

# O H R N E T

SHABBAT PARSHAT VAYEITZEI · 7 KISLEV 5775 - NOV. 29, 2014 · VOL. 22 NO. 7

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### MOVING MOUNTAINS

*“And Yaakov departed from Be’er Sheva and went to Charan. He encountered there the place...” (11:12)*

Judaism teaches that when a person tries his best to become closer to G-d, he will receive assistance from Above.

In this week’s Torah portion, we see how far that assistance goes.

There’s a saying in English, “If the mountain will not come to Muhammad, then Muhammad must go to the mountain” (attributed to Francis Bacon, in *Essays*, 1625).

For Yaakov Avinu, however, the mountain came to him.

Our Sages understand that the deeper understanding of the verse, “He encountered the place...” as meaning that Mount Moriah, the site of the Beit Hamikdash, was uprooted from its place and came towards Yaakov as far as Beit El. (Rashi in Tractate Chullin 91b explains that the word “encounter” – *pogga* – denotes two entities moving toward each other.)

However, why should Mount Moriah be uprooted now? Hadn’t Yaakov already passed it on his journey to Charan? Why didn’t G-d halt Yaakov when he arrived there?

The answer is if Yaakov passed by the site of the Beit Hamikdash and did not stir himself to pray at that place, why

should Heaven detain him there?

Yaakov Avinu was 63 years old when he set out to Charan. He had not slept in a bed for the last fourteen years while learning in the Beit Midrash of Shem and Ever. When he finally reached Charan he had just completed an extremely long journey from the south of Eretz Yisrael, a route far longer than that from the North. Nevertheless he did not want to rest even for a second.

All this because he feared he might not be able to correct the failure to exploit his opportunity of praying at the site where both his father and grandfather had prayed.

He immediately set out back to Mt. Moriah.

Only when Yaakov himself made up his mind, despite his exhaustion, to return to the future site of the Beit Hamikdash, and came back as far as Beit El, did G-d perform a miracle and transport Mt. Moriah to him.

For someone who does his maximum to elevate himself, even mountains will be uprooted.

• Sources: Rashi to 28:17; Rabbi Rubman in *Zichron Meir* as seen in *Lekach Tov*; Rabbi E. E. Dessler in *Michtav M’Eliyahu*, Part 2, page 70

*The Ohr Somayach family would like to extend our sincere condolences to the families of the victims -*

**Rabbi Moshe Twersky zt”l, Rabbi Aryeh Kupinsky zt”l,  
Rabbi Avraham Shmuel Goldberg zt”l, Rabbi Kalman Levine zt”l and Zidan Saif**  
*of last week’s horrific terror attack in Har Nof. Hy”d.*

*Please daven for a refuah shleimah for*

**Chaim Yechiel ben Malka** (Ohr Somayach alumnus Howard Rothman) - **Eitan ben Sarah - Yitzchak ben Chaya Shmuel Yerucham ben Baila** (Rebbetzin Heller’s son-in-law)  
*and all the other victims of this atrocity. May we all hear Besoros Tovos.*

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## PARSHA OVERVIEW

Fleeing from Esav, Yaakov leaves Be'er Sheva and sets out for Charan, the home of his mother's family. After a 14-year stint in the Torah Academy of Shem and Ever, he resumes his journey and comes to Mount Moriah, the place where his father Yitzchak was brought as an offering, and the future site of the *Beit Hamikdash*. He sleeps there and dreams of angels going up and down a ladder between Heaven and earth. G-d promises him the Land of Israel, that he will found a great nation, and that he will enjoy Divine protection. Yaakov wakes and vows to build an altar there and tithe all that he will receive. Then he travels to Charan and meets his cousin Rachel at the well. He arranges with her father, Lavan, to work seven years for her hand in marriage, but Lavan fools Yaakov, substituting Rachel's older sister, Leah. Yaakov commits himself to work another seven years in order to also marry Rachel. Leah bears four sons:

Reuven, Shimon, Levi and Yehuda, the first Tribes of Israel. Rachel is barren, and, in an attempt to give Yaakov children, she gives her handmaiden Bilhah to Yaakov as a wife. Bilhah bears Dan and Naftali. Leah also gives Yaakov her handmaiden Zilpah, who bears Gad and Asher. Leah then bears Yissachar, Zevulun, and a daughter, Dina. G-d finally blesses Rachel with a son, Yosef. Yaakov decides to leave Lavan, but Lavan, aware of the wealth Yaakov has made for him, is reluctant to let him go, and concludes a contract of employment with him. Lavan tries to swindle Yaakov, but Yaakov becomes extremely wealthy. Six years later, Yaakov, aware that Lavan has become dangerously resentful of his wealth, flees with his family. Lavan pursues them but is warned by G-d not to harm them. Yaakov and Lavan agree to a covenant and Lavan returns home. Yaakov continues on his way to face his brother Esav.

## TALMUD Tips

ADVICE FOR LIFE

Based on the Talmudic Sages found in the seven pages of the Talmud studied each week in the Daf Yomi cycle

## YEVAMOT 58 - 64

*“Moshe Rabbeinu did three things on his own initiative and his will was in agreement with the will of G-d: ... and he broke the first Tablets....”*

This *beraita* on our *daf* teaches that although Moshe was not instructed to break these first *luchot* with the Ten Commandments when he descended Mt. Sinai and saw the iniquity of the people with the golden calf, he nevertheless had acted correctly in breaking them. Reish Lakish in our *gemara* explains that we see that G-d expressed support for this action by telling Moshe “*asher shibarta*” — “that you broke” — which is to be understood as “*yashar kochacha*” — “straight (true) is your strength”.

The Maharsha offers two explanations for the source of Reish Lakish's derivation, the first being that the word “*asher*” is “extra” since the verse could have simply said “*sheshavarta*” without “*asher*”. Therefore, “*asher*” is to be interpreted as adding a meaning of “*yashar*”.

Another explanation I have heard is that the word “*asher*” is also the same root in Hebrew as the word “*l'asher or ishur*” which means to strengthen and validate.

• Yevamot 62a

*“One who loves his wife as much as himself and honors her more than himself, and guides his sons and daughters in the straight way, and helps them marry when they reach the appropriate age — about him the verse states, ‘And you will know that there is peace in your tent (home)’ (Iyov 5:24).”*

The above *beraita* is a succinct ‘recipe’ for building a faithful Jewish home with conduct that leads to great family harmony and security, with the help of Heaven. What is meant by honoring one's wife more than oneself? One explanation is that this refers to the principle that the nature of a woman's dignity, honor and modesty require greater protection from disgrace and embarrassment (Rashi). Another commentary (Maharsha) writes that this extra honor refers to making sure that one's wife has even more ‘honorable’ clothing than her husband. The special clothes are an expression of her special honor as a person, as well as his wife. One might say: “The clothes make the man — and the woman even more.”

• Yevamot 62b

## PARSHA Q&A ?

1. When Yaakov traveled to Charan, the Torah stresses that he departed from Be'er Sheva. Why?
2. On the night of his dream, Yaakov did something he hadn't done in 14 years. What?
3. G-d compressed the entire Land of Israel underneath the sleeping Yaakov. What did this symbolize?
4. Yaakov said "I will return with *shalom*." What did he mean by "*shalom*"?
5. Why did Yaakov rebuke the shepherds?
6. Why did Rachel, and not her brothers, tend her father's sheep?
7. Why did Yaakov cry when he met Rachel?
8. Why did Lavan run to greet Yaakov?
9. Why were Leah's eyes tender?
10. How old was Yaakov when he married?
11. What did Rachel find enviable about Leah?
12. Who was Yaakov's fifth son?
13. Who was Leah's handmaiden? Was she older or younger than Rachel's handmaiden?
14. How do you say *dudaim* in Arabic?
15. "G-d remembered Rachel" (30:22). What did He remember?
16. What does "Yosef" mean? Why was he named that?
17. G-d forbade Lavan to speak to Yaakov "either of good or of bad." Why didn't G-d want Lavan to speak of good?
18. Where are there two Aramaic words in this week's parsha?
19. Who was Bilhah's father? Who was Zilpah's father?
20. Who escorted Yaakov into *Eretz Yisrael*?

## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to This Week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 28:10 - The departure of a righteous person leaves a noticeable void in that place.
2. 28:11 - Sleep at night lying down.
3. 28:13 - That the Land would be easy for his descendants to conquer.
4. 28:21 - Completely without sin.
5. 29:7 - He thought they were loafing, stopping work early in the day.
6. 30:27 - Her brothers weren't born yet.
7. 29:11 - He saw prophetically that they would not be buried together; or because he was penniless.
8. 29:13 - He thought Yaakov was carrying money.
9. 29:17 - She cried continually because she thought she was destined to marry Esav.
10. 29:21 - Eighty-four.
11. 30:1 - Her good deeds, thinking they were the reason Leah merited children.
12. 30:5 - Dan.
13. 30:10 - Zilpah. She was younger.
14. 30:14 - Jasmine (*Yasmin*).
15. 30:22 - That Rachel gave Leah the "signs of recognition" that Yaakov had taught her, so that Leah wouldn't be embarrassed.
16. 30:24 - "Yosef" means "He will add." Rachel asked G-d for another son in addition to Yosef.
17. 31:24 - Because the "good" that comes from wicked people is bad for the righteous.
18. 31:41 - *Yagar Sahaduta*, meaning "wall of testimony."
19. 31:50 - Lavan.
20. 32:1 - The angels of *Eretz Yisrael*.

## LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and *Eretz Yisrael*

### BAR'AM — TOMB OF THE PROPHET OVADIA

In the north of Israel near the Hiram Junction is the village of Bar'am where there is a tomb that is believed by many to contain the remains of the Prophet Ovadia.

Our Talmudic Sages describe Ovadia as an Edomite proselyte whose prophecy, recorded in



the Book of the 12 "Minor Prophets", is entirely directed against Edom.

He managed the household of the idol-worshipping King Achav and Queen Izevel and managed to save a hundred true prophets from their murderous hands by hiding them in two caves and supplying all their needs.

# Abarbanel

## ON PARSHAT VAYEITZEI

By Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett

**A**lthough it is a minority opinion among the commentators, Abarbanel clearly holds that Leah was hated by Yaakov as a result of her having deceived him on the wedding night. Abarbanel supports this contention with his analysis of the language and circumstances of the births and naming of her first three sons.

Abarbanel states that Leah, like Rachel, was initially barren and required an act of Divine Providence in order to conceive. Seeing that she was hated by her husband, however, G-d “opened her womb” immediately in order to bring her closer to Yaakov. (The fact that all of the sons of Yaakov were conceived as a result of Divine Intervention is an indication that the formative stage of the creation of the Jewish nation should not be viewed as a natural historical development, but rather as a result of G-d’s direct intervention in the historical process to bring about His chosen nation — an intervention which continues throughout Jewish history.)

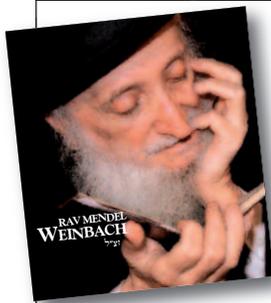
Abarbanel explains that hatred is expressed in three ways: actions, speech and inner thoughts. With the birth of each of her first three sons Leah hopes that another dimension of Yaakov’s hatred toward her would disappear. His hateful actions were exemplified by his unwillingness to have regular intimate relations with her. As a result, she names her first son Reuven, the root of which is ‘to see’. This is as the verse states, “Because G-d has seen my humiliation.” She hopes that his actions will change, since she has fulfilled the purpose of marriage by providing Yaakov with offspring. However, Yaakov continues to speak to her with anger and reproach. As a result she names her second son Shimon, a

reference to the word ‘*shema*’ or ‘hear’. As the verse states, “And she conceived again and bore a son and declared, ‘Because G-d has *heard* that I am hated, He has given me this one also’.” Even though Yaakov’s actions do not betray his hatred, the hateful words remain and G-d hears those words. She hopes that this second son will erase this second dimension of his hatred.

She names her third son Levi, rooted in the concept of loving attachment. The Torah states, “This time my husband will become *attached* to me for I have borne him three sons; therefore he called his name Levi.” She hopes that the third dimension of hatred, the dimension of inner thoughts, would be erased as well, thus allowing Yaakov to feel a true attachment to her. Leah also realizes that the elimination of hatred does not automatically result in a feeling of love, as she says “*This time* my husband will become attached to me.” She emphasizes the importance of this third child whom she hopes will both erase the hatred and replace it with love. The specific mention of three sons is another reason for Yaakov to change his attitude toward her. His grandfather Avraham had two sons from two wives; his father Yitzchak had two sons from one wife. He has surpassed them both with three sons from one wife.

Finally, Abarbanel demonstrates that Leah’s hopes have been fulfilled. Reuven and Shimon were named by her, but Levi is named by Yaakov, a clear indication that he agrees to a loving attachment as a result of the joy that she has brought him.

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## DISHONESTY

From: Misha

Dear Rabbi,  
Is it permissible to be dishonest with a non-Jew? Might there be a difference between outright lying as opposed to withholding the truth? Is there any difference between a non-Jewish monotheist as opposed to an idolater?

Dear Misha,

It is forbidden to be dishonest with anybody, directly or indirectly, Jew or non-Jew, monotheist or not. In situations where lying would be the only way to prevent unwarranted danger or harm, it would be permitted to lie, even to a Jew. But we're clearly not talking about that type of extreme scenario, but rather the myriad situations which commonly arise in society.

Many Jewish teachings explicitly illustrate this point. I'll present just a few:

Regarding the prohibition of outright lying, the Talmud states: "It is forbidden to deceive your fellow creatures, even a heathen, for there is in this a sin, inasmuch as we are obliged to speak words of truth, for this is one of the foundations of the soul" (Tractate Chullin 94a).

In addition, just withholding the truth is also forbidden. The Midrash relates a story about Rabbi Shimon ben Shetach who purchased a donkey from an Ishmaelite. A precious stone was later found hanging on the donkey's neck and people ascribed to this the verse, "The blessing of G-d makes one rich" (Prov. 10:22). But the Rabbi responded, "A donkey I purchased, a precious stone I did not!" So he went and returned the gem to the Ishmaelite who exclaimed, "Blessed is the L-rd, the G-d of Shimon ben Shetach!" (Deut. Rabbah 3:3).

Similarly, some Talmudic Sages purchased wheat from non-Jews and found in the wheat a bundle of money. They returned the money to them, and the heathens said, "Blessed is the G-d of the Jews!" (Jer. Talmud, Baba Metzia 2:5).

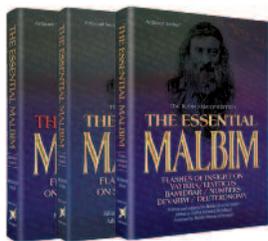
Both of these stories indicate not only that it's wrong to be only passively or indirectly deceitful with non-Jews, but furthermore, considering that these teachings apply to the non-Jews of Talmudic times who were heathens, they demonstrate that there is no distinction between monotheists and idolaters on this account.

Rather, by being honest in all our affairs with every human being, we bring about a sanctification of G-d's name in the world!

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## THE SHEMONEH ESREI: THE SIXTH BLESSING - PART 3

**“Forgive us..., for we have sinned accidentally;  
pardon us... for we have willfully transgressed;  
for You pardon and forgive.”**

**W**hen one commits a sin there is a twofold effect: 1) the soul becomes blemished and will need to be cleansed. 2) The soul becomes separate and even distances itself from G-d, so to speak.

When we ask for forgiveness, the main focus is on the spiritual damage caused by one’s sins. The basis for our request is based on two things: 1) that the sin was done accidentally; thus, since there is no actual betrayal in the act the main concern is the spiritual damage to one’s soul. 2) One must also realize that, ultimately, he is responsible for the sin, since had he been more careful the sin could have been avoided.

Regarding a sin committed willfully, one must address the main issue, which is that he has rebelled against G-d. The focus of his *teshuvah* should be on how to fix the damage done to the relationship one has with G-d, as a loyal son and servant, making every effort to reconnect to his former standing.

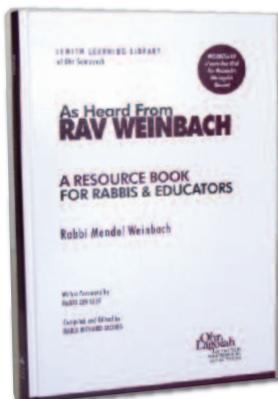
In the beginning of this blessing we ask first for forgiveness for accidental sins, and afterwards for a pardon for

one’s willful sins. However, at the blessing’s conclusion the order is reversed, first mentioning pardon and then forgiveness.

It is well-known that the Sages were precise with both the wording selected for a blessing, as well as its order. Therefore, the question arises as to why the order was changed.

The intent in switching the order is to give the impression that both accidental and willful sins need to be treated with equal importance. This point, however, requires clarification.

While a willful sin is obviously more severe than an accidental one, in the latter one might wrongly conclude that since he did not commit the sin with intent he need not worry too much about fixing it. In his heart he will feel that he is still as devoted and connected to G-d as before. This reasoning is false. Furthermore, it can lead to a lack of carefulness, resulting in a relaxed approach to one’s Divine service, which will lead to more accidental sins. This can eventually lead to willful transgression. Regarding the downward spiral effect of sin the Sages explain that a person can even come to commit idolatry.



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