



Parshat HaShavuah

ויצא

VAYEITZEI
NOVEMBER 9,
2013

ו' כסלו תשע"ד

A PUBLICATION OF



Ashreinu

חלקינו מה טוב

Candle Lighting

5:15

S"Z Kriat Shema

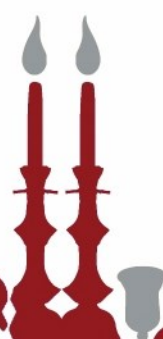
9:20

Sunset

5:33

Motzei
Shabbat

6:10



Enriching and Enhancing Your Study of the Weekly Torah Portion

RABBI AVI HOCHMAN	1
SIMCHA STADLAN ('16)	2
SHULI MAYER ('16)	3
ELLA HERMAN ('16)	3-4
MIKEY PEARL ('16)	4

This week's issue is sponsored by Dr. Carmi and Liz Stadlan in loving memory of his beloved father, grandfather of Simcha ('16) and Joshua ('11), Dr. Emanuel Mordecai Stadlan, ז"ל. עמנואל מרדכי בר"ב יהושע צבי, ז"ל, on his 1st yahrzeit, כ"ו כסלו.

MR. DESTINY
RABBI AVI HOCHMAN

In this week's parsha the Torah tells us that when Yaakov finishes his work with Lavan in order to attain a wife, he says: "הָבָה אֶת אִשְׁתִּי, כִּי מָלְאוּ יָמֵי; וְאָבוֹאָה אֵלֶיךָ"—"Give me my wife, for my term is completed; and I will consummate the marriage with her" (Bereishit 29:21).

Yaakov could have simply said, "the time is up." Why does he need to be so expressive and emphatic by stating "כִּי מָלְאוּ יָמֵי"—"my term is completed"?

Rabbi Mayer Twersky explains that Yaakov was really asking, "How can I fulfill my divinely ordained mission of fathering 12 tribes unless I marry now?" Yaakov knows that he is destined to father 12 tribes. He is concerned that he might not be able to fulfill his destiny if Lavan does not give him his daughters to marry. Yaakov puts in the effort and determination to be able to accomplish his goal and begin fulfilling his destiny.

In our own lives, Hashem has a destiny for each of us, but He does not automatically fulfill the destiny. We must put in our own personal effort to recognize and complete our destiny. Whether it is a major role in history or just helping someone with their homework, we must carry out that assignment to the very end. Otherwise, our destiny will remain unfulfilled and Hashem will find other means to guide history according to His will.





WALK IN THE WAY OF HASHEM SIMCHA STADLAN ('16)

After experiencing the famous dream of the angels ascending and descending the ladder, Yaakov travels to the land of “בְּנֵי קְדָדִים”. There, he meets and converses with three shepherds who are sitting by a well. They explain to him that they cannot give water to their sheep until more shepherds arrive because they themselves cannot remove the large stone from on top of the well. However, when Yaakov sees Rachel bringing her sheep to the well, he rolls the stone off the well all by himself as it states: “וַיִּגֶשׁ יַעֲקֹב, וַיִּגֹּל אֶת-הָאֶבֶן מֵעַל פִּי הַבְּאֵר” (29:10).

What is the significance of this seemingly extraneous detail? Furthermore, where does Yaakov acquire the strength to remove the large stone? After all, he was a man of study, not a man of the field!

There are accounts in the news of “super-human” strength—people have seen a family member trapped under a car, and in panic have lifted up the car all by themselves. These heroes explain that their love for their family members and the fear of losing them gave them the miraculous strength to lift up the car. Reading the pesukim, one could understand that the Torah is demonstrating how Yaakov's “love at first sight” for Rachel gives him the strength to lift up the rock for her. However, many commentators are not satisfied with this superficial answer.

The Ramban explains that one must understand this episode in conjunction with the previous story—Yaakov's dream. After Yaakov wakes up from his dream, he makes a promise, a deal with Hashem: if he does not sin and follows in Hashem's ways, Hashem will protect him and provide him with the physical necessities in life.

When Yaakov witnesses how the shepherds would not even try to remove the stone for Rachel so she could give water to her sheep, he immediately performs an act of chesed, following in Hashem's ways. Therefore Hashem provides Yaakov with super strength. This story demonstrates Hashem's fulfillment of Yaakov's promise. Yaakov keeps his side of the deal by performing an act of kindness, and Hashem responds by allowing Yaakov to lift the stone off the well. The Torah is teaching us that if we follow in the righteous path of mitzvot and good deeds, Hashem will provide for us and assist us in life.

Another explanation is given by the Sfat Emet, who conveys a more metaphorical and symbolic understanding of this story. He asserts that the well symbolizes the source of our necessities and desires in life, and the stone represents the obstacles which hinder us from attaining them. The Sfat Emet teaches us that like Yaakov, we need to summon all of our strength and power to overcome the challenges in life to obtain what we want. Yaakov is determined and driven to get the water for Rachel and therefore employs all of his strength to achieve this goal.

From both the Ramban's and Sfat Emet's interpretations of this episode with Yaakov and the well we can learn a very valuable lesson. If we walk in the way of Hashem and perform His mitzvot, Hashem will provide us with everything we need. Nevertheless, Hashem does not simply grant us these rewards; rather, He requires us to exert all of our energy and strength to pursue our desires. To perform an act of chesed, Yaakov attempts to lift up the rock without knowing that Hashem will grant him the super-strength necessary to succeed; seeing Yaakov strive to help Rachel, Hashem assists him as promised.



LIVING WITH THE BARE NECESSITIES

SHULI MAYER ('16)

Parshat Vayeitzei begins by describing the first dream mentioned in the Torah. Yaakov puts his head down to sleep after traveling from Be'er Sheva to Charan and dreams of angels ascending and descending on G-d's ladder. G-d speaks to Yaakov and reminds him that He is the G-d of Avraham and Yitzchak and will provide Yaakov with strength and a fruitful nation. When Yaakov wakes up, he vows: "If G-d will be with me, and He will guard me on this way upon which I am going, and He will give me bread to eat and a garment to wear, and if I return in peace to my father's house, and the Lord will be my G-d; then this stone, which I have placed as a monument, shall be a house of G-d, and everything that You give me, I will surely tithe to You" (28:22).

The following questions can be raised about Yaakov's vow: If Yaakov has just experienced a miraculous dream, why does he ask for such physical things? Also, Yaakov has just dreamt about the ladder of G-d, and G-d has just promised Yaakov that He will give him strength from all directions. Why now does Yaakov use tangible items for his physical well-being as examples of items that G-d should give him? Finally, why does Yaakov state that the bread will be used for eating and the garments for wearing (extremely obvious functions)?

By reading the *p'shat* more carefully, one can easily see the answer. By specifying the exact functions of each object, Yaakov is confirming that he only wants the bare minimum of each item. No fancy clothes or different flavors of bread are required. Yaakov is making a point that he only wants bread to eat and clothes to wear in order to continue to fulfill G-d's requests in the least physical way possible. In this vow, Yaakov lays out his priorities and conveys that simplicity is the key to creating a happy life that revolves around serving G-d. Obsessing over food or clothes doesn't leave room for a person to enjoy the things he or she actually needs.

FIGHTING NEGATIVE INFLUENCES

ELLA HERMAN ('16)

One main element of Parshat Vayeitzei is the difference in character between Yaakov and his uncle/father-in-law, Lavan. The relationship between the two is one marked by deceit, mistrust, and hatred, all aggravated by Yaakov's desire to marry Rachel. We are first introduced to Lavan in Parshat Chayei Sarah, when Eliezer is dispatched to find Yitzchak a wife. When he meets Rivka, he immediately knows she is the one for Yitzchak due to her conspicuous and genuine chesed.

We are then introduced to her father, Betuel, and her brother Lavan. When the family is asked whether they will agree to the shidduch, Lavan agrees on behalf of his family. Because Lavan spoke for his family even before his father, it demonstrates Lavan's disrespectful manner, and his exaggerated self-confidence seems to indicate that he feels he is superior to his father.

The second time we encounter Lavan in the Torah is when Yaakov is forced to flee from his home to Charan in order to escape Esav. Yaakov sees Rachel for the first time by the well and knows she is the one he will marry. Rachel and the sheep she is taking care of are both described in terms of Lavan: "Lavan's daughter" and "Lavan's sheep." This shows that Lavan is very possessive. He feels that he has a right to all he has been granted; it is as if he deserves his life and belongings.

Lavan continuously deceives Yaakov and brings much hardship on him when he forces him to work for Rachel. Lavan tries to intimidate Yaakov and make himself superior as Yaakov goes through these tribulations. Even with a financial agreement, Lavan still tries to cheat Yaakov to gain more wealth, but ends up being financially subservient to Yaakov, who gains his own prosperous riches with Hashem's help.



Continued page 4

FOUNDATIONS OF TEFILLAH

MIKEY PEARL ('16)

The gemara (Berachot 26b) cites two different sources for our daily tefillot. According to Rebbe Yossi son of Rebbe Chanina, our tefillot were instituted by the forefathers. Rebbe Yehoshua ben Levi says, however, that our tefillot correspond to the daily korbanot. The gemara later (ibid. 27b) disputes the nature of the tefillah of Maariv. Rabban Gamliel says we are obligated in the Maariv tefillah, whereas Rebbe Yehoshua argues that Maariv is optional.

Why should Ma'ariv, the tefillah instituted by Yaakov Avinu, be any different than the tefillot of Avraham and Yitzchak?

Rabbi Yonasan Sacks quotes the Netziv, who explains that our answer can be found in the phrase "*vayifga bamakom*,"—"he encountered the place" (Bereishit 28:11), which describes the tefillah of Yaakov Avinu. The gemara (Chullin 91b) comments: "When Yaakov reached Charan he exclaimed, "how could I have passed the place where my fathers davened and not have davened there myself?" Unlike the tefillot of Avraham and Yitzchak, regarding whom the Torah simply states that they davened, here the pasuk attributes the tefillah of Yaakov Avinu to a particular time and place.

Apparently, the tefillah of Yaakov is not a clear-cut obligation, but rather a response to his unique circumstance. If so, the Netziv observes, the view of Rebbe Yehoshua, who holds that "*tefillat arvit reshut*," can be understood based on the nature of the tefillah of Yaakov Avinu. Maariv, which was instituted by Yaakov Avinu, emphasizes the appropriateness of tefillah when one is surrounded by darkness. May we, as the descendants of Yaakov, take advantage of every opportunity to daven.

Herman continued

The ways of Yaakov, however, are entirely opposite of Lavan's conniving schemes. Yaakov represents truth and candor. Lavan wants to find ways to break Yaakov's meticulous righteousness and force him to lower his standards. Lavan wishes to corrupt Yaakov's integrity by making him believe that life is pointless and impossible.

However, what Lavan fails to see is that Yaakov's essence is *emet*. *Emet*, truth, is an unbreakable virtue that is the difference between right and wrong. *Emet* does not succumb to the enticing of the *yetzer hara*. Any perversion of truth has the power to sway one from making a good choice. As Yaakov's descendants, it is our job to continuously infuse *emet* into a world of immorality. Truth is the essence of who we are as a people and what we represent, and it is our job to maintain this vital entity by delving into the Torah—the absolute truth.

Editor-in-Chief

Jessica Griff ('15)

Final Editor

Jared Samilow ('14)

Senior Editor

Isaac Kurtz ('14)

Faculty Advisor

Rabbi Avi Hochman

Staff

Andrew Bronner ('15)

Ariel Bugay ('15)

Jacob Wells ('15)

Casey Winderbaum ('16)

Elie Zaghi ('16)

Editing

Laura Betesh ('15)

Daniella Cohen ('15)

Ari Clements ('14)

Kira Dennis ('14)

Bailey Frohlich ('16)

Ari Mazor ('14)

Matthew Silkin ('14)

Simcha Stadlan ('16)

Interested in sponsoring Ashreinu?
Contact Rabbi Hochman at
RAVH@WYHS.NET

This publication contains Torah matter-
Please treat it with respect



7902 Montoya Circle
Boca Raton, FL 33433
Phone: 561-417-7422
Fax: 561-417-7028
www.wyhs.net