

## Parshas Vayeitze

For the week ending 9 Kislev 5756  
1 & 2 December 1995

### Summary

**F**leeing from Esav, Yaakov leaves Beersheva and sets out towards Haran, the home of his mother's family. After a fourteen year stopover in the Yeshiva of Shem and Ever, he resumes his journey and comes to Mount Moriah, the place where his father Yitzhak was brought as an offering, and the future site of the Beis Hamikdash. He lays down to sleep and has a prophetic dream of angels ascending and descending on a ladder between heaven and earth. Hashem promises him the Land of Israel; that he will father a great nation; and he will be guarded by Divine protection everywhere. Yaakov awakes and vows to build an altar there and tithe all that he will receive. Then he travels to Haran 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 deceives Yaakov, and substitutes Rachel's elder sister, Leah. He then commits himself to work another seven years in order to also marry Rachel. Leah bears him four sons — Reuven, Shimon, Levi and Yehuda — the first of the Tribes of Israel. Rachel is jealous that she cannot conceive, and gives her handmaiden Bilhah to Yaakov. Bilhah bears Dan and Naftali. Leah also gives Yaakov her handmaiden Zilpah, and she bears Gad and Asher. Leah now gives birth to Yissachar, Zevulun, and a daughter, Dina. Hashem finally blesses Rachel with a son, Yosef. Yaakov decides to leave Lavan, but Lavan, aware of how much wealth Yaakov has made for him, is reluctant to let him go, and concludes a contract of employment with him. Lavan tries again to swindle Yaakov, but is unsuccessful, and Yaakov becomes extremely wealthy. Twenty years later, Yaakov, aware that Lavan has become resentful of his wealth, takes advantage of his father-in-law's temporary absence, and flees with his family. Lavan pursues them but is warned by Hashem not to harm them. A covenant is agreed upon by Yaakov and Lavan, and Lavan returns home. Yaakov continues on his way to face his brother Esav.

**You can't take it with you...  
...But you can send it ahead!**

### Commentaries

A LITTLE BONUS...

**"She (Leah) conceived again, and bore a son and declared, 'This time let me gratefully praise Hashem,' and therefore she called his name Yehuda." (29:35)**

"Mrs. Jacobs — here's your monthly salary check."

"Oh thanks..."

"And here's a little bonus that I don't think you were expecting..."

"Oh thank you so much! That's so kind of you! I really don't know how to thank you!"

A person finds it hard to give thanks for things that he feels he deserves: Leah knew that she would give birth to three of the 12 tribes, so she didn't really feel thanks for the first three births. That, after her all was her due, she felt. However, with the fourth birth, she knew that she had received a bonus that she wasn't expecting, and consequently she was able to

thank Hashem with a full heart. It could also be that once she was blessed with a fourth child, she realized that she really didn't *deserve* even the first three — **that everything in life is a bonus** — and then, retroactively, she felt that same appreciation for the first three children that she felt when Yehuda was born.

(Based on Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz, *zatzal*; *v'yb'!* Rabbi Mordechai Perlman, *shlita*)

YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU...

**"And all that You will give me, I will repeatedly tithe to You." (28:22)**

All a person really owns at the end of his stay in this world are the mitzvahs and good actions that he performs while he is here. All the wealth, the honor and the status that he amasses, whether he likes it or not, is left here with his body when he exits the world. As Yaakov Avinu says in this verse: What You have given me is that which I tithe and give to Tzedaka — that's what will stay with me. Everything else will remain behind.

**You can't take it with you — But you can send it ahead!**

(Based on Kometz HaMinchah)

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**"This is none other than the house of G-d..."**  
(28:17)

...Not like Avraham who called it (the Beis Hamikdash) 'mountain', and not like Yitzhak who called it 'field', but rather like Yaakov who called it 'house'." (Pesachim 88a)

A house is basically four walls, a door, and perhaps a window. The walls serve three functions: First of all, they create an inner area, a private domain, separated from the public domain. The Jewish home must create an environment of Jewish values and morals, an inner sanctum of spirituality that serves as the foundation of Torah learning and observance.

Secondly, the walls form a partition that encompasses and unites all the individuals who occupy this inner area. Each individual feels himself part of a unit, each using his unique talents for a common goal. And finally, the walls of the house serve as barriers against destructive foreign influences, hostile to Torah values. Once that inner area is suffused with sanctity and purpose, then the light from the inside can be projected from the windows, and the intense sanctity of the Jewish home can be exposed to the outside world.

Yaakov perceived the 'house' aspect of the Beis Hamikdash as he was ready to descend into exile, where his children would be as the dust of the earth, trodden upon by all the nations of the world, yet at the same time a source of the inspiration and blessing to the entire world. In exile, the concept of the Beis Hashem (the house of Hashem) would be embodied in the House of Prayer, the House of Study, and the Jewish home. These three would be like a time-capsule, preserving the Jewish People in exile and enabling them to return to Eretz Yisrael and receive the ultimate House of Hashem, the Third Temple.

(Adapted from *Outlooks and Insights*, Rabbi Zev Leff)

**Haftorah:**

**Hoshea 11:7 - 14:10**

**"You corrupted yourself, Israel, for your help is only through Me." (13:9)**

**H**A great king once asked one of the sages of Israel why it was that, at the time of the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, so many thousands of Jews were slain. The sage replied that the Jewish People had always put their trust in Hashem saving them, and He had always protected them. They had never concerned themselves with the strategies of war; rather they had always poured out their hearts in prayer and offerings. Therefore, when the Jewish People sinned, and consequently lost Hashem's protection, they were left bereft of any defense at all. They fell before their enemies like the standing crop before the scythe, like lambs abandoned by their shepherd, torn by the teeth of wolves. The Jewish People are the lamb amongst the 70 wolves. The lamb is not protected by F-16s or the military might of any world-power — however broad its shoulders may be. The Jewish People have only one 'Friend'. But He is the only Friend we need.

(Based on *Ahavas Yehonason*)

It changes all the time...



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**Yom Shabbos Kodesh**

**אשכנזי**

**"Holy Sabbath Day..."**

**קרא למשה מתנה - Kara I'Moshe Matana**

He (Hashem Who created the Shabbos) called it a gift when speaking to Moshe.

"I have a precious gift in my treasure house," said Hashem to Moshe, "and it is called Shabbos. I wish to give it to Israel and I want you to inform them." (Masechta Shabbos 10)

Just as a gift is received with no investment of effort so does the sanctity of Shabbos spiritually enrich us far beyond the effort we invested in preparing for it.

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