

# OHR NET

SHABBAT PARSHAT VAYEITZEI · 6 KISLEV 5774 - NOV. 9, 2013 · VOL. 21 NO. 7

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### WAITING TO RUST

*“Then Rachel and Leah replied and said to him, ‘Have we then still a share and an inheritance in our father’s house? Are we not considered as strangers... so whatever G-d has said to you, do’.” (31:14-16)*

There’s a widespread misunderstanding about why people are religious. It runs something like this. Okay, I’m prepared to sacrifice something of my pleasure in this world so that I can get a piece of the action in the next. I don’t mind refraining from the occasional BLT or McDonalds, because I believe the Big Macs are bigger on the ‘other side’.

Even those of us who like to think of ourselves as religious, if questioned, may subscribe to this line of thinking.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

A person should feel that he is giving nothing up of this world because this world has nothing to give him.

Let me give you an example:

Tuesday morning. You finally get the call. You’ve waited for two full months. And now it’s here. Your champagne-metallic luxury turbodeisel 4x4 has arrived at the car dealer. Your heartbeat leaps to 120 beats a minute. Your mouth dries up. You jump into the nearest taxi and sit there lost in the glow of expectation. You arrive at the showroom. The car dealer hands you the keys. This is the moment you’ve been waiting for. You slide behind the wheel. The smell of leather and “new car” is more potent than the latest Paris perfume. You turn the key and the engine purrs into life. You ease the car out of the parking lot and cruise down the main drag of the city real slow.

Riding a wild set of wheels at an easy pace.

Phew!

A couple of months later, you’ve already scratched the champagne metallic paint in more than a few places, and the front fender shows the battle scars of a shopping expedition to the mall.

Why can’t new cars stay new? What happens to that smell

of new-car? Does the factory send out a fragrance recall on it? And what happens to the *feeling* of new car? Why does it always turn into a gas-guzzling insurance-eating rusting heap?

Nothing in this world that is solely of this world brings you real happiness.

Compare this to the feeling that comes from praying, even with a little bit of concentration. Most of us, at some time or another, have had this beautiful experience. And that feeling is second only to the feeling of learning Torah that’s the most exquisite experience in the world. And it’s a genuine pleasure that stays with you. Not like this week’s new purchase that fills you with pride and desire and then comes to collect from you a heavy debt, both physically and spiritually.

*“Then Rachel and Leah replied and said to him, ‘Have we then still a share and an inheritance in our father’s house? Are we not considered as strangers... so whatever G-d has said to you, do’.”*

You could very easily misunderstand what Rachel and Leah meant by the above statement. You could very easily think that they were saying that the only reason to do what G-d said was because they had no share or inheritance in their father’s house, that they were considered as strangers, but if that were not the case, then Yaakov should not do what G-d said!

What Rachel and Leah were really saying was that they understood that leaving their father’s house was in no way a sacrifice for them. For they felt estranged from everything that Lavan’s house represented.

Life’s true pleasure is to be close to G-d. Everything else is like a pile of steel waiting to rust.

• Based on Lev Eliyahu

## 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

## YOMA 2 - 8

*“When the Beit Hamikdash will be rebuilt in the future, Aharon and his sons, and Moshe Rabbeinu will come with them, and tell them how (in what order) to dress themselves with the special garments for the Kohanim.”*

Originally the *gemara* on our *daf* asked how Moshe dressed the *Kohanim* during the days of dedication (*Milu'im*) for the Mishkan Sanctuary in the desert. The *gemara* responded with, “What was – was!” The Torah is not a history book — rather, it is the timeless Law, with eternal teachings and this question of how they once dressed is not one that should be asked by our Talmudic Sages. However, the *gemara* explains that the question is indeed important for the future dedication of the Temple, so that the dedication service in the future will be as it was the very first time. Despite this explanation the *gemara* states that this question of how the dressing was done in the Mishkan is not one that needs answering now, since Moshe Rabbeinu will return in the future and once again teach the procedure.

Nevertheless, the *gemara* justifies the relevance of the question regarding the order of putting on these garments. The verses in the Torah that command making and wearing these garments pose an apparent contradiction, and therefore the *gemara* asks how they were in fact worn and how we are to correctly understand the relevant verses in a way that resolves any apparent inconsistency.

• Yoma 5b

*“In a place of joy, there should be trembling.”*

With these words Rav Ada bar Ahava explains on our *daf* the contrary traits of “joy” (*gila*) and “trembling” (*ra'ada*) in the verse in Tehillim 2:11.

He teaches that the Torah and the giving of the Torah — which bring true happiness to our hearts — should be accompanied by our great awe for the Giver of the Torah (Rashi).

• Yoma 4b

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## 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*.

## Remembering Rav Weinbach

LEARN MISHNAYOS IN MEMORY OF  
HAGAON HARAV MENDEL WEINBACH זצ"ל  
הרב חנא מנחם מנדל בן ר' יחזקאל שרגא זצ"ל

*Students, Alumni and friends are invited to share their memories, stories and thoughts on the*

MEMORIAL PAGE FOR RAV WEINBACH AT [WWW.OHR.EDU](http://WWW.OHR.EDU)

*Hespedim of our beloved Rosh Hayeshiva is available at [www.ohr.edu](http://www.ohr.edu)*

# Abarbanel

## ON PARSHAT VAYEITZEI

By Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett

In this Parsha it is difficult to determine Yaakov's true feelings towards Leah. After having been tricked into marrying Leah, Yaakov then marries Rachel after committing to seven more years of labor for Lavan. The Torah tells us that Yaakov "...consorted also with Rachel and loved Rachel even more than Leah." The Torah seems to be telling us that although he loved Leah, he loved Rachel even more. The problem is that the Torah then tells us immediately that "G-d saw that Leah was hated, so he opened her womb." After Leah gives birth to her first-born, she says, "Because G-d has discerned my humiliation, now my husband will love me." Then, after giving birth to her second son, she says, "Because G-d has heard that I am hated, He has given me this one also."

From the last three quotations it appears that Leah was hated by Yaakov, while the first quotation seems to indicate that she was certainly loved, just to a lesser degree than Rachel. Abarbanel explains that there is actually no inconsistency. The first verse is not an indication that Yaakov loved Leah. (Perhaps, as Ramban explains, Yaakov had consistently negative feelings toward Leah as a result of her having deceived him on his first wedding night.)

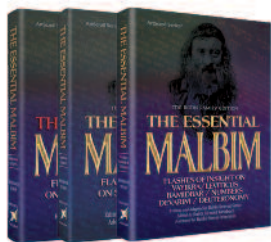
Abarbanel offers a grammatical explanation of the first

verse quoted. The literal translation of that verse is Yaakov "consorted also with Rachel and loved Rachel *from* Leah." The Hebrew letter '*mem*' which literally means 'from' can also mean 'because of'. Now the verse translates as he "...loved Rachel *because of* Leah." He explains that because of Yaakov's total inexperience with women, his desire for a particular woman, i.e. Rachel, was intermingled with his basic desire for any woman. Therefore, when he had relations first with Leah, this aspect of his physical desire should have been satisfied and his ardor for Rachel should have cooled somewhat. However, the opposite occurred. After marrying Leah, rather than having his connection to Rachel diminished, it was actually augmented. He now realized that his feelings toward Rachel went far beyond simple physical desire, as that aspect had already been experienced. Thus, *because of* his experience first with Leah he experienced a deeper and more authentic love for Rachel. Furthermore, having been with Leah, his love for Rachel took on a second dimension. His initial love for Rachel was for who she was, independent of others. But now he could compare her to Leah and see even more clearly how she completely fulfilled his purpose in life. Again, it was *because of* Leah that Yaakov's love for Rachel deepened.

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## VOTING VALIDATION

From: Lena

Dear Rabbi,  
My question is: Does a Jew have an obligation to vote in an election?

Dear Lena,

In countries where one is obligated by law to vote, such as Australia and Belgium, one would be obligated to vote based on the concept “*dina d’malchuta dina*” - the laws of the land are law. This means that a Jew is obligated to follow the laws of the country in which he lives. (Of course, this only applies when the local Law does not contradict Torah Law.)

In countries where voting is not obligatory by civil law, a Jew nevertheless has a responsibility to actively help in establishing a just society. As our Sages say, “Pray for the peace of the kingdom (government) for if not for the fear of it, people would swallow each other alive.” Voting is one way of helping establish a better society, and hence one has

a responsibility to do so.

Regarding voting in the State of Israel, some are of the opinion that since a Jewish government ruling over the Land of Israel must do so only according to Torah Law, one is forbidden from voting in the national elections which perpetuates secular, non-Torah rule in Israel. The majority of Torah leaders are of the opinion that this prohibition may be suspended in order to protect and promote Torah observance in Israel, which the secular majority actively seeks to undermine.

Regarding participating in municipal elections in Israel, some who forbid voting on the national level uphold their prohibition for local elections. Others are lenient for local elections based on the distinction that they do not assert national sovereignty over the Land of Israel but rather regulate the communal needs of cities. Therefore, the vast majority of Rabbis permit voting in municipal elections.

Sources:

- *Bava Kama 113b*
- *Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 369:2*
- *Ethics of the Fathers 3:2*

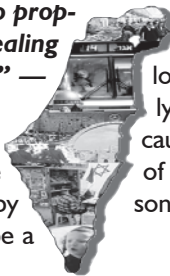
## LOVE OF THE LAND

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

## RABBI ELAZAR BEN AZARYA – THE TANA

**“If there is no learning of Torah there can be no proper dealing with people. If there is no proper dealing with people there can be no learning of Torah” — Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah (Avot 3:17)**

If one fails to learn Torah his dealings with people will not be proper, for he will not be aware of his responsibilities. It has been pointed out by Chazal (*Bava Kama 30a*) that one who wishes to be a



truly righteous person must study the Tractates of Seder *Nezikin*, which deal with man’s responsibility to his fellow man. If, on the other hand, one does not deal properly with people, his Torah will be forgotten as a penalty for causing the *Chillul Hashem*, described by Chazal (*Yoma 86*), of people saying, “How corrupt are the actions of this person who learns Torah.”

• *Tosefot Yom Tov*

לעילוי נשמות  
 מרת אסתר בשה בת ר' משה יחזקאל ע"ה  
 אשה יראת ה' ובעלת חסד  
 נלב"ע ד' מנחם אב תשע"ג  
 ת.ג.צ.ב.ה

## YAAKOV'S LADDER — A SYMBOL OF PRAYER

While the wondrous journey of prayer reaches the highest Heavenly realms, it begins in this physical and lowest of all worlds. Accordingly, when one prays with proper intention his prayers are likened to a spiritual ladder, complete with all its rungs (*Ba'al Ha'Turim*). As a person prays, his soul climbs this ladder - rung by rung - ascending higher and drawing closer to the more sublime realms above. Since the revelation of G-d's light is far more intense in the upper worlds, the experience of prayer is a great help in refining and purifying man's soul (Arizal).

We find an allusion to the above idea in the beginning of this week's Torah portion: "And he (Yaakov) dreamed, and behold! A ladder was set earthward, and its top reached heavenward; and behold! Angels of G-d were ascending and descending on it (*Ber. 28:12*)."

The Ramban explains that the place where Yaakov lay down to sleep is the same place where the Beit Hamikdash was eventually built, and it is from there that all prayers ascend to Heaven. That is why, when Yaakov awoke, he declared: "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the House of G-d, and this is the Heavenly gate."

The phrase, "This is the Heavenly Gate" teaches us that

all prayers ascend, and all blessing descend at the place of the Beit Hamikdash, and from there they spread to the entire world. This is because Jerusalem is the heart and life source of the world.

The angels mentioned in Yaakov's dream, whose main occupation is the perpetual praise of G-d, can be understood as a reference to the Jewish people, who, when involved in prayer and praising God, resemble angels ascending to Heaven.

Accordingly, the Zohar explains that one should liken oneself to the angels during prayer. This is why we stand with our feet together for the *Amidah* standing prayer, as it is written about the angels, "Their legs were a straight leg," as if to say that their legs appeared as one.

Since the angels in Yaakov's dream represent the Jewish people in prayer, we are told first of their ascent, and then their descent. This is in accordance with the process of the daily prayers which first flow from below to above, and then from above to below. The reason for this is that after one completes the ascent to Heaven, he must channel G-d's blessings back down to this physical world.

## @ OHR *Profiles of Ohr Somayach Alumni and Students*

### Special Double Profile

By Shimon O'Heron

#### **Pesach Feldman - MIT – Computer Science Shoresh Program & Joseph Jacobson - MIT – Physics Shoresh Program**

In the summer of 1989, two geniuses of MIT collided as roommates in Ohr Somayach. Pesach Feldman, while researching functional analysis abroad at Hebrew U, began to wonder how seemingly intelligent people could be religious - and Joseph Jacobson, while visiting family at the Blumenthal Orphanage, wanted to try learning while Rav Simcha Wasserman was teaching at Ohr Somayach. The depth and craft within the seemingly pointless and empty

words of the Torah shined through, and when Pesach and Joseph went back to Boston to finish their studies the Boston kollel was a regular retreat. Pesach returned to Jerusalem to study in Meshech Chochma Kollel and then began working for the Iyun HaDaf Kollel. Joseph continued his studies in the Boston Kollel while becoming a professor at MIT in Synthetic Biology where his research created the E-Book technology.

Today both are happily married with wonderful children.

The love they share for learning Torah has brought them back to Ohr Somayach's campus some 20 years later to sweat over *Gemara* together. You can spot them quickly at lunch before they dig in back in the Beit Midrash for another marathon. True, Joseph's visit cannot last forever, but the sparks from this meeting will.

