

O H R N E T

SHABBAT PARSHAT VAYETZE · 9 KISLEV 5776 - NOV. 21, 2015 · VOL. 23 NO. 7

PARSHA INSIGHTS

HOLY ECLIPSE!

“And Yaakov left Be’er Sheva and went to Charan.” (21:10)

Most of us get to a certain platform of spirituality in life and leave it at that. We’re happy to move into neutral and coast on what we’ve already achieved.

If we decided to keep Shabbat, we carry on keeping Shabbat; if we said, “I’m going to keep kosher,” we carry on keeping Kosher, or putting on *tefillin* or whatever it is. If we went to Yeshiva, we carry on learning — sometimes less, sometimes more. At some point we feel, “Okay, I’m not that great, but I’m not that bad either.”

Truth be told, to move outside our comfort zone and do something that’s even a little bit more than other people is very difficult. It’s difficult because people don’t do more than they have to. Some of us struggle to do even that. In terms of spirituality we are a bit like herd animals. We like to stick with the crowd.

And we also tend to think, “What difference does it make to the world anyway? True, I’ll be a better person, but there are already so many *tzadikim* (righteous people) in the world, so what does the world need me for? Why do I need to be so religious? Aren’t there already enough “Famous *Tzadik*” pictures to put up in the *succa*?”

“And Yaakov left Be’er Sheva and went to Charan.”

Rashi explains that the Torah needed to write only that Yaakov went to Charan — what need was there to empha-

size that he also *left* Be’er Sheva? He answers that when a *tzadik* leaves a place it leaves an impression. When a *tzadik* is in a city, his presence causes radiance and a luminous, spiritual brilliance to settle on the city, and when he leaves, the radiance is lost.

The question arises, “Was Yaakov the first *tzadik* to leave a city? Didn’t both his father Yitzchak and his grandfather Avraham both leave places? Why does the Torah emphasize Yaakov’s leaving over theirs?”

The difference is that when both Avraham and Yitzchak left places, they left no *tzadik* of their stature behind, whereas when Yaakov left Be’er Sheva he left his parents, Yitzchak and Rivka, two great *tzadikim*. One might have thought that since Yitzchak and Rivka remained, Yaakov’s departure would not dim the spiritual light of the place. Therefore, it is specifically here that the Torah emphasizes the reverse — holiness never eclipses itself. The spiritual light that three holy people radiate is much greater than two.

When we think that our meager efforts at being close to G-d are eclipsed by the great and the holy people of our generation, we should remember that holiness is never eclipsed, that our every holy thought or action adds immeasurably to the cosmos.

• Sources: *Kli Yakar in Talelei Orot*

PLEASE JOIN US...

...in saying Tehillim/Psalms and a special prayer to G-d for the safety and security of all of Klal Yisrael in these times of conflict and conclude with the following special prayer:

“Our brothers, the entire family of Israel, who are delivered into distress and captivity, whether they are on sea or dry land – may G-d have mercy on them and remove them from stress to relief, from darkness to light, from subjugation to redemption now, speedily and soon.”

SOTAH 30 - 36

Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar says, “Greater is a person who does (the will of G-d) due to love than a person who does (the will of G-d) due to fear.”

This teaching is found in a *beraita* on our *daf* and has its basis in verses in Ex. 20:6, “And I (G-d) perform loving kindness to thousands (of generations) to those who love Me and to those who keep My commandments.” This is compared to that the verse in Deut. 7:9, “Know, therefore, that the L-rd, your G-d He is G-d, the faithful G-d, Who keeps the covenant and loving kindness with those who love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations.” The first verse mentions the reward for those who do the will of G-d out of love for Him *adjacent* to “thousands of generations”, whereas the second verse cited mentions those who keep G-d’s commandments *not adjacent* to love of Him, but rather adjacent to fulfilling His *mitzvot*. Love is mentioned earlier in the verse, not with the mention of a thousand generations, which implies that the second verse is speaking about those who do His will “only” due to fear of Him, but not due to love. The first verse teaches that the merit of doing the will of G-d due to love leads to protection for the next 2,000 generations, whereas doing His will out of fear — but not love — results in Divine protection for fewer future generations — a thousand. (Rashi)

This teaching is not “mere philosophy”; it is a halacha that is codified by the Rambam in the Laws of Repentance 2:3.

• Sotah 31a

Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai, “Why did our Sages establish that the prayer (“*Shmoneh Esrei*” or “*Amida*”) be said quietly? In order not to embarrass transgressors.”

Prayer should be said quietly, as we learn from the prayer of Chana when she prayed to bear a child, as the Torah states about her prayer, “and her voice was not heard” (Shmuel I 1:13). Our *gemara* teaches that this manner of prayer was established as the manner for the individual’s “silent prayer” for the entire Jewish People, so that someone who is confessing in his prayer to G-d the transgressions he has, will not be embarrassed by another person present. If the prayers needed to be said aloud, people would refrain from confessing their transgressions due to embarrassment. (Rashi) The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 101:2) teaches that a person should say his prayer quietly but not completely silently; rather he should be the only person present to hear the words of his prayer. (More details and a variety of scenarios are taught in the Shulchan Orach and in the Mishna Berura there.)

• Sotah 32b

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Rav Bulman *zt”l*
on the
Torah Portion of the Week

OHRNET magazine is published by OHR SOMAYACH Tanenbaum College
POB 18103, Jerusalem 91180, Israel • Tel: +972-2-581-0315 • Email: info@ohr.edu • www.ohr.edu

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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.

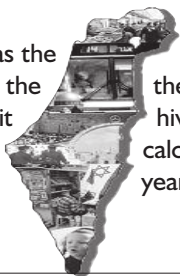
1. 28:10 - The departure of a righteous person leaves a noticeable void in that place.
2. 28:11 - Sleep at night lying down.
3. 28:13 - That the Land would be easy for his descendants to conquer.
4. 28:21 - Completely without sin.
5. 29:7 - He thought they were loafing, stopping work early in the day.
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*.

LOVE OF THE LAND

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

TEL RECHOV — BEE HONEY IN THE LAND OF MILK AND HONEY

Although the Torah's description of *Eretz Israel* as the "Land of Milk and Honey" was a reference to the honey-like date fruit rather than bee honey, it may well be that honey-making from beehives was once a local industry.



Recent archaeological excavations at Tel Rechov in the Bet She'an Valley uncovered the oldest known beehive colony in the Middle East. According to Carbon-14 calculations these beehives date back close to 3,000 years.

Abarbanel

ON THE PARSHA

BY RABBI PINCHAS KASNETT

Vayetze

Warned that his brother Esav is seeking to kill him, Yaakov flees and settles down for the night. “And he 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. And behold!, G-d was standing over him, and He said, ‘I am G-d, the G-d of Abraham your father and G-d of Yitzchak’” (Ber. 28:12-13)

Abarbanel lists eight different interpretations of this enigmatic dream that are mentioned in other commentaries. Although he acknowledges that each of them is valuable, he notes that none of them connects the dream with Yaakov’s immediate circumstances, the fact that he “stole” his father’s blessing from his brother Esav and was now fleeing for his life. The eight interpretations are as follows:

1. **Rashi:** Yaakov is being shown the superior status of the Land of Israel. The angels that accompanied him in Israel are ascending back to that high spiritual level. The descending angels point to the fact that all locations outside of Israel are on a lower spiritual level.

2. **Pirkei D’Rebbe Eliezer:** The angels represent the four kingdoms that would oppress the Jewish people: Babylonia, Persia, Greece and Rome. Their ascent and descent indicates that the waxing and waning of their oppression of Israel comes directly from G-d.

3. **Ibn Ezra:** The ladder represents man’s higher soul and the angels represent man’s rational intellect.

4. **Ramban:** The angels are G-d’s “agents” to direct the fortunes of the nations. Metaphorically speaking, they descend to see what the nations are doing, and then they ascend to “report” their findings to G-d. They then return to earth to carry out G-d’s will. Yaakov, however, has a direct connection to G-d, and is not dealt with via intermediary angels.

5. **Rambam and Ralbag:** The verses quoted refer to seven distinct aspects of the unity and interconnectedness of all of the spiritual, intellectual and metaphysical elements of the universe.

6. **Rambam:** The dream symbolizes that G-d is the sole Creator and Sustainer of the entire universe, and that all spiritual and material existence is intertwined. The ladder symbolizes those who wish to ascend to a spiritual level that will enable them to begin to understand G-d’s true essence.

7. **Rambam:** The symbolism can also be understood to relate entirely to different dimensions of the physical world.

8. **Unnamed source:** The ascending and descending angels represent the accomplishments of individuals in the material world. These accomplishments, as laudable as they may be, have no permanence. Yaakov and his descendants, however, are not under the control of natural forces. As a result, their accomplishments will be permanent.

However, none of these explanations has a direct connection to Yaakov. Furthermore, why was this prophecy given to

him at this particular time and in this particular place? Why wasn’t it given when he was at home or in the House of Study? Why didn’t Avraham or Yitzchak have a similar vision?

Abarbanel explains that Yaakov, because he abandoned his possessions and fled for his life, may have regretted placing himself in such great danger by having taken the blessing away from Esav. Perhaps what he did was not really looked upon favorably by G-d, and he would end up bringing a curse upon himself instead of a blessing. Therefore, G-d arranged that he should sleep in that particular place and have a prophecy that would assure him that he had acted correctly, would be safe from Esav and would inherit the blessings promised to Avraham and Yitzchak. Those blessings were threefold: He and his progeny would always be connected to G-d’s Divine Providence; they would inherit the Land of Israel; and they would multiply greatly. G-d showed him the ladder connecting Heaven and earth to tell him that the Beit Hamikdash, the structure that symbolizes this connection, would be built on that spot. The bottom of the ladder was rooted in the place of the Holy of Holies and the top reached the Heavens, G-d’s “dwelling place”, the source of Divine Providence. The ascending angels represent the sweet savor of the sacrificial offerings and prayers that were offered there, and the descending angels represent G-d’s protective providence in response.

To demonstrate to Yaakov the depth and power of this protective providence, the verse tells us that G-d was standing over him. The next verse states, “I am G-d, the G-d of Avraham your father and the G-d of Yitzchak” (Ber. 28:13). G-d refers to Avraham as Yaakov’s father to further assure him that he would receive and pass on all the blessings that were promised to Avraham, just as they had previously been promised to Yitzchak.

In terms of the second promise, that he and his progeny would inherit the Land, G-d tells him, “The ground upon which you are lying, to you I will give it, and to your descendants” (Ber. 28:14). This would also serve to put Yaakov at ease. Even though he fled with nothing more than the clothes on his back, this spot would be his, and in a sense he was sleeping in his own bed in his own house. People are satisfied with even the bare necessities if they can call them their own and not be dependent on others.

Finally, G-d makes it clear to Yaakov that not only will he be safe from Esav, but he will eventually be the progenitor of a great nation. Even though he had to flee from his home and will still need to travel from place to place, even ending up in Egypt, his offspring will emerge as a great and numerous people, and “all the families of the earth will bless themselves by you and by your offspring” (Ber. 28:14). In effect, they will say to their children, “May G-d make you like Yaakov, from whom such a great and numerous people emerged.”

MULTI-FACETED MONOTONY

From: Gregg

Dear Rabbi,

The regular prayers are recited three-times daily. There is basically the same wording for morning, afternoon and evening prayers. I wonder, is there is nevertheless any difference between them? Thanks for your consideration.

Dear Gregg,

The source for the wording of the formal, standing silent prayer, which is the central part of each prayer service, is from the early Talmudic sages called the Great Assembly.

The Talmud (Berachot 26b) offers two opinions regarding the actual source for the requirement to pray during different times of the day.

According to one opinion, the Sages predicated prayer on, and in lieu of, the Torah-decreed daily sacrifices that were offered in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. These consisted of an animal sacrifice that was consumed on the altar in the morning, and again in the afternoon, of which a part was often consumed that evening.

This would be the basis for the *shacharit*, *mincha* and *ma'ariv* prayers.

Another opinion is that the dynamic of these three prayers was actually initiated by our forefathers Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, respectively.

In interceding with G-d on behalf of Sodom and Gemora, Avraham is described as waking early in the morning to stand before G-d (Gen. 19:27), where "standing" is explained by the Talmud to be a reference to prayer.

Just before meeting his bride brought from afar, Yitzchak is described as going out to converse in the field towards evening (Gen. 24:63), where "conversing" is explained to mean prayer.

Upon Yaakov's arriving by night at the holy location where he

had his prophetic dream of "Jacob's Ladder", he is described as encountering the place (Gen. 28:11), where this "encounter" is also explained to be prayer.

According to this explanation for the source of prayer it would seem that the inner dimension of prayer is not at all standard, but rather the quality of the prayers at these different times of the day are uniquely reflective of the quality inherent to that particular time.

In fact, the inner qualities of each of these spiritual beacons resonated with the quality of the particular time of the day in which each fathered his prayer.

Avraham's central attribute was loving-kindness, *chesed*, whose love and illumination he shared with the world, just as the morning sun spreads warmth and light over the world. Yitzchak's main quality, seen in his submission to sacrifice, was fortitude and self-control, *gevurah*, under the onslaught of strict judgment, just as the noon-day sun is harshest at its zenith but gradually succumbs to the onset of night. Yaakov's prevailing trait was faith in redemptive Divine mercy, *rachamim*, despite the gloom and obscurity of exile into which he was cast, just as night is a time of darkness and occlusion, but whose deepest point actually heralds the dawn.

Accordingly, even if the wording of the prayers is essentially the same throughout the day, the inner intention with which we infuse our prayer should vary according to the shifting spiritual shades of the day: The morning prayer should be suffused with renewed passion and enthusiasm, as in the verse, "to relate in the morning Your kindness, *chesed*" (Ps. 92:3); the afternoon prayer should be proffered with focus and concentration, suspending and sacrificing our worldly involvements for the purpose of prayer; and the evening prayer should be filled with faith that G-d will literally and figuratively "see us through the night", as in the verse, "and to recall your faithfulness, *emunah*, in the night" (ibid).

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.

SHEMONEH ESREI: NINETEENTH BLESSING

Blessed are You, G-d, Who blesses His People, Israel, with peace — Amen.

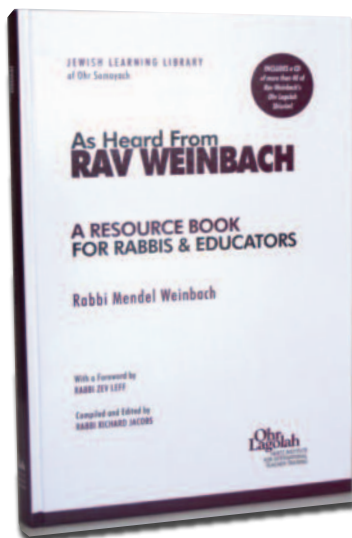
We conclude the final blessing of the Shemoneh Esrei, the central prayer for all Jews, with a blessing for peace. Above all of the treasured acquisitions of life, peace is the foundation of them all. We thus find stated in the Mishna that the Holy One, Blessed is He, did not find a vessel that could contain His Divine blessings other than “*shalom*”, peace, as it is written: “G-d will give strength to His people; G-d will bless His people with peace (Psalms 29:11). Accordingly, the Rambam writes, “So great is the value of peace that the entire Torah was given for the sole purpose of bringing the world to a state of peace.”

A Journey to Peace

The Hebrew word “*shalom*” has several meanings. It is traditionally translated as “peace”; hence the phrase, “These people are peaceable, *shleimim* with us (Gen. 24:21).” We also find that it means “whole” or “complete”. One who attains “*shleimut*” is said to have attained perfection or completeness, as in the verse, “A perfect, *shalem*, and honest weight you shall have (Dev. 25:15).”

When the people of the world dwelled together as one, with one language, they proved to be unworthy. Amidst their rebellion, G-d separated them across the world, giving each nation its own language. They turned their rebellion on one another, fighting over their differences, bringing war and destruction to the world. We thus pray for the era of peace, when there will be no more war and all the nations will return to dwell as one, as it is stated in Bereishet Rabbah (88:7), “The entire world will join together as one, as it is written, ‘For then I will change the nations to speak a pure language (*lashon hakodesh*), so that they will all proclaim the name of G-d, to worship Him, united with one belief and ideology’ (Tzeiphania 3:9).” Radak, Metsudat David)

So too, man originally dwelled in harmony, his body and soul as one. Sadly, after the sin they became separated, like enemies fighting an endless battle; when one rises the other falls. With the rise of the physical – the domination of the body – the soul becomes trapped like a prisoner within. However, when body and soul reunite to serve their Maker they become as one again, attaining inner peace, *shalom* and perfection, *shleimut*. We thus pray that G-d grant us inner peace in order to serve Him perfectly.



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DAVID ALICK

Age: 36 From: San Antonio, Texas
San Angelo State University (Texas); BA in Psychology
University of St. Thomas (St. Paul, MN); MA in Social Work
Center Program

The first thing that one notices about David Allick is his smile. It's warm and welcoming. It's no wonder that he was a successful psychiatric social worker. He also exudes a confidence without a hint of haughtiness that, no doubt, contributed to his success as an officer in the United States Air Force.

David's father was a career officer in the Air Force and the family moved around from place to place. They lived for a time in Greece and they moved about in the States. They finally settled down in San Antonio, Texas, where David went to high school and then to college. He was in ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps), and after college joined the Air Force with the rank of second lieutenant. He began his career as an Air Force recruiter in the Dallas area. He then became a behavioral scientist for the Air Force, working in the Psychology of Industrial Organization. As he rose through the ranks he taught "Strategy and Leadership Training" to newly-minted second lieutenants. Had he continued in the military he most likely would have risen to the highest ranks in the Air Force, but he started to get interested in Judaism.

While he was still in college, a friend suggested that they listen to a class given by the local rabbi that was called "From Sinai to Cyberspace". The title intrigued him and the class had a major impact on his life. While working in the Dallas area as an Air Force officer he started to re-examine his life. David decided to live his life as a religiously observant Jew, leave the military and change his career to one he felt would

be more oriented to personally help people live in a productive way. At about the same time, David met a young lady with a similar background who was also searching for more meaning in her life. They eventually married and moved to St. Paul where David studied for his MA in Social Work. While studying there he started to work in the field of psychiatric social work with inmates at a Minnesota state prison. After completing his degree, the couple moved to Milwaukee on the suggestion of an Air Force rabbi whom David knew, and they joined the community of Rabbi Michel Twersky. David accepted employment as a psychiatric social worker at the Milwaukee County Jail. He worked with drug addicts, people who were suicidal, violent and mentally disturbed, helping them to re-enter society. He loved it. "You work with people

who are at the bottom of the ladder. They either go up or die," says David.

His *eishet chayil* "pushed" the family to make *aliyah* and for her husband to learn in Yeshiva. After careful research, David decided to come to the Center Program at Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem. They arrived in Israel on July 27, 2015, with their two girls, Shoshana (5) and Temima (9 months). David started in the Yeshiva in Elul. "So far I love it. It's very intense — much more than I thought it would be. I'm already seeing progress. The *rabbe'im* here are amazing. The learning continues to shape me. I can see the changes within me. I love it."



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