

Parsha Press

Parshat Vayetze

How Are *You* Doing? Michelle Zomber

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"Vayidar Yaakov neder lemor im yihiyeh elokim imadi u'shmarani bade-rech haze asher anochi holech v'natan li lechem le'echol u'beged lil'bosh. Vshavti b'shalom el beit avi."

"Then Yaakov took a vow saying, 'If G-d will be with me, and will guard me on this way that I am going; and will give me bread to eat and a garment to wear; and I will return safely to my father's house...'" (Bereishis 28:20, 21)

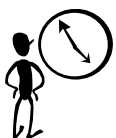
A story is told about the Gaon, Rav Yosef Dov Soleveitchik. While staying at a hotel in Minsk, the Gaon received many visitors, including a former student of his. When first seeing the student, the Gaon asked him, "How are you doing?" The student responded, "Baruch Hashem, the sugar business I began one year ago with my brother-in-law has been very successful." A little while later, Rav Yosef Dov repeated his question to the student. Baffled, the student answered in the same way. That evening, when asked the question again, the student respectfully asked Rav Soleveitchik why he was repeatedly being asked the same thing. The Gaon simply replied, "I repeated my question because the first time I asked it, I realized you did not seem to understand my intention. Then, after receiving the same response a second time, I decided to ask you once more, hoping you might see that I implied something more. Now I can explain to you what I meant. It states in the gemara, 'everything is in the hands of Hashem except for *yir'as Hashem*.' In other words, physical success, such as in business, is attributed to Hashem, while spiritual accomplishments can only be those of humans. When I asked how *you* were doing, you answered what Hashem had granted you. I expected you to respond in terms of your own Torah learning and *chessed*."

In these *pesukim*, Yaakov clearly understands that all of his physical comforts come from Hashem. However, when he says, "And I will return safely..." (as Rashi explains to mean "unblemished by sin") it shows his understanding that it is his and only his responsibility to provide spiritual protection for himself.



~Based On the Mekor Baruch

In Shabbos delights by Rabbi Aryeh Leib Lopiansky



Candle Lighting:
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Preserving Our Ruchniut in Galut Beth Stein

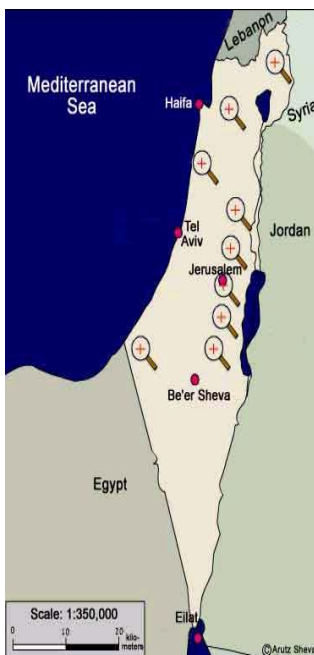
News From Israel

- Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom said Israel would be willing to work in partnership with the PA on the planned withdrawal if a new, more responsible leadership emerges.
- Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Gaza representatives rejected Abbas' request for a cease-fire ahead of PA elections
- Katyusha rockets fired from Lebanon; UN calls for peace along border between Israel and Lebanon
- Israel invited to participate in NATO exercises and anti-terror maneuvers.

Most people are familiar with the story of Yaakov Avinu's *sulam* and the stones. However, one should wonder why Yaakov placed the stones around his head, to begin with. Rashi explains the words "*vayasem mirashosav*" saying, "*Asa'an kimin marzaiv saviv l'rosho, sheyareh mipnei chayos raos,*" he was fearful of wild animals so he surrounded his head with stones. Still, why would Yaakov place the stones **around his head**, even as a protection? Why didn't he surround the rest of his body with stones?

There are many *mepharshim* who explain that the upper part of a person's body, especially the head, represents that person's *ruchnius* or spiritual aspect. The lower body, on the other hand, represents *gashmius*. Therefore, by surrounding his head, Yaakov was begging Hashem, "I am going to the house of Lavan, a true *rasha*. Please make me leave his house as a *tzaddik gamur*, and don't allow me to be easily influenced." This can be seen at the conclusion of Perek נ"ג, when Yaakov Avinu promises Hakadosh Boruch Hu that if He protects him physically and spiritually, he will give Him one-tenth of his belongings.

Obviously, there is so much that we can learn from Yaakov Avinu. As Jews living in *galus*, we are constantly exposed to inappropriate things, wherever we go. Whether it is those flashy billboards or the literature we see in the bookstores, the society that we live in can very easily influence us to do things that we might not do under normal circumstances. Hopefully, the day will come soon, when we no longer be under the influence of the *goyim*, and will be able to serve Hashem completely.



The Ladder of Life Michal Jager

One of the most famous aspects of Parshat Vayetze is Yaakov Avinu's dream of a ladder. It says: "*In his dream there was a ladder standing on the ground and its top reaching the heavens.*"

The Chofetz Chaim cites the commentators, saying that this ladder symbolizes a person's situation in this world. You can do one of two things: Either climb up towards the top, or climb down to the bottom. The direction that you take is determined by your actions and fulfillment of the mitzvot. To get to the top, we must fulfill the mitzvot of Hashem and reach our potential.

Rabbi Yissocher Frand put a modern day spin on this explanation. He says that we must look at life as an escalator, a down esca-

(Continued on page 3)

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tor. We must achieve our mission in life to get to the top. If we don't make any effort or even just walk slowly, we will end up at the bottom. If we walk quickly, we will remain in the same place, only countering the downward motion of the escalator. In order to reach our destination, we must exert much energy and make a tremendous effort. There is no standing still in the world of spirituality.

The downward motion of the escalator represents the physical world. The material world is a negative power, dragging us down in our spirituality. In order to overcome this immense power, we must continue to grow and fulfill the mitzvot of Hashem. We must keep running if we want to reach the top. We can overcome the power of the escalator and rise in our spirituality, bringing Mashiach speedily in our days.



Quote of the Week

"What the caterpillar calls the end of the world is the beginning to the butterfly"

Story of a Gadol

After R'Baruch Ber Leibowitz finished giving his shiur, the yeshiva boys discussed what they had learned. As was common practice, there were questions left unanswered and the boys pondered the points back and forth. Finally one of them approached R'Leibowitz and asked his question. R'Leibowitz answered and then left.

The next day, R' Leibowitz began his shiur by stating that due to the boy's question after shiur, R'Leibowitz re-thought what he had taught and he was now retracting the shiur he had taught.

Once, after shiur, one talmid continually questioned R'Leibowitz about what he had taught. R'Leibowitz took the talmid's questions to heart and ended his shiur for that day.

Before delivering his shiur to a large group of talmidim, R' Leibowitz usually presented it to a select small group of talmidim first. One time, after presenting his shiur to this small, select group, R' Leibowitz began his shiur to the large group. But it was a totally different shiur than the one he had just presented! Why? R' Leibowitz explained that while he was preparing for shiur, he had some questions. He decided that if something about the shiur was not perfectly clear, it could not be true, pure Torah and could therefore certainly not be taught to others.

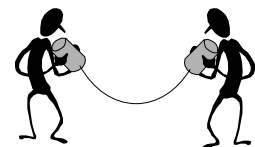
~Based on A Story A Day: G. Sofer

We learn from R' Leibowitz an application of the verse "*mikol milam-dai hiskalti*" – from all my students have I learned. Even a great Talmid Chacham like R' Leibowitz was able to learn Torah from his students' questions and comments. We also learn how modest a true Talmid Chacham is. He was not above learning from his students or changing his mind because of their input.

Shmirat Halashon

When one speaks lashon harah, he is violating the commandment of 'V'ahavta l'reacha kamocho" because it is clear that the speaker does not love the person he is speaking badly of and he is not treating him as he would himself.

Chofetz Chaim:
A Daily Companion



Fast Facts On Genaivat Daat Chaya Green

- It's an *Issur* from the Torah to deceive even an *ovaid avoda zara* and a *nachri*
- There are three types of stealing but the worst type is Genaivat Daat
- According to the Smak and the Bach, the *Issur* of *Genaivat Daat* is *Dirabbanan*
- The Rambam gives examples of this *Issur*:
 - You are not permitted to tempt someone with food, if you know that he can't eat it
 - You can't flatter someone with false information to make him think that something was done especially for him, when in truth it was not.
- The worst type of *Genaivat Daat* is if a non-Jew asks you to daven for him, for a *refuah*, and you make him think that you will sincerely pray for his recovery, but instead you curse him or daven that he dies. On the other hand, if you daven for his recovery and your *tefillot* are answered, you make a big Kiddush Hashem and you might cause him to become Jewish

~Based On Torah La Daat
By Rabbi Matis Blum

Mazel Tov



Mazel Tov to the Torah Bowl
team for winning all their
games on Wednesday!

Happy Birthday



November 22
Sarina Ellner
Dani Lent

November 24
Shani Siegel

November 23
Aviva Aryeh
Rivka Bauer

November 27
Carrie Rabinowitz
Gila Schreier

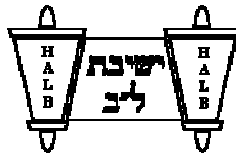
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