALLY MAKES THINGS MUCH MORE STRAIGHT FORWARD...
SO I CAN KEEP GOIN'?
"DON' WORRY - BE HAPPY..."
NO, IT MEANS YOUR UNDER ARREST!
HUH?!


MY JOB IS TO MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER, PEACE AND SAFETY, IN THESE PARTS. THEREFORE IT IS MY DUTY TO...
I DON'T GET IT, Y'ALL ARRESTIN' LI'L OL' ME BECAUSE I VOLUNTEERED ON MY OWN GOODWILL?
YES, I THINK SO...


YOU SEE, OUR THREE GREAT PATRIARCHS, AVRAHAM, YITZCHAK AND YAAKOV VOLUNTARILY KEPT THE WHOLE TORAH LONG BEFORE IT WAS GIVEN ON MOUNT SINAI!
WELL, THAT'S MIGHTY NOBLE O' THEM, BUT WHAT IN TARNATION'S THAT GOTTA DO WITH MY...?


...UNTIL YAAKOV AVINU WAS FACED WITH A MORAL DILEMMA:
HE'D BEEN TRICKED INTO MARRYING HIS FIANCE'S SISTER, LEAH...
IF HE WERE TO KEEP HIS WORD TO RACHEL AND MARRY HER TOO, HE'D END UP BEING MARRIED TO TWO SISTERS!


WELL, THE NOT-YET-GIVEN TORAH, LEVITICUS 18, 18 - FORBIDS MARRYING TWO SISTERS!
SHOULD HE DIVORCE LEAH, SO THAT HE COULD KEEP THAT HOLY LAW, TOO?
RABBI AHARON LICHTENSTEIN ZT"L SAYS THAT YAAKOV WILLINGLY COMPROMISED HIS USUAL SPIRITUAL STANDARDS OF VOLUNTARILY KEEPING THE TORAH, IF THE ALTERNATIVE WAS LEAVING LEAH HURT, ALONE AND HEARTBROKEN.


WAIT A SECOND, Y'ALL COMPARIN' MY...?
VOLUNTEERING WHERE ONE IS NOT OBLIGED IS A WONDERFUL THING, SIR, BUT IF ENDS UP CAUSING SOMEONE PAIN OR DISTRESS IN ANY WAY -
IT'S NOT A WONDERFUL THING ANYMORE, IT'S A CRIME!
ARE YOU IMPLYIN' THAT I'M DISTRESSIN' SOMEBODIES?
ONLY ABOUT 1.06 MILLION RESIDENTS OF THIS CITY, SIR.


DANG... Y'ALL RIGHT..
I'M SORRY, SIR, GIVEN THAT YOU'VE BEEN WARNED ABOUT THIS SAME OFFENCE SO MANY TIMES, I'M GOING TO HAVE TO PRESS CHARGES THIS TIME...
PERHAPS SOME AFOREMENTIONED COMMUNITY SERVICE OF CLEANING THE STREETS OUGHT TO HAVE YOU SINGING A DIFFERENT TUNE...


SO NOW I GOT TO BE HERE? FORCED TO BE RIGHT HERE ON THESE STREETS BY LAW?!
ER... Y-E-E-E-S...?


♪ GREAT!
"JUUUUUST WHISTLE WHILE YOU WORK... AND CHEERFULLY TOGETHER ♪ WE CAN TIDY UP THE MESS..."
MUST HE BE HERE?!
ER... ONLY BECAUSE I'M MAINTAINING PEACE AND ORDER...



ELI CRAIMER
MODIIN CHAPTER DIRECTOR

EVERY MOMENT IS A TIME TO THANK HASHEM

In this week's Parsha, the Torah tells us about Yaakov's love for Rachel:

"וַיָּבֹא גַּם אֶל רָחֵל וַיֶּאֱהַב גַּם אֶת רָחֵל מִלְאָה וַיַּעֲבֹד עִמּוֹ עוֹד שֶׁבַע שָׁנִים אֲחֵרוֹת"

"And he also came to Rachel, and he loved Rachel more than Leah, and he worked for him another seven years."

Rashi explains that just as Yaakov worked the first seven years faithfully, he worked the second seven years with that same faithfulness, even though Lavan had deceived him.

Yaakov worked seven years to marry Rachel, only to discover that Lavan had deceived him. Yet despite everything, Yaakov continued working another seven years with the same dedication and faithfulness.

We need to learn something powerful from this: When something bad happens in our lives, we must continue with the same emunah that we had before, just like Yaakov Avinu.

Rav Zechariah Wallerstein zt"l explained that this is exactly what we say in Tehillim:

"טוֹב לְהֹדוֹת לַה' וּלְזַמֵּר לְשִׁמְךָ עֶלְיוֹן. לְהַגִּיד בַּבֹּקֶר חַסְדֶּךָ וֶאֱמוּנָתְךָ בַּלֵּילוֹת"

"It is good to give thanks to Hashem and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High. To declare Your kindness in the morning and Your faithfulness at night."

לְהַגִּיד בַּבֹּקֶר חַסְדֶּךָ — "To declare Your kindness in the morning."

The morning represents the good times in our lives, when everything is going well and it is easy to recognize Hashem's kindness.

וֶאֱמוּנָתְךָ בַּלֵּילוֹת — "And Your faithfulness at night."

The night represents the difficult times, when things aren't going as planned. Even during these moments, we must strengthen our emunah and continue trusting Hashem.

We thank Hashem not only during our mornings, but also during our nights. And what are we thanking Him for?

For the emunah He has given us!

We are saying, "Thank You, Hashem, for giving me the faith to continue believing in You even when things are difficult."

Hashem never gives us a challenge that we cannot overcome, and through overcoming our challenges, we become stronger people.

Just as Yaakov remained faithful even



after being deceived by Lavan, we too must hold on to our emunah through every challenge.

טוֹב לְהֹדוֹת לַה'

Not only when everything goes right, but even when things don't go the way we planned.

Because every moment, whether good or difficult, is a time to thank Hashem.



JESSE MUSKATT
10TH GRADE, MODIIN

THROUGH EVERY UP AND DOWN

In Parshat ויצא, Yaakov is running away from home. He has nothing; no money, no family with him, and his brother Esav wants to kill him. He stops in the middle of nowhere, puts a stone under his head, and falls asleep.

That night, Yaakov has his famous dream. He sees a ladder reaching from the ground to the heavens, as the pasuk says, וְהִנֵּה סֻלָּם מֻצָּב אַרְצָה וְרֹאשׁוֹ מַגִּיעַ הַשָּׁמָיְמָה, with angels going up and down it.

But why were the angels going both up and down? If they're angels of Hashem, shouldn't they just be going up to Shamayim?

Rashi explains that the angels who accompanied Yaakov in Eretz Yisrael were going up, while new angels who would accompany him outside of Israel were coming down.

But there's a deeper lesson here. The ladder represents our lives. Sometimes we're going up, feeling close to Hashem and doing well. Other times, we feel like we're going down, feeling distant or feeling like we've failed.

Yaakov teaches us that life isn't always a straight climb upwards. Even when we're struggling, Hashem is still with us. As Hashem promises Yaakov, וְהִנֵּה אָנֹכִי עִמָּךְ.

We should always keep climbing and trying to get closer to Hashem. Even when we stumble, we shouldn't give up, because Hashem is always with us. ■

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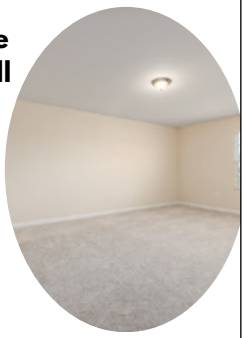
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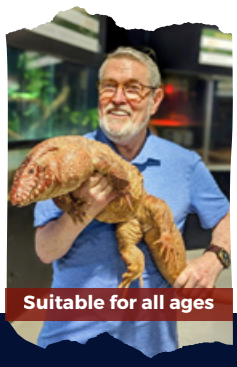
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