

THE
TORAH

חומש

בראשית

∞
TORAH

CHUMASH BEREISHIT

The Book of Genesis

Parshat Vayeitzei

*A free excerpt from the Kehot Publication Society's
new Chumash Breishis/Book of Genesis with commentary
based on the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe,
produced by Chabad of California.*

The full volume is available for purchase at www.kehot.com.

*For personal use only. All rights reserved.
The right to reproduce this book or portions thereof,
in any form, requires permission in writing from
Chabad of California, Inc.*

*With an Interpolated English Translation
and Commentary Based on the Works of
The Lubavitcher Rebbe*

THE TORAH - CHUMASH BEREISHIT

WITH AN INTERPOLATED ENGLISH TRANSLATION
AND COMMENTARY BASED ON THE WORKS OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Copyright © 2008
by
Chabad of California

A project of
Chabad of California
741 Gayley Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024
310-208-7511 / Fax 310-208-5811

Published by
Kehot Publication Society
770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, New York 11213
718-774-4000 / Fax 718-774-2718

Order Department:
291 Kingston Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11213
718-778-0226 / Fax 718-778-4148
www.kehot.com

All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this book
or portions thereof, in any form, without permission,
in writing, from Chabad of California, Inc.

The Kehot logo is a trademark
of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch, Inc.

ISBN: 978-0-8266-0190-1
ISBN: 978-0-8266-0195-2 (set)

Published in the United States of America

חומש בראשית

THE TORAH

*With an Interpolated English Translation
and Commentary Based on the Works of*

The Lubavitcher Rebbe

Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

CHUMASH BEREISHIT

The Book of Genesis

Parshat Vayeitzei



Kehot Publication Society

770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn NY 11213



GENESIS

Bereishit
Noach
Lech Lecha
Vayeira
Chayei Sarah
Toldot

Vayeitzei 7 וַיֵּצֵא

Vayishlach
Vayeishev
Mikeitz
Vayigash
Vayechi

EXODUS

Shemot
Vaeira
Bo
Beshalach
Yitro
Mishpatim
Terumah
Tetzaveh
Ki Tisa
Vayakheil
Pekudei

LEVITICUS


Vayikra
Tzav
Shemini
Tazria
Metzora
Acharei Mot
Kedoshim
Emor
Behar
Bechukotai

NUMBERS

Bemidbar
Naso
Beha'alotecha
Shelach
Korach
Chukat
Balak
Pinchas
Matot
Masei

DEUTERONOMY

Devarim
Va'etchanan
Eikev
Re'eh
Shoftim
Ki Teitzei
Ki Tavo
Netzavim
Vayeilech
Ha'azinu
Vezot Habrachah



Vayitzei

Overview

Parashat Vayitzei is the first of the final six *parashiot* of the Book of Genesis, which are all exclusively devoted to the life of Jacob. As we shall see, Jacob was the first and only patriarch who succeeded in raising all his children to be wholly committed to God's will and mission; it is for this reason that he earned the distinction of being the eponymous father of the Jewish people. Throughout the Torah, the Jewish people are referred to almost exclusively as *Benei Yisrael*, i.e., "the Israelites" (or literally, "the descendants of Israel"), "Israel" being Jacob's other name.

Jacob is thus the last of the patriarchs. Only Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the progenitors of all the Jewish people; only they embody the elements of Divine living that all of us must emulate. In contrast, Jacob's children passed on their unique, individual emphases in disseminating Divine consciousness only to their respective tribes.

Jacob succeeded in ensuring that all his children remain loyal to his legacy because he was the synthesis of the best of Abraham and Isaac. As we saw, Abraham personified loving-kindness (*chesed*); he exposed his disciples to Divine concepts and experiences regardless of whether they were appropriately qualified to receive them, but he did so at the expense of conditioning them to absorb this Divinity. Isaac, on the other hand, personified restraint (*gevurah*); he elevated his disciples so they could absorb Divinity, but in doing so had to forgo letting them experience levels of Divine consciousness beyond their ability to reach on their own. Jacob personified reconciliation and harmony (*tiferet*); as such, he was able to blend these two diametrically opposed approaches, bringing the highest levels of Divine awareness down to people of even the lowest spiritual caliber, on the one hand, and ensuring that they absorb them as well, on the other.

Jacob was able to reconcile the mutually exclusive approaches of his father and grandfather by relating to God in a more transcendent way than they did. Abraham's relationship with God was based on logic: he arrived at his awareness of God through logic and convinced others of God's existence through logic, as well. Isaac, too, based his relationship with God on logic: he understood that in order for reality to be able to absorb Divine revelation, it had to be fit to do so, and he based his lifework on this premise. Jacob, in contrast, related to God from the outset in a less calculated, more naïve way, bypassing the limits of rationality. His commitment to God was therefore unconditional and unas-

sailable, even when it flew in the face of logic.¹ Because he himself related to God in this way, he was able to inspire others to relate to God in this way, as well. He was therefore able to raise all his children to be devoted to God, notwithstanding their differing personalities, and was likewise able to bring his disciples to levels of Divine consciousness that were beyond their ken while simultaneously teaching them how to integrate those lofty levels into their own lives. Jacob is therefore not only the last of the three patriarchs; he is the patriarch *par excellence*. It is his life, more than either Abraham's or Isaac's, that constitutes the model after which we all are to fashion our own.²

Nowhere is it more evident that Jacob synthesized his father's and grandfather's approaches than in the first segment of the Torah's chronicle of his life, *parashat Vayeitzei*. In this *parashah*, we watch Jacob marry, establish his family, and amass his wealth, all in faithful adherence to his father's instructions. But he pursues all these goals in ways that seem to contradict the ways in which Isaac had pursued them: Whereas God did not allow Isaac to leave the Holy Land, He allows Jacob to do so freely; whereas Isaac married only one wife, Jacob marries two—in addition to their handmaids!; whereas Isaac avoided his detractors' provocations, Jacob actively confronts them. In all these cases, Jacob emulates Abraham more than he does Isaac.

And just as Abraham was not at all fazed by the fact that his son Isaac was his virtual antithesis, so, too, is Isaac not at all fazed by the fact that his son Jacob is his; in fact, *he* is the one who sends Jacob away from the protective cocoon of his household and into the idolatrous milieu of Padan Aram and the clutches of Laban the deceiver. Once again we are witness to the father's tacit acknowledgement that in order for the son to truly continue in his father's footsteps, he has to strike out on his own and forge his own path. In Jacob's case, Isaac fully understood that because of Jacob's transcendent commitment to God, it was not only fitting but also imperative that he undertake the challenge of venturing forth to bring the message of God to the widest-possible public.

This is the message implied in the name of this *parashah*, *Vayeitzei*, which means, "he went out." In order for Jacob to begin his own chapter in the saga of Genesis, he had to "go out," to leave the material and spiritual comforts of home (not to mention the easy path of simply imitating his father) and face the challenges of a hostile world. Only thus—by putting his commitment to the test and awakening his latent prowess—could he mature into the father capable of raising the chosen family as well as into the patriarch capable of setting the chosen people on its course through history.

As it was with Jacob, so is it with each of us. Once we have imbibed the cultural heritage of our past, we must accept the challenge of maturity, setting out to follow our destiny and making our unique contribution toward bringing the world to its ultimate fulfillment of God's plan. Only in this way can we awaken our latent prowess and utilize our God-given talents and potentials to their fullest advantage. Furthermore, only thus can we ensure that the power God gave us to sanctify all facets of mundane reality manifest itself to its fullest, enabling every corner of life to become His true home.³

1. See on 25:27, above. 2. At least until the messianic era; see the Overview to *parashat Toldot*. 3. *Torah Or* 17c; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, pp. 240-241; *Sefer HaSichot* 5751, vol. 1, pp. 142-143, 174-175.

— ONKELOS —

10 וַיִּפְּקַע יַעֲקֹב מִבְּעֵר שֶׁבַע וַאֲזַל לְחָרָן: 11 וַיַּעַרַע בְּאַתְרָא וּבֵת תַּמָּן אָרִי עַל שְׁמֵשׁא וְנָסִיב מֵאֲבָנֵי אַתְרָא וְשִׁי אֲסֻדְהֵי וְשָׂכִיב בְּאַתְרָא הַהוּא:

28:10 וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב מִבְּעֵר שֶׁבַע וַיֵּלֶךְ חֲרָנָה: 11 וַיִּפְּעַע בְּמָקוֹם וַיֵּלֶן שָׁם בִּיבְיָא הַשְּׁמֵשׁ וַיִּקַּח מֵאֲבָנֵי הַמָּקוֹם וַיִּשֶׂם מֵרָאשֵׁיתוֹ וַיִּשְׁכַּב בְּמָקוֹם הַהוּא:

— RASHI —

לְשׁוֹן תַּפְלָה, כְּמוֹ: "וְאֵל תִּפְגַּע בִּי". וְלִמְדוֹ, שֶׁתִּקַּח תַּפְלָת עֲרִבִית. וְשִׁנָּה הַכְּתוּב וְלֹא כָתַב "וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל", לְלַמֶּדךָ שֶׁקִּפְצָה לוֹ הָאֶרֶץ. כְּמוֹ שֶׁמִּפְּרָשׁ בְּפָרָק "גִּיד הַנֶּשֶׁה": **כִּי בֵּא הַשְּׁמֵשׁ**. הָיָה לוֹ לְכַתֵּב "וַיִּבֵּא הַשְּׁמֵשׁ וַיֵּלֶן שָׁם", "כִּי בֵּא הַשְּׁמֵשׁ" מִשְׁמַע שֶׁשִּׁקְעָה לוֹ חֲמָה פְתָאם שְׁלֹא בְּעוֹנָתָהּ, כְּדִי שִׁילִין שָׁם: **וַיִּשֶׂם מֵרָאשֵׁיתוֹ**. עֲשָׂאן כְּמִין מְרֻבֵּב סָבִיב לְרֵאשׁוֹ, שֶׁהָיָה יָרֵא מִפְּנֵי חִיּוֹת רַעוֹת. הַתְּחִילוֹ מְרִיבוֹת זֶה עִם זֶה, וְזֹאת אֲמֹרֶת: עָלֵי יָנִיחַ צְדִיק אֶת רֹאשׁוֹ. וְזֹאת אֲמֹרֶת: עָלֵי יָנִיחַ. מִיָּד עֲשָׂאן הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶבֶן אַחַת, וְזֶהוּ שְׁנֵאֲמָר: "וַיִּקַּח אֶת הָאֶבֶן אֲשֶׁר שָׁם מֵרָאשֵׁיתוֹ: **וַיִּשְׁכַּב בְּמָקוֹם הַהוּא**". לְשׁוֹן מַעוֹט, בְּאוֹתוֹ מָקוֹם שָׁכַב, אֲבָל אֶרְבַּע עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנִים שֶׁשָּׁמַשׁ בְּבֵית עֵבֶר לֹא שָׁכַב בְּלֵילָה, שֶׁהָיָה עוֹסֵק בְּתוֹרָה:

1. בראשית כח, ו. 2. רות א, ז. 3. בראשית כב, ד. 4. יהושע טז, ז. 5. יהושע יט, יא. 6. בראשית רבה סח, ט. 7. ירמיה ז, טז. 8. חולין צא, ב. 9. פסוק יח.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

eny, with the strength to follow along a similar path. True, our home environment should be a haven from the materialistic world, permeated with the Torah's wholesome and holy values. However, once we have established such a home, we do not have to be afraid to venture into the outside world in order to elevate reality. And just as Jacob's descent to Charan actually propelled him to great spiritual heights, the same holds true for us: our temporary forays into the non-spiritual milieu of the material world with the aim of elevating it will not only not have a detrimental affect on us; they will actually prove beneficial to our spiritual growth,

as well. In fact, the *only* way we can grow is by taking on the challenges of our personal Charan.⁷

10 Jacob left Beersheba...to Charan: Beersheba was named for the covenant of peace made there between Abraham and Avimelech.⁸ This covenant enabled Abraham and his descendants to live a Godly life unhindered by Avimelech and his opposition to holiness.

The Midrash interprets Jacob's *leaving* Beersheba to mean that he was unwilling to perpetuate this covenant,⁹ for his approach to evil differed drastically from Abraham and Isaac's. The first two patriarchs were

INNER DIMENSIONS

[10] Jacob left Beersheba...to Charan: Allegorically, Jacob's departure from Beersheba and subsequent arrival in Charan mirrors the soul's descent from the spiritual realm into the physical world. Before the soul commences this challenging mission, it is given the strength to succeed, in the form of an oath administered by the heavenly court enjoining it to act righteously.¹⁰ Hence—

Jacob left Beersheba, the "well of the oath," alluding to the oath taken by the soul before descending into this world.¹¹ The soul fulfills its mission by going—

to Charan: The word "to" in this phrase is indicated by the letter *hei* suffixed to the word Charan. This appended *hei* alludes to the second letter *hei* of God's Name *Havayah* (spelled *yud-hei-vav-hei*), with which, we are taught, He created the physical world.¹²

Allegorically, thus, the verse means that when the soul descends from the spiritual worlds (Beersheba) into the physical world (Charan) and performs its holy work therein, it reveals that the world, which initially conceals Godliness, is in reality created and sustained (the *hei* of Charan) by God.¹³

7. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 1, pp. 60-61, vol. 3, pp. 788-789; *Sefer HaSichot* 5752, vol. 1 p. 139. 8. See Genesis 21:31. 9. *Bereishit Rabbah* on this verse. 10. *Nidah* 30b. 11. *Or HaChaim* on v. 14 below; *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5630, pp. 31ff; *Sefer HaMa'amarim Melukat*, vol. 2, p. 162. 12. *Menachot* 29b. 13. *Sefer HaSichot* 5752, vol. 1, pp. 138-139.

Jacob's Dream

28:10 Jacob left Beersheba. While he was living there, Jacob's righteous conduct inspired the inhabitants of the city to behave properly and made them feel ashamed to behave improperly. Thus, his departure left a palpable vacuum, and the inhabitants felt that their city had lost its most valuable asset.¹

After Jacob left, Esau sent his son Eliphaz to kill him. Eliphaz pursued Jacob and caught up with him, but was then faced with a dilemma: on the one hand, he was duty-bound to obey his father's command to kill Jacob; on the other hand, because he had been raised by his righteous grandfather, Isaac, his conscience got the better of him and he could not bring himself to kill his uncle Jacob. So he decided to ask Jacob himself what he should do. In response, Jacob gave Eliphaz all his possessions, pointing out to him that the Torah views a poor person as dead because he lacks resources with which to influence other people.² Eliphaz could now therefore tell his father that he had indeed left Jacob "dead."³

Aware of the challenges awaiting him in Charan, Jacob realized that he needed to prepare himself spiritually before going there. He therefore returned to the academy of Ever (Shem had already died by then), studying there assiduously for the next fourteen years (2171-2185). **He then finally set out for Charan.** When he arrived, he realized that he had unwittingly passed Mount Moriah, where his father and grandfather had prayed, without praying there himself. In order to rectify this apparent affront to his forebears' conduct, he turned around and retraced his steps in the direction of Mount Moriah. When he reached Bethel, God miraculously uprooted Mount Moriah and set it down in Bethel.

11 Thus, Jacob unknowingly **came upon the place**, Mount Moriah, where his father had been bound and nearly sacrificed. Although it was still daylight when he arrived, God made the sun set early in order to force him to spend the night. Once it became dark, Jacob **prayed to God**, for in addition to following his father's custom of praying every afternoon and his grandfather's custom of praying every morning,⁴ he had instituted the practice of praying every night, as well. Thus, although he had not originally planned on doing so, **he spent the night there**, on Mount Moriah, **because the sun had set**. In order to protect himself from wild animals, **he took some of the stones of that place and placed them around his body⁵ and head**. When he took another stone to use as a pillow, the stones he had placed around his head protested, each demanding the honor of serving as Jacob's pillow, so God miraculously transformed them into one stone.⁶ Jacob **lay down in that place** to sleep. This was the first time in fourteen years that he actually lay down to sleep, for during his stay in Ever's academy, he had made it a point to continue studying into the night, only taking short naps as necessary.

❧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ❧

10 Jacob left Beersheba: Jacob's leaving the holy environment of the Land of Israel and descending to the less-than-holy environment of Charan in order to challenge Laban "the deceiver" endows us, his prog-

¹ *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 35, pp. 119-122. ² *Nedarim* 64b. ³ Rashi on 29:11, below. ⁴ Above, 19:27 and 24:63. ⁵ *Sefer HaSichot* 5752, vol. 1, p. 143. ⁶ Maharsha on *Chulin* 91b.

— ONKELOS —
 12 וְחֵלֶם וְהָיָה סֶלֶם מִצֵּב אֶרֶץ וְרָאָה מִגֵּיעַ הַשְּׂמִימָה
 וְרִישָׁה מִטִּי עַד צִית שְׂמִיָּא וְהָיָה
 מְלֶאכֶיָּא דִּי סִלְקִין וְנַחְתִּין בָּהּ:

12 וְחֵלֶם וְהָיָה סֶלֶם מִצֵּב אֶרֶץ וְרָאָה מִגֵּיעַ הַשְּׂמִימָה
 וְהָיָה מְלֶאכֶיָּא אֱלֹהִים עֲלֵים וְיֹרְדִים בּוֹ:

— RASHI —
 12 עֲלִים וְיֹרְדִים. עֲלִים תַּחֲלָה וְאַחֵר כִּךְ יֹרְדִים — לְרַקִּיעַ, וְיֹרְדוּ מְלֶאכֶיָּא חוּצָה לְאָרֶץ לְלוֹוֹתוֹ:
 מְלֶאכֶיָּא שְׁלוּוָהוּ בְּאָרֶץ אֵין יוֹצְאִים חוּצָה לְאָרֶץ, וְעָלָו

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

is therefore naturally inclined to fulfill His will.²³

Once we have accessed the essence of the soul, its influence ultimately continues to pervade us even after we become intellectually and emotionally inspired. In the words of the Mishnah²⁴: “He who observes the Torah in poverty will in the end fulfill it out of wealth.”²⁵

The essence of the soul not only enables us to fulfill our Divine mission even while we feel “stone-like” and uninspired; it likewise enables us to combine the seemingly multifarious and lifeless “stones” of the mundane world into one united home for God.²⁶

As we have seen, Jacob’s descent to Charan allegorically represents the soul’s descent into the physical world. The soul’s primary purpose in this world is to elevate physical reality by using it for Godly ends, thereby revealing the Divinity hidden within it. This purpose is alluded to in the phrase “He took some of the stones of that place,” since the word for “that place” (*ha-makom*) also means “space” in general, and space (together with time) forms the basis of physical reality.²⁷ The “stones” of “that place” thus refer to the lowest element of physical reality, that which displays no sign of Divine life at all. The absence of Divine consciousness in this level of reality is further highlighted by the fact that the word “stones” appears in the plural, signifying the apparent plurality of forces at play in the natural world, in contrast to the true oneness of the Divine energy hidden within it, continuously creating it and sustaining it.

Just as Jacob²⁸ combined the many stones into one, so is the soul’s task to reveal the inherent unity of reality by consecrating it to its Godly purpose. This one “stone”

can be then transformed, as Jacob says, into a home for God.²⁹

Alternatively, the stones in this verse allude to the rock-like strength of the soul. By placing stones around his head, Jacob was spiritually drawing the energy and strength of his soul into his physical being. He hoped that doing so would protect him from wild beasts, since animals do not molest a person whose body is thoroughly permeated with the soul’s energy.³⁰

The Godly soul is manifest initially in the head; from there, its influence radiates to the rest of the body.³¹ The Torah therefore only explicitly mentions the stones Jacob placed around his head, even though he placed other stones around the rest of his body.

However, the stones surrounding his body began to argue with those surrounding his head, demanding that they be the ones to surround his head. Symbolically, this means that they wanted the power of Jacob’s soul that was manifest in his head to be equally manifest throughout his whole body.

Since Jacob was lying in the holiest place in the world—the site of the future Temple, where God’s essence would be manifest—the stones’ request could be fulfilled. At the level of God’s essence, the distinctions between the spiritual (the head) and the physical (the body) are overwhelmed by their commonality—i.e., by the fact that they are both creations of God—and fall away. The foot can accommodate the energy of the soul just as well as the head.

In such a protected environment, predatory beasts certainly could not attack Jacob. (Similarly, in the messianic age, “[predatory beasts] will do no harm...for the

~ A CLOSER LOOK ~

[12] For they were not permitted to leave the Land of Israel: The Land of Israel at that point had not yet been physically sanctified; it had not yet been rendered any different from any other part of the world.³² There was therefore no reason for the patriarchs and matriarchs not to leave it. Spiritually,

however, the Land of Israel had been sanctified when God created the world, and ever since possessed intrinsic holiness. This is the reason that the angels of the Land of Israel were not allowed to leave it.³³

23. See *Mishneh Torah*, *Gerushin* 2:20. 24. *Avot* 4:9. 25. *Sefer HaMa’amarim Melukat*, vol. 2, pp. 165-167. 26. *Sefer HaMa’amarim Melukat*, vol. 2, p. 167. 27. *Sha’ar HaYichud VeHa’Emuna*, chapter 7. 28. See *Rashi* on *Chulin* 91b, s.v. *Nivli’u*. 29. *Sefer HaMa’amarim Melukat*, vol. 2, pp. 161, 163. 30. See *Zohar* 1:191a. 31. *Tanya*, chapter 9. 32. *Isaiah* 11:6-9. See *Zohar* 1:191a. 33. Above, 1:10, and on 15:18. 34. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, pp. 200-210, vol. 25, pp. 152-153.

12 He had a dream: he beheld a ladder standing firmly on the ground and sloping diagonally upward, its top reaching up toward heaven: its base rested in Beer-sheba and its top was above Bethel; thus, the original, natural location of Mount Moriah was beneath a point in between the two extremes of the ladder.¹⁴ **Upon it, behold, the angels of God** who had accompanied him on his trip thus far **were ascending** back toward heaven, for they were not permitted to leave the Land of Israel, **and other angels, who were designated to accompany him while he was outside the Land of Israel, were descending.**

✧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ✧

able to elevate Avimelech only to the point of making peace with him, so he would not hinder their living a Godly life; they neither vanquished his evil nor won him over to their way of holiness. In contrast, when Jacob went to Charan, his intention was not merely to live a Godly life unhindered by the culture of Charan, but to *transform* Charan, as well.

Because Abraham and Isaac were not able to transform the evil of their spiritual opponents (and therefore did not try to do so), they were also not able to transform the evil propensities of their own children, Ishmael and Esau. They only neutralized their sons' opposition to holiness. Jacob, on the other hand, was able to transform evil; he therefore refused to tolerate it. Consequently, any evil that might have been present in his children was transformed to holiness, and consequently, all of them followed in his Godly path.

This distinction between the patriarchs' diverse methods of dealing with evil can be compared to that between the inherently-saintly person and the penitent. The inherently-saintly person, who never experiences an ungodly impulse, does not interact with evil at all and, as such, neither does he elevate it. The penitent, in contrast, struggles with temptation and sometimes succumbs to it; since he does experience evil, he is therefore capable of transforming it into holiness.¹⁵

11 Jacob prayed to God: Until this point, Jacob had lived an insular life, steeped in Torah study. His journey to Charan was his first foray into the "real" world, whose ways and manners were foreign to him. Yet instead of making learning the language and customs of his new land a priority, Jacob's first item on his agenda was to pray.¹⁶

Similarly, when young people emerge from the care-free cocoon of youth (especially those who were privileged to have spent it in the insular world of Torah education) in order to begin earning a livelihood, they should not make the mistake of rushing off to immerse themselves in the culture of their new world and adapt to it. On the contrary: At this juncture, more than ever, must they focus on their spiritual lives, for they will quickly find themselves confronted by challenges in-

comparably greater than anything they had ever before experienced or encountered. They must therefore pray to God for the strength to overcome the challenges of their new life.¹⁷

Adults too, before setting about their daily affairs, must begin each morning with prayer, followed immediately¹⁸ by Torah study. Once they have reconnected to God through prayer and Torah study, they are equipped to fulfill their spiritual mission in the material world.¹⁹

He took some of the stones...and placed them around his head: Jacob realized that he was entering a new world with new challenges. He knew that he would have to engage that new world while remaining somewhat detached from it. He therefore surrounded his head with stones to indicate symbolically that he wished to protect his "head"—his focus and awareness—from falling prey to the distractions and challenges of his new life. He resolved to engage in his work with his *hands*²⁰ but to keep his head aloof, ever focused on his spiritual mission.

As an expression of this resolve, Jacob used lifeless, inanimate stones, symbolizing the strength of humble perseverance that keeps us on track even after our more "alive" intellectual and emotional inspiration has run dry.

Similarly, when we embark upon our foray into the "real" world, we cannot rely solely on our own intellectual and emotional connection with God to keep us on track. Only by protecting our "heads" through developing and strengthening our supra-rational connection to God can we stay true to our goal of building a home for Him.²¹

Rabbi Judah Loewe²² posits that Jacob in fact placed the stones *above* his head. In this context, Jacob's placement of the stones alludes to the superiority of fulfilling our Divine mission with humble perseverance, even in the absence of any intellectual or emotional inspiration. The motivation to forge onward even in these circumstances derives from the part of us that transcends our minds and hearts—the essence of our soul. This level of consciousness, being one with God,

14. Rashi on v. 17, below. 15. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 10, pp. 88-91. 16. *Berachot* 26b; *Bereishit Rabbah* 68:9. 17. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 1, p. 61. 18. See *Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Orach Chaim*, 155:1. 19. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 3, p. 792. 20. See *Psalms* 128:2. 21. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 1, p. 62-63. 22. *Gur Aryeh* on this verse.

ONKELOS

13 וְהָא יִקְרָא דִּי מַעֲדָה עֲלֻוּדִי
וְאָמַר אָנָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי דְאִבְרָהָם
אֲבוּךָ וְאֱלֹהֵי דִי־יִצְחָק אֲנִי־עַתָּה
דִּי אַתְּ שָׂכִיב עֲלֵה לָךְ אֲתִנְנָה
וּלְבָנֶיךָ: 14 וַיְהִי בְּנֵיךְ סִגְיָאִין
כַּעֲפָרָא דְאַרְעָא וְתַתְּקִיף לְמַעְרָבָא
וּלְמַדִּינָחָא וּלְצַפּוֹנָא וּלְדִירוֹמָא
וַיִּתְּבַרְכוּ בְּדִילָךְ כָּל זְרַעֲיָת
אַרְעָא וּבְדִיל בְּנֵיךָ: 15 וְהָא מִימְרֵי
בְּסַעֲדָךְ וְאַטְרִנְךָ בְּכָל אֲתֵר דִּי
תְּהִי וְאַתִּיבְנֶךָ לְאַרְעָא הָאָרִי
לֹא אֲשַׁבְּקֶנְךָ עַד דִּי אֲעַבְדִּי יֵת דִּי
מִלִּילִית לָךְ: 16 וְאַתְּעַר יַעֲקֹב
מִשְׁנֵתָה וְאָמַר בְּקוֹשְׁטָא אִיתִי יִקְרָא
דִּי שְׂרִי בְּאַתְרָא הָדִין וְאָנָּה לֹא
הוּיָתִי יָדַע:

13 וְהָיָה יְהוָה נֹצֵב עָלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבִרָהָם
אָבִיךָ וְאֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה שֹׁכֵב עָלֶיהָ לְךָ
אֲתִנְנָה וּלְזַרְעֶךָ: 14 וְהָיָה זֶרַעְךָ כַּעֲפַר הָאָרֶץ וּפְרִצְתָּ יָמָה
וּקְדֻמָּה וּצְפֹנָה וְנִגְבָּה וְנִבְרָכוּ בְּךָ כָּל־מִשְׁפָּחַת הָאָדָמָה
וּבְזַרְעֶךָ: 15 וְהָיָה אֲנֹכִי עִמָּךְ וּשְׁמִרְתִּיךָ בְּכָל־אֲשֶׁר־תֵּלֵךְ
וְהִשְׁבַּתִּיךָ אֶל־הָאָדָמָה הַזֹּאת כִּי לֹא אֶעֱזָבְךָ עַד אֲשֶׁר
אֶם־עָשִׂיתִי אֵת אֲשֶׁר־דִּבַּרְתִּי לְךָ: 16 וַיִּקֶּץ יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁנֵתוֹ
וַיֹּאמֶר אָבִן יֵשׁ יְהוָה בְּמָקוֹם הַזֶּה וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי:

RASHI

אם עשיתי. "אם" משמש בלשון "כי": דברתי לך.
לצרכך ועליך, מה שהבטחתי לאברהם על זרעו, לך
הבטחתי ולא לעשו, שלא אמרתי לו: "כי יצחק יקרא
לך זרע", אלא "כי ביצחק". ולא כל יצחק. וכן כל "לי"
ו"לך" ו"לו" ו"להם" הסמוכים אצל "דבור", משמשים
לשון "על", וזה יוכיח, שהרי עם יעקב לא דבר קדם
לכן: 16 ואנכי לא ידעתי. שאם ידעתי לא ישנתי
במקום קדוש כזה:

13 נֹצֵב עָלָיו. לְשִׁמְרוֹ: וְאֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק. אף על פי שלא
מצינו במקרא שיחד הקדוש ברוך הוא שמו על
הצדיקים בחייהם לכתוב "אלהי פלוני", משום שנאמר:
"הן בקדשיו לא יאמין", כאן יחד שמו על יצחק, לפי
שָׁכְחוּ עֵינָיו וְכִלּוּא הָיָה בְּבִית, וְהָרִי הוּא כִּמְת, וַיִּצֶר
הָרַע פֶּסֶק מִמֶּנּוּ. תְּנַחֲמָא: שֹׁכֵב עָלֶיהָ. קָפַל הַקְּדוּשׁ
בְּרוּךְ הוּא כָּל אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל תַּחְתּוֹ, רָמַז לֹא שֶׁתִּהְיֶה נֹחָה
לְכַבֵּשׁ לְבָנָיו: 14 וּפְרִצְתָּ. וְחֻזְקָתָה, כְּמוֹ: "וְכֵן יִפְרֹץ":
15 אֲנֹכִי עִמָּךְ. לְפִי שֶׁהָיָה יָרָא מַעֲשֹׂו וּמִלְכָּן: עַד אֲשֶׁר

10. איוב טו, טו. 11. תולדות ז. 12. שמות א, יב.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

truly present in this place, yet I was not aware of it." Jacob recognized that the revelation of God in that place was of the type beyond normal awareness and knowledge.⁴³

14 You shall spread out powerfully...and all the families on earth will be blessed through you: The word for "you shall spread out powerfully" (*ufaratzta*) literally means "you shall break through," as through a barrier. Allegorically, this blessing refers not only to Jacob's physical progeny but also to his Divine message to the world, which will be consummately disseminated throughout the world in the messianic future. The Messiah will usher in an era in which God's presence will be revealed in the world in a manner that breaks through any former limitation and constriction. All nations of the world will recognize God⁴⁴ and devote themselves to making the world into His home.⁴⁵

Thus, the Messiah is descended from Judah's son Peretz, whose name also means "breaking through."⁴⁶ The Messiah himself is referred to as "the one who breaks through:" "I will assemble the remnant of Israel.... The one who breaks forth will go before them; they will

break through and pass through the gate.... Their king will pass before them and God will be at their head."⁴⁷

God's blessing was also fulfilled to a certain degree in Jacob's lifetime, in the context of his miraculous success in amassing wealth, as will be recounted below: In the verse, "The man thus became exceedingly prosperous,"⁴⁸ the word for "became prosperous" (*yifrotz*) also literally means "break through."

Similarly, we can fulfill this blessing in our own lives, if we merit. In order to motivate God to bless us beyond the bounds of nature, we must break through our own bounds by going beyond the normal demands of proper or even holy behavior.⁴⁹ For example, teachers typically have a set number of hours they are required to teach. If they throw themselves heart and soul into their teaching, continuing to teach beyond their required hours, they have broken out of that limitation. Similarly, giving more charity than we are required to and augmenting our regular commitments to Torah study, prayer, and fulfilling the commandments are all examples of breaking through holy limitations.⁵⁰

43. *Sefer HaSichot* 5752, vol. 1, pp. 140-142. 44. Isaiah 40:5. 45. Zephaniah 3:9. 46. See below, 38:29. 47. Micah 2:12-13. 48. Below, 30:43. 49. See on Exodus 26:15. 50. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 1, pp. 167-170; *Sefer HaSichot* 5748, vol. 1, pp. 112-113.

13 And behold, God was standing over him, to guard him during his sojourn in Charan. **He said, “I am God, God of Abraham your forebear, and God of Isaac.”** God does not usually refer to Himself as “the God of” a living person since that person might commit a sin at any time, and thereafter God would not want to be associated with him. However, in Isaac’s case, since his seriously-impaired eyesight rendered him unsusceptible to the world’s temptations,³⁴ God did not hesitate to refer to Himself as Isaac’s God. He miraculously contracted the entire Land of Israel into the four square cubits under Jacob’s body, and told him, **“I will give the land upon which you are lying to you and your descendants.** It will be as easy for them to conquer it from its inhabitants as it is for a person to control the four square cubits occupied by his own body.”³⁵

14 Your descendants will be as numerous as the dust of the earth, and you shall spread out powerfully to the west, to the east, to the north, and to the south, and all the families on earth will be blessed through you and through your descendants.

15 Behold, you do not need to fear Esau or Laban, for **I am with you, I will protect you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land, for I will not neglect you** by not providing you with food and clothing³⁶ **until I have fulfilled what I have promised Abraham concerning you.** For I intend to fulfill all the promises I made to Abraham through you and not through your brother Esau,³⁷ including My promise that Abraham’s children will all remain true to their heritage. Esau’s inheritance from Abraham will consist solely of the territory promised him.³⁸

16 Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “God is truly present in this place, yet I was not aware of it. Had I known that this was a holy place, I would not have slept here.”

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

world will be filled with the knowledge of God....”³⁹)

It was precisely this power of God’s essence that Jacob brought with him to Charan. It enabled him to overcome the spiritual darkness of Charan and, furthermore, to fuse mundane and holy, body and soul.⁴⁰

The above explanation helps us understand why Jacob fell asleep in such a holy place. Sleep generally implies a decrease in Divine consciousness. When we are awake, our minds and hearts are (at least potentially) in full control of the rest of our bodies. This preeminence is reflected in the fact that our heads and hearts are physically higher than the lower, more materially-oriented part of our bodies. In contrast, when we sleep, our minds and hearts lose most of their control over the body, this being reflected in the fact that we sleep lying down, our brains and hearts physically level with the lower half of our bodies. It seems puzzling, then, that the first time Jacob lay down to sleep in fourteen

years was on the holy Temple Mount! True, he was not aware of its holiness,⁴¹ but why would God have arranged for him to fall asleep specifically in such a holy place?⁴²

The answer is that it was precisely *because* of his location that God had Jacob fall asleep there. Mount Moriah was the site of the future Temple, which would house and reflect God’s essence. As we have seen, God’s essence transcends the physical and the spiritual equally, and they are therefore equal relative to God’s essence. In this context, sleep was not a descent but rather an ascent, a reflection of the unique intensity of spiritual consciousness that informed that holy spot. The equality of Jacob’s head and feet reflected the equality of the spiritual and physical that exists within the Divine essence. This equality was further reflected in Jacob’s dream by his vision of the ladder uniting heaven and earth.

This vision is what caused Jacob to declare: “God is

35. See Numbers 15:39. 36. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 20, pp. 129-134. 37. Rashi on v. 20, below. 38. See above, 17:7, 19-21; 21:12; 28:4. 39. Above, 15:19; Rashi on Deuteronomy 2:5; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 32, p. 173, note 39. 40. *Sefer HaSichot* 5752, vol. 1, pp. 143-144. 41. See below, 28:16. 42. See *Divrei David* on this verse.

ONKELOS

17 ודחילו ואמר מא דחילו אתרא
הדין לית דין אתר הדין אלחין
אתר דרענא בה מן קדם יי ודין
תרע קבל שמאי: 18 ואקדים
יעקב בצפרא ונסיב ית אבנא
די שוי אסדוהי ושווי יתה קמא
ואריק משחא על רישה: 19 וקרא
ית שמא דאתרא ההוא בית אל
וברם לזו שמא דקרתא בקדמימא:
20 וקיים יעקב קים למימר אם יהי
מימרא דיי בסעדי וישרנני בארשא
הדא די אגא אזל ויתן לי לחם
למיכל ובסו למלכש: 21 ואתב
בשלם לבית אבא ויהי יי לי
לאלה: 22 ואבנא הדא די שויתי
קמא תהי דאהי פלח עלה קדם
יי וכל די תתן לי חד מן עשרא
אפרשנה קדמך:

17 ויִירָא וַיֹּאמֶר מִה־נֹרָא הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה אֵין זֶה בִּי אִם־
בֵּית אֱלֹהִים וְזֶה שַׁעַר הַשָּׁמַיִם: 18 וַיִּשָּׁבֶם יַעֲקֹב בַּבֶּקֶר
וַיִּקַּח אֶת־הָאֲבָן אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם מִרְאשֵׁתָיו וַיִּשֶׂם אֹתָהּ מִצְבֵּה
וַיִּצֶק שָׁמֶן עַל־רֹאשָׁהּ: 19 וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־שֵׁם־הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא
בֵּית־אֵל וְאוּלָם לֹו שֵׁם־הָעִיר לְרֹאשְׁנָה: 20 וַיֵּדֶר יַעֲקֹב
נֶדֶר לֵאמֹר אִם־יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי וְשָׁמְרָנִי בַדֶּרֶךְ הַזֶּה
אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ וְנָתַן־לִי לֶחֶם לֶאֱכֹל וּבְגָד לְלַבֵּשׁ:
21 וְשִׁבְתִּי בְשָׁלוֹם אֶל־בֵּית אָבִי וְהָיָה יְהוָה לִי לֵאלֹהִים:
22 וְהָאֲבָן הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַתִּי מִצְבֵּה יִהְיֶה בֵּית אֱלֹהִים
וְכָל אֲשֶׁר תִּתֶּן־לִי עֹשֶׂר אֶעֱשֶׂרְנֹו לָךְ:

RASHI

וגו', לא באברהם שקראו הר, ולא ביצחק שקראו
שדה, אלא כיצקב שקראו בית אל: מה נורא. תרגום:
"מה דחילו אתרא הדין", "דחילו" שם דבר הוא, כמו:
"סכלתנו", "ובסו למלכש"¹⁹: וזה שער השמים. מקום
תפלה, לעלות תפלתם השמימיה. ומדרשו²⁰, שבית
המקדש של מעלה מכון כנגד בית המקדש של מטה:
20 אם יהיה אלהים עמדי. אם ישמר לי הבטחות
הללו שהבטיחני להיות עמדי, כמו שאמר לי²¹: "והנה
אנכי עמך", ושמרני. כמו שאמר לי²²: "והבטיחך בכל
אשר תלך", ונתן לי לחם לאכל. כמו שאמר: "כי לא
אעזבך", והבטקש לחם הוא קרוי נעזב, שנאמר: "ולא
ראיתי צדיק נעזב ונורעו מבקש לחם": 21 ושבתי. כמו
שאמר לי²²: "והשבתיך אל האדמה": בשלום. שלם מן
החטא, שלא אלמד מדרךי לכן: והיה ה' לי לאלהים.
שיחול שמו עלי מתחלה ועד סוף, שלא ימצא פסול
בזרעי, כמו שאמר: "אשר דברתי לך", והבטקה
זו הבטיח לאברהם, שנאמר: "להיות לך לאלהים
ולזרעך אחריו", ורצה מיחס, שלא ימצא בו שום פסול:
22 והאבן הזאת. כך תפרש וי' זו של "והאבן", אם
תעשה לי את אלה, ואף אני אעשה זאת: והאבן הזאת
אשר שמי מצבה וגו'. בתרגומו: "אחי פלח עלה קדם
ה'". וכן עשה בשובו מפרדן ארם, כשאמר לו²³: "קום
עלה בית אל", מה נאמר שם²⁴: "ויצב יעקב מצבה וגו'
ויסר עליה נסר":

17 בי אם בית אלהים. אמר רבי אלעזר בשם רבי
יוסי בן זמרא: הסלם הזה עומד בבאר שבע, ואמצע
שפועו מגיע כנגד בית המקדש, שבאר שבע עומד
בדרומה של יהודה, וירושלים בצפונה, בגבול שבין
יהודה ובנימין. ובית אל היה בצפון של נחלת בנימין,
בגבול שבין בנימין ובין בני יוסף. נמצא, סלם שרגליו
בבאר שבע וראשו בבית אל, מגיע אמצע שפועו נגד
ירושלים. וכלפי שאמרו רבותינו¹⁹ שאמר הקדוש
ברוך הוא: צדיק זה בא לבית מלוני, ויפטר בלא לינה?
ועוד אמרו: יעקב קראה לירושלים "בית אל", וזו לו
היא ולא ירושלים, ומהיכן למדו לומר כן? אומר אני,
שנעקר הר המוריה ובא לכאן, וזו היא קפיצת הארץ
האמורה ב"שחיטת חליו"¹⁵, שבא בית המקדש לקראתו
עד בית אל, וזהו: "ויפגע במקום". ואם תאמר: כשעבר
יעקב על בית המקדש, מדוע לא עכבו שם — איהו
לא יחייב לבה להתפלל במקום שהתפללו אבותיו, ומן
השמים יעבדוהו? איהו עד חרן אזל, כדאמרינן בפרק
"גיד הנשה"¹⁶, וקרא מוכיחו: "וילך חרנה". כי מטא לחרן
אמר: אפשר שעברתי על מקום שהתפללו אבותי ולא
התפללתי בו? יחב דעתה למדהר, וחזר עד בית אל,
וקפצה לו הארץ. בית אל לא זהו הסמוך לעי, אלא
לירושלים, ועל שם שהיתה עיר האלהים קראה בית
אל, והוא הר המוריה שהתפלל בו אברהם, והוא השדה
שהתפלל בו יצחק, וכן אמרו בפסחים¹⁷: "לכו ונעלה"¹⁸

13. חולין צא, ב. 14. פסחים פח, א. 15. דף צא, ב. 16. שם. 17. פח, א. 18. ישעיה ב, ג. 19. פסוק כ. 20. בראשית רבה סט, ז. 21. פסוק טו. 22. פסוק טו.
23. פסוק טו. 24. תהלים לו, כה. 25. פסוק טו. 26. פסוק טו. 27. בראשית יז, ז. 28. בראשית לה, א. 29. בראשית לה, יד.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

requisite for ushering in the latter.⁶⁰

22 This stone that I have set up as a monument will become a house of God: Jacob did not use gold or silver to build a home for God, but simple stones.

On a spiritual level, this means that Jacob vowed to take even the lowliest and most materialistic aspects of his life and transform them into God's home. He succeeded in doing so because he had taken an oath,

17 He became afraid, and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than Mount Moriah, the future site of the House of God.⁵¹ And thus, this is the gateway through which prayer ascends to heaven, passing through the heavenly Temple, which is figuratively situated ‘above’ the site of the physical Temple,” meaning that the site of the future Temple is the earthly locale most receptive to the spiritual consciousness of the higher worlds.

18 Jacob rose early in the morning, took the semicircular stone that he had placed under his head, and set it up as a monument. He then poured oil on the top of it, consecrating it as an altar.⁵²

19 This place was already known as Bethel, but in light of the revelation he had just received, Jacob ratified this name. He named that place again Bethel [“House of God”], although the original name of the town was Luz.

20 Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me; and will protect me physically on this journey that I am undertaking; and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear;

21 and will protect me spiritually from Laban’s evil influence so that I will be able to return to my father’s house untainted by sin; and if God will be both my God and the God of the children I will father in Laban’s house, in that they all remain true to their heritage and not rebel as did some of my grandfather Abraham’s and one of my father Isaac’s children—as He has promised me all this⁵³—

22 then this stone that I have set up as a monument will become a house of God. I will offer up sacrifices on it. And,” addressing God directly, he said, **“I will set aside a tenth for You of everything that You give me, as my forebears did.”⁵⁴**

∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

20-21 Bread...and clothing... I will return to my father’s house untainted: We transform the world into God’s home in two ways: by doing things that are intrinsically holy, such as studying the Torah and performing God’s commandments; and by sanctifying mundane pursuits, such as eating or earning a living. In this verse, Jacob alludes to both these facets of religious life:

Bread: This alludes to Torah study. When we study the Torah, we are internalizing God’s wisdom, which then becomes part of us, just as when we eat (bread being the archetypal foodstuff), we ingest what we eat and it becomes part of us.

Clothing: This alludes to the performance of the commandments. When we perform a commandment, we are enveloped by an external, transcendent feeling of inspiration, much as a garment surrounds, envelops, and warms its wearer.⁵⁵

I will return to my father’s house untainted: This alludes to our return to the domain of holiness after venturing out temporarily into the mundane world in order to uplift it.⁵⁶

As has been mentioned, despite the intrinsic superior-

ity of holy activities, elevating the mundane is of greater importance, for it brings God the greatest pleasure and hastens the advent of the messianic era. Studying the Torah and performing the commandments, while by no means an easy task, is the soul’s natural inclination. Even the body, despite its innate propensity for pursuits that afford immediate gratification, can be induced into participating in holy pursuits, for it, too, is rooted in a sublime source. In contrast, the outside, mundane world is the aspect of reality existentially furthest from Divine awareness; transforming it is a genuine feat that requires great acumen and often heroic determination.⁵⁷ Yet the soul can achieve this transformation by drawing upon its essence, which in turn draws upon the infinite power of God’s essence.⁵⁸

The *Zohar* and the Midrash interpret Jacob’s descent to Charan as an allegory for the exile of the Jewish people. Jacob therefore says that ultimately, in the messianic age, “he,” i.e., his descendants, will return from exile to “my father’s house,” to the Land of Israel.⁵⁹

The phrase “I will return to my father’s house untainted” thus refers both to sanctifying the mundane and to the messianic age, indicating that the former is a pre-

51. Above, 22:2, 14. 52. Rashi on 31:13, below. 53. Above, v. 15. 54. Above, 14:20, 25:27, 26:12. 55. *Tanya*, chapter 5. 56. *Sefer HaMa’amarim Melukat*, vol. 2, pp. 162-163. 57. *Sefer HaMa’amarim Melukat*, vol. 2, p. 173. 58. *Sefer HaMa’amarim Melukat*, vol. 2, pp. 165. 59. See *Zohar* 1:23b, 147a. See also *Bereishit Rabbah* 68:13. 60. *Sefer HaMa’amarim Melukat*, vol. 2, p. 175.

— ONKELOS —

29:1 ונטל יעקב רגליו ואזל לארע בני מדינא: 2 וחזא והא בירא בחקלא והא תמן תלתא עדיו דען רביעין עלה ארי מן בירא ההיא משקן עדריא ואבנא רבתא על פמא דבירא: 3 ומתפנשין לתמן כל עדריא ומגנדרין ית אבנא מעל פמא דבירא ומשקן ית ענא ומתיבין ית אבנא על פמא דבירא לאתרה: 4 ואמר להון יעקב אחי מנן אתון ואמרו מחרן אנהא: 5 ואמר להון הידעתון ית לבן בר נחור ואמרו ידעין אנהא:

שני 29:1 וישא יעקב רגליו וילך ארצה בני־קדם: 2 וירא והנה באר בשדה והנה שם שלשה עדריאן רבצים עליה פי מן־הבאר ההוא ישקו העדרים והאבן גדלה על־פי הבאר: 3 ונאספּו־שמה כל־העדרים וגללו את־האבן מעל פי הבאר והשקו את־הצאן והשיבו את־האבן על־פי הבאר למקמה: 4 ויאמר להם יעקב אחי מאין אתם ויאמרו מחרן אנהנו: 5 ויאמר להם הידעתם את־לבן בן־נחור ויאמרו ידענו:

— RASHI —

3 ונאספּו־ רגילים היו להאסף, לפי שהיתה האבן גדולה: וגללו: וגולליו, ותרגומו: "ומגנדרין". כל לשון הוזה משתנה לדבר בלשון עתיד ובלשון עבר, לפי שכל דבר ההוזה תמיד, כבר היה ועתיד להיות: והשיבו. תרגומו: "ומתיבין":

1 וישא יעקב רגליו. משנתבשר בשורה טובה שהבטח בשמירה, נשא לבו את רגליו, ונעשה קל ללכת. כך מפרש בבראשית רבה⁶³: 2 ישקו העדרים. משקים הרועים את העדרים. והמקרא דבר בלשון קצרה:

30. ע. ח.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

his joy permeated his entire being, down to his feet.⁶³ Jacob's joy in fulfilling his Divine mission must inspire us to adopt the same joyful attitude in life whenever we tackle life's numerous daily, mundane activities. Whenever we embark on a mission of goodness, even if it entails what appears to be a spiritual descent, we must do so with joy, trusting in God's promise that everything will work out as it should.⁶⁴

3 The shepherds would together roll the boulder off the opening of the well...and then replace the boulder: As we have seen, a stone (or boulder) epitomizes the inanimate kingdom, which is the least-spiritual component of physical reality since it appears totally lifeless. It is therefore a fitting allegory for our material selves, our egos, and our mundane activities, all of which are natural impediments to Divine awareness.

This "stone" both conceals and blocks the pure well-springs of holiness that reside within our hearts, just as a huge boulder blocked and concealed the water in the shepherds' well. In a similar vein, the prophet Ezekiel uses the imagery of a "heart of stone"⁶⁵ to refer to a spiritual blockage, and the Midrash associates the boulder over the well with the evil inclination that resides within each of us.⁶⁶ How is this formidable, seemingly immovable stone to be removed?

The Torah tells us that one lone shepherd, acting on his own, cannot move the boulder. This means that when our relationship with God is one-dimensional, based on love or fear of God (but not on both), our Godly

essence remains blocked. This is because every positive phenomenon has its corresponding negative correlate.⁶⁷ The opposite of love of God is love of things that interfere with Divine consciousness. When our relationship with God is based solely on love, that love can sometimes become diverted into unhealthy types of love. Conversely, when our relationship with God is based only on fear—meaning respect, awe, and a sense of duty—we are susceptible to unhealthy forms of severity, including impatience and being judgmental.

However, a negative emotion can only oppose its corresponding positive emotion; it cannot oppose a different type of positive emotion. Therefore, when we both love and fear God, our fear of God prevents us from falling into negative forms of love, and our love of God protects us from falling into negative forms of fear.

This is why "the shepherds would together roll the boulder off the opening of the well." The various "shepherds," working together in unison, were indeed able to remove the "stone" from the wellsprings of the heart. Since, Jacob, however, embodied the synthesis of love and fear, as we have seen, he was able to remove the boulder by himself.⁶⁸

Significantly, the boulder was not discarded, but rather replaced upon the well. Allegorically, this means that our material inclinations are not meant to be destroyed; they play a positive role, and the world cannot exist without them.⁶⁹ Rather, they are meant to be sublimated and directed toward holy ends.⁷⁰

63. *Hitva'aduyot* 5745, vol. 5, p. 3100. 64. *Sichot Kodesh* 5731, vol. 1, p. 178; *Hitva'aduyot* 5719, vol. 1, pp. 233-234. 65. Ezekiel 11:19. 66. *Bereishit Rabbah* 70:8. 67. *Ecclesiastes* 7:14. 68. *Likutei Torah* 4:5a; *HaTamim* 120a; *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5628, pp. 29-34. 69. See *Yoma* 69b. 70. *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5628, p. 33.

Jacob Arrives in Charan

- ◆ **Second Reading 29:1** God's explicit promise of protection dispelled Jacob's previous feelings of apprehensiveness and trepidation. **Light of foot, Jacob** enthusiastically and optimistically **set out for the land of the people of the east** (see Figure 28). When he reached the bank of the Jordan River, he put his staff into the water, causing it to miraculously split for him and allowing him to cross over to the opposite bank.⁶¹

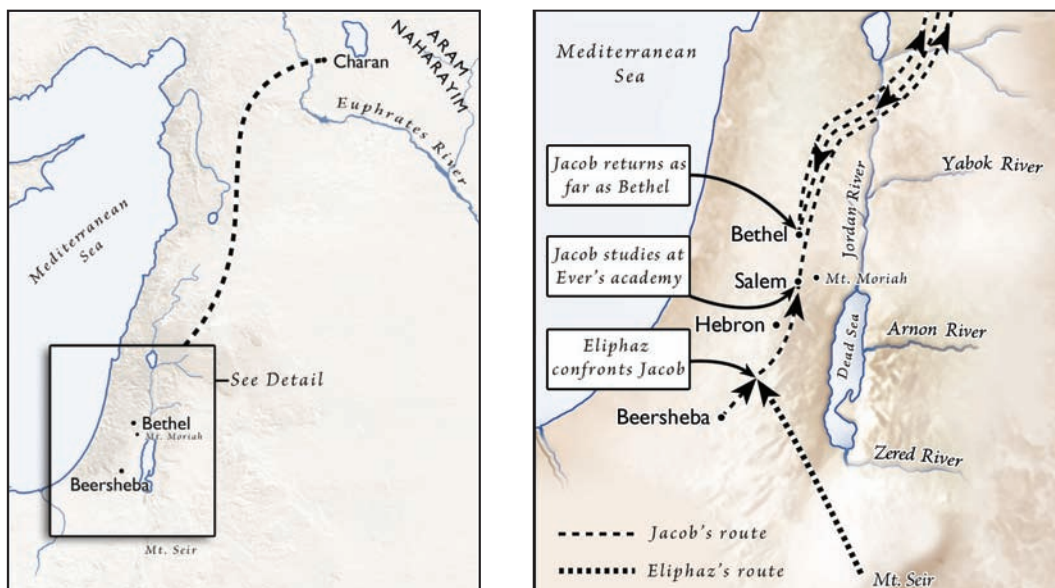


Figure 28: Jacob Travels to Charan.

2 When he reached Aram Naharayim, **he looked, and there before his eyes was a well in a field, and three flocks of sheep were lying there beside it, for the local shepherds watered the flocks from that well. The boulder covering the opening of the well was huge.**

3 Every day, **when all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would together roll the boulder off the opening of the well and water the sheep, and then replace the boulder over the opening of the well.** But Jacob did not know that this was how the shepherds watered their sheep.

4 **Jacob asked them, "My brothers, where are you from?" and they replied, "We are from Charan."**

5 **He asked them, "Do you know Laban, the grandson of Nachor?" and they replied, "We know him."**

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

which meant that even if he no longer had the intellectual or emotional motivation to carry on fulfilling his Divine mission, his oath would propel him onward.

The lesson for us here is to recognize that it is not solely with our prayer and Torah study—our "gold" and "silver"—that we sanctify our homes. Even, and perhaps

especially, our eating utensils—the simple "stones" of our material existence—can be sanctified to build a home for God.⁶²

1 **Light of foot, Jacob enthusiastically and optimistically set out:** Even though Jacob was on his way to enter the spiritual darkness of Charan, he rejoiced—and

61. Rashi on 32:10, below. 62. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 1, p. 63.

ONKELOS

6 ואמר להן השלם לה ואמר
שלם והא רחל ברתה אתיא עם
ענא: 7 ואמר הא עוד יומא סגי
לא עדן למכנש בעיר אשקו ענא
ואזילו רעו: 8 ואמרו לא נכול עד
די יתכנשון כל עדריא ויגדרון
ית אבנא מעל פמא דבירא ונשקי
ענא: 9 עד דהוא ממלל עמהון
ורחל אתת עם ענא די לאבדא
ארי רעיתא היא: 10 ויהוה כד
חזא יעקב ית רחל בת לבן אחיה
דאמה וית ענא דלבן אחיה
דאמה וקריב יעקב וגדר ית אבנא
מעל פמא דבירא ואשקי ית ענא
דלבן אחיה דאמה: 11 ונשק
יעקב לרחל וארים ית קלה ובכא:
12 וחזי יעקב לרחל ארי בר אחת
אבדא הוא וארי בר רבקה הוא
ורהט וחזיאת לאבדא: 13 ויהוה
כד שמע לבן ית שמע יעקב בר
אחיה ורהט לקדמוניה וגפיה לה
ונשיק לה ואעלה לביתה ואשתעי
ללבן ית כל פתגמא האלון:

6 ויאמר להם השלום לו ויאמרו שלום והנה רחל בתו
באה עם-הצאן: 7 ויאמר הן עוד היום גדול לא-עת
האסף המקנה השקו הצאן ולכו רעו: 8 ויאמרו לא
נוכל עד אשר יאספו כל-העדרים וגללו את-האבן
מעל פי הבאר והשקינו הצאן: 9 עודנו מדבר עמם
ורחל באה עם-הצאן אשר לאביה כי רעה הוא:
10 ויהי כאשר ראה יעקב את-רחל בת-לבן אחי אמו
ואת-צאן לבן אחי אמו ויגש יעקב וגל את-האבן מעל
פי הבאר וישק את-צאן לבן אחי אמו: 11 וישק יעקב
לרחל וישא את-קלו ויבך: 12 ויגד יעקב לרחל כי
אחי אביה הוא וכי בן-רבקה הוא ותגד ותגד לאביה:
13 ויהי כשמע לבן את-שמע יעקב בן-אחותו וירץ
לקראתו ויחבק-לו וינשק-לו ויביאהו אל-ביתו ויספר
ללבן את כל-הדברים האלה:

RASHI

לפי שרדף אליפו בן עשו במצות אביו אחרי להורגו
והשיגו, ולפי שגדל אליפו בחיקו של יצחק משה ידו,
אמר לו: מה אעשה לצויו של אבא? אמר לו יעקב: טל
מה שבידי, והעני חשוב כמות: 12 **פי אחי אביה הוא.**
קרוב לאביה, כמו: 33: "אנשים אחים אנחנו". ומדרשו:
אם לרמאות הוא בא — גם אני אחי ברמאות, ואם
אדם כשר הוא — גם אני "בן רבקה" אחותו הכשרה:
ותגד לאביה. לפי שאמה מתה, ולא היה לה להגיד
אלא לו: 13 **וירץ לקראתו.** כסבור ממון הוא טעון,
שהרי עבד הבית בא לבאן בעשרה גמלים טעונים:
ויחבק. בשלא ראה עמו כלום, אמר: שמא זהובים
הביא, והנם בחיקו: **וינשק לו.** אמר: שמא מרקלות
הביא, והם בפיו: **ויספר ללבן.** שלא בא אלא מתוך אנס
אחיו, ושנטלו ממנו ממונו:

6 **באה עם הצאן.** הטעם בא"ף, ותרוממו: "אתיא".
"ורחל באה", הטעם למעלה בבי"ת, ותרוממו: "אתת".
הראשון לשון עושה, והשני לשון עשתה: 7 **הן עוד**
היום גדול. לפי שראה אותם רובצים, כסבור שרוצים
לאסוף המקנה הביתה ולא ירעו עוד, אמר להם: "הן
עוד היום גדול", כלומר, אם שכירי יום אתם — לא
שלמיתם פעלת היום. ואם הבהמות שלכם — אף על
פי כן, "לא עת האסף המקנה" וגו'. בראשית רבה:
8 **לא נוכל.** להשקות, לפי שהאבן גדולה: **וגללו.** זה
מתרגם: "ויגדרון", לפי שהוא לשון עתיד: 10 **ויגש**
יעקב וגל. באדם שמעביר את הפקק מעל פי צלוחית,
להודיעך שכחו גדול: 11 **ויבך.** לפי שצפה ברוח
הקדש שאינה נכנסת עמו לקבורה. דבר אחר: לפי
שבא בידים ריקניות, אמר: אליעזר עבד אבי אבא, היו
בדיי נזמים וצמידים ומגדרות, ואני אין בידי כלום.

31. פסוק ט. 32. ע, יא. 33. בראשית יג, ת. 34. בראשית רבה ע, יג.

INNER DIMENSIONS

[11] Then Jacob kissed Rachel...wept aloud (lit., "raised his voice and wept"): Allegorically, Rachel personifies *Keneset Yisrael* (malchut of Atzilut), the spiritual origin of all Jewish souls. Jacob, the person-

ification of *tiferet* of Atzilut (the inner dimension of which is *rachamim*, mercy), wept in order to arouse God's mercy upon the souls that descend into the physical world, exiled from their native, spiritual

6 He asked them, “Is he well?” and they replied, “He is well—and here is his daughter Rachel, approaching with the flocks.” Laban would send his daughters to tend his flocks because he had no sons to do so.⁷¹

7 When Jacob saw the shepherds sitting by idly, he assumed they had finished pasturing their flocks. **He said** to them, “Look, **it is still broad daylight**. If you are day-laborers, you have not yet put in a full day’s work. And even if these are your own flocks, it is still **not yet time to round up the livestock** and take them home. If they need to drink, **water the flocks and go off and pasture them.**”

8 They replied, “We cannot, because the boulder covering the well is too heavy for us to move. We have to wait **until all the flocks are rounded up and** all the shepherds can **roll the boulder off the opening of the well** together. Only then we can **water the animals.**”

9 He was still speaking with them when Rachel arrived with her father’s flock, for she was a shepherdess.

10 And when Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban, his mother’s brother, and the flocks of Laban, his mother’s brother, Jacob stepped forward and effortlessly rolled the boulder off the opening of the well, and watered the flocks of Laban, his mother’s brother.

11 Then Jacob kissed his cousin **Rachel. He wept aloud,** for two reasons: First, he foresaw that, although he and Rachel would indeed marry, they would not be buried together. Second, whereas Eliezer was able to impress the family with an abundant show of wealth when he arrived in Charan in search of a bride for Isaac, in contrast, he himself had arrived destitute (after having relinquished all he owned to Eliphaz).

12 Seeing that she was perplexed by his unusual behavior, **Jacob told Rachel that he was both her father’s relative as well as Rebecca’s son.** When he told her that his purpose in coming was to marry her, Rachel apprised him of the fact that her father was a deceiver and would no doubt try to trick him out of marrying her. Jacob responded that if Laban would try to deceive him, **he** would prove that he **was her father’s equal** in deception, but if would treat him honestly, **he** would act as **Rebecca’s son** and also behave honestly. Since Rachel’s mother was no longer alive, **she ran and told only her father** of Jacob’s arrival.

13 When Laban heard the news of the arrival of Jacob, his sister’s son, he ran to greet him—not because of any love for Jacob, but rather⁷²—because he recalled how Eliezer had come years before laden with riches. When he saw that Jacob had arrived empty-handed, **he embraced him**, trying to feel around for gold coins in his pockets. When he saw that he had none, **he then kissed him**, trying to ascertain if he perhaps had pearls in his mouth. When he saw he had no pearls, either, Laban nevertheless **brought him home, and Jacob told Laban of all these events:** how he was forced to flee his brother and give up all his wealth on the way. He did not mention that he had been sent to marry one of his daughters.

⁷¹ Rashi on 30:27, below. ⁷² *Hitva’aduyot* 5747, vol. 1, p. 581.

ONKELOS

14 וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ לָבֵן בְּרָם קָרִיבִי וּבִשְׂרִי
אֶת וַיְתִיב עִמָּה יָרַח יוֹמִין: 15 וַאֲמַר
לָבֵן לְיַעֲקֹב הַמִּדְאֲחִי אֶת וַתְּפַלְחֲנִי
מִנָּן חֲוִי לִי מֵא אַגְרָר: 16 וּלְלָבֵן
תִּרְמִין בְּנֵן שׁוֹם רִבְתָּא לֵאחָ וְשׁוֹם
וְעִירְתָּא רַחֵל: 17 וְעֵינֵי לֵאחָ יֵאָזֵן
וְרַחֵל הָוֵת שְׁפִירָא בְּרִינָא וַיֵּאָיֵא
בַּחוּזָא: 18 וְרַחֵם יַעֲקֹב יֵת רַחֵל
וַאֲמַר אֶפְלַחְנָךְ שְׁבַע שָׁנִין בְּרַחֵל
בְּרַתְךָ וְעִירְתָּא:

14 וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ לָבֵן אֶךְ עֲצָמִי וּבִשְׂרִי אֶתָּה וַיֵּשֶׁב עִמּוֹ חֲדָשׁ
יָמִים: 15 וַיֹּאמֶר לָבֵן לְיַעֲקֹב הַבִּיאֲחִי אֶתָּה וְעַבְדְּתַנִּי
חֲנָם הַגִּידָה לִּי מַה־מְשַׁבְּרֶתְךָ: 16 וּלְלָבֵן שְׁתֵּי בָנוֹת שֵׁם
הַגְּדֹלָה לֵאחָ וְשֵׁם הַקְּטָנָה רַחֵל: 17 וְעֵינֵי לֵאחָ רַבּוֹת
וְרַחֵל הֵיטָה יִפְתָּה־תֹּאֵר וַיִּפֹּת מִרְאָה:
שְׁלִישִׁי 18 וַיֵּאָהֵב יַעֲקֹב אֶת־רַחֵל וַיֹּאמֶר אֶעֱבֹדְךָ שְׁבַע
שָׁנִים בְּרַחֵל בְּתֶךָ הַקְּטָנָה:

RASHI

לְקָטָן: תֹּאֵר. הוּא צוֹרֵת הַפְּרָצוּף, לְשׁוֹן "וַתֵּאָרְהוּ
בִשְׂרָד" ³⁵. קוֹנפֵּא"ש בְּלַעֲזָה: מִרְאָה. הוּא זִיו קְלִסְתָּר:
18 אֶעֱבֹדְךָ שְׁבַע שָׁנִים. הֵם יָמִים אַחָדִים שְׁאִמְרָה לוֹ
אִמּוֹ: ³⁶ "וַיִּשְׁבֶּתָּ עִמּוֹ יָמִים אַחָדִים". וַתֵּדַע שֶׁכֵּן הוּא,
שֶׁהָרִי כְּתִיב: ³⁷ "וַיְהִי בְעֵינָיו כִּימִים אַחָדִים": בְּרַחֵל בְּתֶךָ
הַקְּטָנָה. כָּל הַסִּימָנִים הִלְלוּ לָמָּה? לִפִּי שֶׁהִיא יוֹדַע בּוֹ
שֶׁהוּא רִמָּא, אָמַר לוֹ: "אֶעֱבֹדְךָ בְּרַחֵל", וְשָׁמָּה תֵּאֱמַר:
רַחֵל אֲחֵרֶת מִן הַשּׁוֹק, תִּלְמוּד לומר: "בְּתֶךָ", וְשָׁמָּה
תֵּאֱמַר: אֲחִלִּיף לֵאחָ שְׁמָה וְאֶקְרָא שְׁמָה רַחֵל, תִּלְמוּד
לומר: "הַקְּטָנָה". וְאֵף עַל פִּי כֵן לֹא הוֹעִיל, שֶׁהָרִי רְמָזוֹ:

14 אֶךְ עֲצָמִי וּבִשְׂרִי. מַעֲתָה אֵין לִי לְאֶסְפָּף הַבִּיתָה,
הוֹאִיל וְאֵין בִּידֶךָ כְּלוּם, אֶלָּא מִפְּנֵי קֶרֶבָה אֶטְפֹּל בְּךָ
חֲדָשׁ יָמִים, וְכֵן עֲשֵׂה, וְאֵף זֶה לֹא לְחֲנָם, שֶׁהִיא רוֹעֶה
צֹאנָה: 15 הַבִּיאֲחִי אֶתָּה. לְשׁוֹן תִּימָה: וְכִי בִשְׁבִיל שְׁאֲחִי
אֶתָּה, תַּעֲבֹדֵנִי חֲנָם: וְעַבְדְּתַנִּי. כְּמוֹ "וַתַּעֲבֹדֵנִי". וְכֵן כָּל
תִּבְיָה שֶׁהִיא לְשׁוֹן עֶבֶר, הוֹסִיף וַיִּרְוֵ בְּרֵאשֵׁה וְהִיא הוֹפֵכֶת
הַתִּבְיָה לְהֵבֵא: 17 וְעֵינֵי לֵאחָ רַבּוֹת. שֶׁהִיטָה סְבוּרָה
לְעֹלּוֹת בְּגוּרָלוֹ שֶׁל עֶשׂוֹ וּבּוֹכָה, שֶׁהִיא הַכֹּל אוֹמְרִים: שְׁנֵי
בָּנִים לְרִבְקָה וְשְׁתֵּי בָנוֹת לָבֵן, הַגְּדוֹלָה לְגְדוֹל וְהַקְּטָנָה

35. ישעיה מו, יג. 36. דְמוּת גִּזְרָה. 37. בְּרֵאשִׁית כו, מד. 38. פְּסוּק כ.

INNER DIMENSIONS

[16] The name of the older one was Leah, and the name of the younger one was Rachel: Spiritually, Leah and Rachel embodied the *sefirot* of *binah* and *malchut*, respectively. Leah is described as "the older one" (הַגְּדוֹלָה), which may be read as "the great *hei*" (הַ' גְּדוֹלָה), referring to the first *hei* of the Name *Havayah*, which signifies the *sefirah* of *binah*. Similarly, Rachel is described as "the younger one" (הַקְּטָנָה), which may be read as "the lesser *hei*" (הַ' קְטָנָה), referring to the latter *hei* of the Name *Havayah*, which signifies the *sefirah* of *malchut*.⁸⁰

Binah, the main faculty of the intellect, is expressed primarily through thought, while *malchut*, the faculty of expression, is manifest primarily through speech and action. In terms of living the Divine life, Leah personified the study of the Torah, which primarily engages the intellect, and Rachel personified the performance of the commandments, which primarily engages the faculties of speech and action.⁸¹

[17] Rachel had beautiful features: As we have seen,⁸² Rachel embodied the spiritual origin of the souls of the Jewish people. Rachel's beauty therefore alludes to the spiritual beauty inherent in the soul of every Jew.

Similarly, in the Song of Songs, the love poem de-

scribing the relationship between God and the Jewish people, one of the terms used to describe the Jewish people is "the most beautiful of women" (הִיפָה בְּנָשִׁים).⁸³ The numerical value of this term is 502, which equals the total number of years lived by Abraham (175),⁸⁴ Isaac (180),⁸⁵ and Jacob (147).⁸⁶ Since the three patriarchs personified the three primary emotions of love, fear/awe, and mercy, respectively, this numerical equivalence implies that complete and true beauty results from the full blending of the emotions in fulfilling our Divine mission.⁸⁷

[18] Jacob loved Rachel: As we have seen,⁸⁸ Leah embodied the transcendent realm of thought, while Rachel embodied the realm of speech and deed. Jacob's primary focus in life was to bring Divinity into the most mundane elements of reality. He therefore loved Rachel more than he loved Leah, since his passion and desire was to bring the transcendent light of *keter* (the highest *sefirah*) into *malchut* (the lowest *sefirah*), through which Divinity would be apparent to all.

Yet Jacob united with both Rachel and Leah. Although his primary focus was on the world of deed, he was simultaneously steeped in the world of thought. His innate propensity, however, was toward deed, and therefore also toward Rachel.⁸⁹

14 Laban said to him, “If that be the case, I have no reason to welcome you into my home other than the fact that **you are truly my own flesh and blood**. You may stay with me for a month if you tend my flocks.” So Jacob **stayed with him for a month** and tended his flocks.

15 Laban then said to Jacob, “Just because you are my close relative, does it mean that you must work for me for free?! Tell me what your payment should be.”

16 Now Laban had two twin⁷³ **daughters**. The name of the older one, who had emerged from the womb first, **was Leah**, and the name of the younger one **was Rachel**. He also had two additional daughters, Bilhah and Zilpah, whom he had fathered by his concubine⁷⁴ and whom he kept as handmaids.

17 Ever since Leah and Rachel were born, people used to say, “Laban has two daughters and Isaac has two sons: the older daughter is destined for the older son and the younger daughter for the younger son.” **Leah**, thinking that she was destined to become one of Esau’s wives, cried constantly. Her **eyes were** therefore swollen and **tender**, while **Rachel’s face had beautiful features** and the luster of her complexion caused her to be **of beautiful appearance**.

Jacob’s Family

- ◆ *Third Reading* **18 Jacob loved Rachel**, and he said to Laban, “**I will work for you for seven years**—the maximum amount of time my mother stipulated that I can stay here⁷⁵—**for Rachel**. Now, do not try to deceive me by giving me some other girl named Rachel; I mean **your daughter**. Furthermore, do not try to deceive me by changing your daughter Leah’s name to Rachel; I mean your **younger daughter**.” Nevertheless, despite having taken these precautions against deception, Jacob knew that Laban would still try to deceive him, so he gave Rachel secret signs by which he would be able to distinguish her from her twin sister even in the dark.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

17 Leah cried constantly: Spiritually, this means that Leah personified the penitent, who cries over past imperfections and constantly strives for greater connection to God. She was therefore destined to marry the wicked Esau, since it was in her power to influence him to repent.⁷⁶

Rachel had beautiful features and was of beautiful

appearance: Spiritually, Rachel’s beauty indicates that she personified the perfectly-righteous individual, unblemished in the performance of the commandments.

True beauty is the harmonious blend of diverse elements. Similarly, only a relationship with God that transcends personal inclinations and involves all our emotions⁷⁷ can be termed “beautiful.”⁷⁸

— INNER DIMENSIONS —

[continued...] home—and unite them with God.

Similarly, whenever we feel distanced from God because of our misdeeds, we can arouse God’s mercy upon us by first awakening our own mercy on our Divine soul. We experience the resulting unity with God both as a kiss and as an embrace. We experi-

ence the “kiss” by articulating and contemplating the holy words of the Torah we study, uniting our speech and thought with God’s. We experience the “embrace” by performing the commandments, uniting our power of action with God’s.⁷⁹

73. *Seder Olam Rabbah* 2; cf. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 5, p. 263, note 9, sub-note ***. 74. Rashi on 31:50, below. 75. Above, 27:44. 76. See Rashi on 32:23 below. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 35, p. 152-153. See *Zohar* 1:259a. 77. See above, on v. 3. 78. *Sefer HaMa’amarim* 5716, p. 453-454. 79. *Tanya*, chapter 45. 80. *Torat Chaim*, vol. 1, 168c; *Sefer HaMa’amarim* 5627, p. 76, et al. 81. *Sefer HaMa’amarim Melukat*, vol. 1, p. 211. 82. Above, on v. 11. 83. Song of Songs 1:8, 5:9, 6:1. 84. Genesis 25:7. 85. *Ibid.* 35:28. 86. *Ibid.* 47:28. 87. *Sefer HaMa’amarim* 5627, pp. 189 ff; *Sefer HaMa’amarim* 5716, pp. 453-454. 88. Above on v. 16. 89. *Torah Or* 22d-23b.

— ONKELOS —

19 וַיֹּאמֶר לָבֵן טַב דָּאָתָן יְתָה: לָךְ מִדָּאָתָן יְתָה לְגַבְרָא אַחֲרֵן תִּיב עַמִּי: 20 וּפְלַח יַעֲקֹב בְּרַחֵל שְׁבַע שָׁנִין וְהָוּ בְּעִינוּהִי כִימִין וְעִירִין בְּדִרְחִים יְתָה: 21 וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב לָבֵן הֵב יְתָה אֶתְתִּי אֲרִי שְׁלִימוּ יוֹמֵי פְלַחְנִי וְאִיעוֹל לְיְתָה: 22 וּכְנֹשׁ לָבֵן יְתָה כָּל אֲנָשִׁי אֶתְרָא וְעֵבֶד מִשְׁתֵּיָא: 23 וְהָוּ בְּרַמְשָׁא וְדַבֵּר יְתָה לָאָה בְּרַתָּה וְאֵעִיל יְתָה לְיְתָה וְעַל לְיְתָה: 24 וְיִהְיֶה לָבֵן לָהּ יְתָה וְלָפָה אֲמַתָּה לְלָאָה בְּרַתָּה לְאֶמְהָו: 25 וְהָוּ בְּצִפְרָא וְהָא הִיא לָאָה וַאֲמַר לָבֵן מָא דָּא עֲבַדְתָּ לִּי הָלָא בְּרַחֵל פְּלַחִית עִמָּךְ וְלִמָּא שְׁקֵרָתָא בִּי: 26 וַיֹּאמֶר לָבֵן לָא מִתְּעַבֵּד בְּדִין בְּאֶתְרָנָא לְמַתָּן וְעִירְתָא קָדָם רַבְתָּא: 27 אֲשִׁלִּים שְׁבוּעָתָא דָּדָא וְנָתַן לָךְ אֶף יְתָה דָּא בְּפִלְחָנָא דִּי תַפְלַח עִמִּי עוֹד שְׁבַע שָׁנִין אַחֲרָנִין: 28 וְעֵבֶד יַעֲקֹב כֵּן וְאֲשִׁלִּים שְׁבוּעָתָא דָּדָא וְיִהְיֶה לָהּ יְתָה רַחֵל בְּרַתָּה לָהּ לְאֶמְתָּה:

19 וַיֹּאמֶר לָבֵן טוֹב תַּתִּי אֶתְהָ לָךְ מִתַּתִּי אֶתְהָ לְאִישׁ אַחֵר שְׁבָה עִמָּדִי: 20 וַיַּעֲבֹד יַעֲקֹב בְּרַחֵל שְׁבַע שָׁנִים וַיְהִי בְּעֵינָיו כִּימִים אַחֲדִים בְּאַהֲבָתוֹ אֶתְהָ: 21 וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל-לָבֵן הֲבֵה אֶת-אִשְׁתִּי כִּי מָלְאוּ יָמִי וְאֲבֹאָה אֵלֶיהָ: 22 וַיֹּאסֶף לָבֵן אֶת-כָּל-אֲנָשֵׁי הַמָּקוֹם וַיַּעַשׂ מִשְׁתָּה: 23 וַיְהִי בַּעֲרֵב וַיִּקַּח אֶת-לָאָה בָתוֹ וַיָּבֵא אֶתְהָ אֵלָיו וַיָּבֵא אֵלֶיהָ: 24 וַיִּתֵּן לָבֵן לָהּ אֶת-זִלְפָּה שִׁפְחָתוֹ לְלָאָה בָתוֹ שִׁפְחָה: 25 וַיְהִי בַּבֶּקֶר וַהֲנִיחָהּ הוּא לָאָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-לָבֵן מַה-זֹּאת עָשִׂיתָ לִּי הֲלֹא בְרַחֵל עֲבַדְתִּי עִמָּךְ וְלָמָּה רַמִּיתָנִי: 26 וַיֹּאמֶר לָבֵן לֹא-יַעֲשֶׂה כֵּן בַּמָּקוֹמָנוּ לָתֵת הַצִּעִירָה לְפָנֵי הַבְּכִירָה: 27 מָלְא שְׁבַע זֹאת וְנִתְּנָה לָךְ גַּם-אֶת-זֹאת בַּעֲבֹדָה אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲבֹד עִמָּדִי עוֹד שְׁבַע-שָׁנִים אַחֲרוֹת: 28 וַיַּעַשׂ יַעֲקֹב כֵּן וַיִּמָּלֵא שְׁבַע זֹאת וַיִּתֵּן-לוֹ אֶת-רַחֵל בָתוֹ לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה:

— RASHI —

נקוד בחטף³⁹, "שְׁבוּעַת שָׁל זֹאת", והן שְׁבַעֲת יְמֵי הַמִּשְׁתָּה. בְּגִמְרָא יְרוּשְׁלָמִית בְּמוֹעֵד קָטָן⁴⁰. וְאִי אֶפְשָׁר לומר שְׁבוּעַת מִמָּשׁ, שָׁאֵם כֵּן הָיָה צָרִיף לְנִקְדָּה בְּפִתְחָא⁴¹ הַשִּׁי"ן. וְעוֹד, שְׁבַעֲת לְשׁוֹן וְכָר, בְּדִכְתִּיב⁴²: "שְׁבַעֲת שְׁבַעֲת תִּסְפֹּר לָךְ". לְפִיכָךְ, אֵין מִשְׁמַע "שְׁבַעֲת" אֶלָּא שְׁבַעֲת. שִׁיטִּינ"א בְּלַעֲז⁴³: וְנִתְּנָה לָךְ. לְשׁוֹן רַבִּים, כְּמוֹ: "נִרְדָּה וְנִבְלָה"⁴⁴, "וְנִשְׁרָפָה"⁴⁵, אֶף זֶה לְשׁוֹן "וְנִתֵּן": גַּם אֵת זֹאת. מִיד לְאַחֵר שְׁבַעֲת יְמֵי הַמִּשְׁתָּה, וְתַעֲבֹד לְאַחֵר גִּשְׁוֹאִיָּה:

21 מָלְאוּ יָמֵי. שְׁאֲמַרָה לִי אֲמִי. וְעוֹד, "מָלְאוּ יָמֵי", שְׁהָרִי אֲנִי כֵּן שְׁמוֹנִים וְאַרְבַּע שָׁנָה, וְאִמָּתִי אֶעֱמִיד שָׁנִים עֶשֶׂר שְׁבָטִים וְהָוּ שְׁאֲמַר: "וְאֲבֹאָה אֵלֶיהָ", וְהֵלֵא קֵל שְׁבָקִלִים אֵינוֹ אוֹמֵר כֵּן? אֶלָּא לְהוֹלִיד תּוֹלְדוֹת אָמַר כֵּן: 25 וַיְהִי בַּבֶּקֶר וַהֲנִיחָהּ הוּא לָאָה. אֲבָל בְּלִילָה לֹא הִיָּתָה לָאָה, לְפִי שְׁמֵסֵר יַעֲקֹב לְרַחֵל סִימְנִים, וּכְשֶׁרָאָתָה רַחֵל שְׁמִכְנִסִּין לוֹ לָאָה, אָמַרָה: עֲכָשׁוּ תְּכַלֵּם אַחֲוִתִּי. עֲמָדָה וּמִסְרָה לָהּ אוֹתָן סִימְנִים: 27 מָלְא שְׁבַע זֹאת. דְּבוּק הוּא, שְׁהָרִי

39. בְּשִׁב"א. 40. פִּי"א הִי"ז. 41. בְּקָמֶץ. 42. דְּבָרִים טו, ט. 43. קְבוּצָה שֶׁל שְׁבַעֲת. 44. בְּרֵאשִׁית יא, ז. 45. שִׁם, ג.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

28 Voluntary observance of the Torah cannot override one's obligation to keep a promise: Nowadays, since observance of the Torah is obligatory, this principle is slightly transposed: Voluntary observance of pious stringencies cannot override one's obligation to fulfill

the Torah's explicit dictates in other areas. Thus, our otherwise-praiseworthy desire to better ourselves and reach higher levels of spiritual growth cannot serve as an excuse for not taking the time to reach out to those less knowledgeable of Judaism.⁹⁵

~ A CLOSER LOOK ~

[27] Complete the bridal-celebration week of this one, and then we will give you that one: The sages derive from this verse that one should not celebrate two joyous occasions simultaneously.⁹⁶ Although the

sages also state that one cannot deduce halachic rulings from incidents that occurred before the giving of the Torah,⁹⁷ this does not include incidents whose purpose is to teach us about human nature.⁹⁸

95. Likutei Sichot, vol. 5, pp. 145-148. 96. Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer 16; Y. Moed Katan 1:7. 97. Y. Moed Katan 3:5, cited in Tosafot, Moed Katan 20a, s.v. Mah Chag. 98. Likutei Sichot, vol. 1, pp. 65-66.

19 Laban replied, “Better that I give her to you than give her to another man. Stay with me.”

20 So Jacob worked seven years for Laban in order to marry Rachel, but in his eyes they seemed a mere few days because of his love for her.

21 At the end of these seven years, Jacob said to Laban, “Give me my intended wife—for, first of all, the maximum time my mother allowed me to remain here is up, and furthermore, my time to have children might soon be up, since I am already eighty-four years old—and let me cohabit with her.” Jacob demanded his wife because his intention was entirely innocent: to father children.⁹⁰

22 So Laban gathered together all the local people and made a wedding-feast.

23 When it was evening, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob. Rachel, realizing that her sister Leah was about to be placed in an embarrassing situation, disclosed to her the secret signs Jacob had given her. Thus, Jacob thought that Leah was Rachel and consummated the marriage with her.

24 Laban gave his visibly younger handmaid/daughter Zilpah to his older daughter Leah, to be her handmaid. He gave the younger handmaid to Leah in order to reinforce his deception of Jacob, since Jacob would naturally think that Laban would give the older handmaid to the older daughter and the younger to the younger.⁹¹

25 When morning came, behold, Jacob discerned that it was Leah he had married, so he said to Laban, “What have you done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I worked for you? Why did you deceive me?”

26 Laban replied, “I am not denying you Rachel. It is just that in our region, established practice forbids giving a younger daughter in marriage before the older; it is therefore something that is simply not done here. Therefore, in order to give you Rachel, I had to give you Leah first.

27 Complete the bridal-celebration week of this one, Leah, and then we will give you that one, Rachel, too, on the following day—in return for the work that you will do for me for another seven years.”

28 Jacob, like his father and grandfather before him, had voluntarily undertaken to observe all the Torah’s commandments. Even though the Torah explicitly prohibits one man from marrying two sisters,⁹² Jacob nonetheless assented to Laban’s proposal for two reasons: (a) voluntary observance of the Torah cannot override one’s obligation to keep a promise, and Jacob had promised Rachel that he would marry her—and she certainly would not have consented to release him from his promise, for that would have meant that she would probably have had to marry Esau;⁹³ (b) the Torah explicitly states that two sisters are prohibited to marry the same man because this will cause jealousy between them, but in this case, Rachel voluntarily disclosed her secret signs to Leah, demonstrating that she harbored no jealousy towards her for marrying Jacob.⁹⁴ Jacob therefore acquiesced to Laban’s proposal and completed the bridal-celebration week of the one, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife.

90. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 5, p. 118, note 41. 91. Below, 30:10; Rashi *ad loc.* 92. Leviticus 18:18. 93. Above, v. 17. 94. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 5, pp. 141-148.

ONKELOS

29 ויהב לבן לרחל ברתה ית בלהה אמתה לה לאמהו: 30 ועל אף לות רחל ורחים אף ית רחל מלאה ופלח עמה עוד שבע שנים אחרנין: 31 וחזא יי ארי שניאתא לאה ויהב לה עדני ורחל עקרא: 32 ועדיאת לאה וילידת בר וקרת שמה ראובן ארי אמרת ארי גלי קדם יי עלבונא ארי כען ירחמנני בעלי: 33 ועדיאת עוד וילידת בר ואמרת ארי שמיע קדם יי ארי שניאתא אגא ויהב לי אף ית דיין וקרת שמה שמעון: 34 ועדיאת עוד וילידת בר ואמרת הודא ומנא יתחבר לי בעלי ארי וילידת לה תלתא בנים על כן קרא שמה לוי:

29 ויתן לבן לרחל בתו את בלהה שפחתו לה לשפחה: 30 ויבא גם אל רחל ויאהב גם את רחל מלאה ויעבד עמו עוד שבע שנים אחרות: 31 וירא יהוה כי שנואה לאה ויפתח את רחמה ורחל עקרה: 32 ותהר לאה ותלד בן ותקרא שמו ראובן כי אמרה כי ראה יהוה בעיני כי עתה יאהבני אישי: 33 ותהר עוד ותלד בן ותאמר כי שמע יהוה כי שנואה אנכי ויתן לי גם את זה ותקרא שמו שמעון: 34 ותהר עוד ותלד בן ותאמר עתה הפעם ילוה אישי אלי כי ילדתי לו שלשה בנים על כן קרא שמו לוי:

RASHI

יוצאים מיעקב, וארבע נשים ישא. אמרה: מעתה אין לו פתחון פה עלי, שהרי נטלתי כל חלקי בבנים: על כן. כל מי שנאמר בו "על כן" מרבה באוכלוסין, חוץ מלוי, שהארון היה מכלה בהם: קרא שמו לוי. בכלם כתיב "ותקרא", וזה כתב בו "קרא", ויש מדרש אגדה באלה הדברים רבה⁴⁷, ששלח הקדוש ברוך הוא גבריאל והביאו לפניו וקרא לו שם זה, ונתן לו עשרים וארבע מתנות בהנה. ועל שם שלוחו במתנות, קראו לוי:

30 עוד שבע שנים אחרות. "אחרות" הקישן לראשונות, מה ראשונות באמונה, אף האחרונות באמונה, ואף על פי שברמאות בא עליו: 32 ותקרא שמו ראובן. רבותינו⁴⁸ פרשו: אמרה: ראו מה בין בני לבן חמי, שמכר הבכורה ליעקב, וזה לא מכרה ליוסף, ולא ערער עליו, ולא עוד שלא ערער עליו, אלא שבקש להוציאו מן הבור: 34 הפעם ילוה אישי. לפי שהאמהות נביאות הוי, ויודעות ששנים עשר שבטים

46. ברכות ז, ב. 47. אינו ב"דברים רבה" שלפנינו.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

32 She named him: The patriarchs were either named (or renamed) by God or by their fathers, while the sons of Jacob (except for Benjamin) were named by their mothers. This distinction arises from the difference between the patriarchs' relationship to the Jewish people as a whole and the progenitors of the tribes' relationship to the Jewish people as a whole.

Since all Jews are descended from the patriarchs, we are all required to internalize their paths of relating to God and fulfilling His mission. Conversely, since only the members of a specific tribe are descended from that tribe's progenitor, only they are expected to internalize that aspect of Divine living embodied in the life of their tribe's progenitor.

Although the father of a child contributes the child's seminal essence, it is within the mother that this essence develops into a full-fledged human being with

his or her own personality and individuality. It is therefore fitting that in the case of the progenitors of the tribes, each of whom embodied a distinct, specific way of relating to Divinity and Divine life, the mothers were the ones to name them.¹⁰⁷

Although the names of the tribes seem to mainly describe the relationship between Jacob and his wives, it is obvious that these names, given prophetically by the matriarchs, also express their children's essences.¹⁰⁸

God has seen my humiliation...now my husband will love me: Allegorically, Leah's words in this verse are also the words spoken by the exiled Jewish people to their "husband," God. Even though we, "the wife," are at the moment spiritually and physically humiliated and afflicted, we do not deny our "spouse"—God—and we remain devoted to Him. Seeing this, God is filled with love for us.¹⁰⁹

INNER DIMENSIONS

[32] Leah conceived: As stated above, Leah personified the *sefirah* of *binah*. *Binah*, understanding, "gives birth" to the seven emotions. Leah therefore gave birth to seven children: six sons, corresponding to

the six "male" *sefirot* of *chesed*, *gevurah*, *tiferet*, *netzach*, *hod*, and *yesod*; and one daughter, corresponding to the "feminine" *sefirah* of *malchut*.¹¹⁰

29 Laban gave his older handmaid/daughter Bilhah to his younger daughter Rachel, to be her handmaid.

30 Jacob thus also married Rachel, and although he loved Leah, he loved Rachel even more than he loved Leah. He then worked for Laban for another seven years. He worked for Laban as faithfully during the second set of seven years as he had done during the first set of seven years, despite the fact that Laban had deceived him.

31 God saw that Jacob loved Rachel so much that **Leah felt hated** by her husband in comparison. God therefore compensated Leah, who, like her identical twin Rachel, was barren by nature, and miraculously⁹⁹ **opened her womb**, i.e., blessed her with the ability to reproduce, **while Rachel remained barren.**

32 Leah conceived and gave birth to a son. Leah knew that Abraham's and Isaac's firstborn sons, Ishmael and Esau, had turned out wicked; she was therefore understandably apprehensive that this might prove to be a family pattern and that Jacob's firstborn son might also turn out wicked. But she foresaw prophetically¹⁰⁰ that not only would her newborn son be righteous: he would even be of extraordinarily righteous behavior. **She therefore named him Reuben**, saying, "See [*re'u*] the difference between [*bein*] my firstborn and my father-in-law Isaac's firstborn, Esau! Esau did not value the fact that he was the firstborn: he willingly sold his birthright to Jacob. Reuben, however, *will* value his birthright. Nonetheless, he will not complain when he will prophetically see that God will at one point transfer his birthright to his younger brother, Joseph,¹⁰¹ even though he will not receive any compensation. In fact, he will even try to save Joseph when his life is threatened."¹⁰² **"Therefore," she said, "God has seen [*ra'ah*] my humiliation, for now,** in the merit of my son's exceptional qualities, **my husband will love me** as much as he loves my sister."¹⁰³ A twin sister was born along with Reuben.¹⁰⁴

33 She again conceived and gave birth to a son—"because," she said, "God heard [*shama*] that I felt hated, so He gave me this one as well," and she named him Simeon [*Shimon*]. Two sisters were born along with Simeon.¹⁰⁵

34 Again she conceived and gave birth to a son, and she said, "This time my husband will become attached [*yilaveh*] to me, for I have borne him three sons and thereby fulfilled my procreative obligations to him." Leah foresaw that Jacob would marry four women and eventually father twelve sons, so when she bore her third son, she assumed that she had fulfilled her equal share of this destiny. This third son was destined to be the progenitor of the priestly class of the Jewish people, so when he was born, God sent the angel Gabriel to bring him before Him, and He conferred upon him all the rights of the priesthood. God **therefore named him Levi**, both because he was accompanied [another meaning of *yilaveh*] by gifts when Gabriel returned him, and because of Leah's pronouncement that Jacob would now become attached to her. A twin sister was born along with Levi.¹⁰⁶

99. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 5, p. 263, note 9, sub-note ***. 100. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 10, p. 94, note 16. 101. Below, 48:3-5. 102. Below, 37:18-23. 103. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 10, pp. 92-96. 104. Rashi on 35:17 and 37:35, below. 105. Rashi on 35:17 and 37:35, below; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 5, p. 262, note 9. 106. Rashi on 35:17 and 37:35, below. 107. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 10, pp. 96 ff. 108. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 10, p. 98. See also *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 30, p. 134. 109. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 22, p. 196. 110. *Hitva'aduyot* 5746, vol. 1, p. 641, citing *Sefer HaMa'amrim* 5568, vol. 1, p. 110 and *Or HaTorah, Bereishit*, vol. 2, 250a.

— ONKELOS —

35 ועדיאת עוד וילידת בר ואמרת
היא זמנא אודי קדם יי על כן
קרת שמה יהודה וקמת מלמלד:
30 וחות רחל ארי לא ילדת
ליעקב וקניאת רחל באחתה
ואמרת ליעקב הב לי בנין ואם לא
מיתא אנא: 2 ותקוף רגזא דיעקב
ברחל ואמר המני את בעיני הלא
מן קדם יי תבעין די מנע מניך
ולדא דמעין:

35 וְתָהָר עוֹד וְתֵלֵד בֵּן וְתֹאמַר הַפַּעַם אוֹדָה אֶת־יְהוָה
עַל־כֵּן קָרָאתָ שְׁמוֹ יְהוּדָה וְתַעֲמֹד מִלִּדְתָּ: 1 וְתֹרָא
רַחֵל כִּי לֹא יֵלְדָה לְיַעֲקֹב וְתִקְנֶאתָ רַחֵל בְּאַחֲתָהּ וְתֹאמַר
אֶל־יַעֲקֹב הִבְהִילִי בָנִים וְאִם־אֵין מִתָּה אָנֹכִי: 2 וַיִּתְּר־
אָף יַעֲקֹב בְּרַחֵל וַיֹּאמֶר הִתַּחַת אֱלֹהִים אָנֹכִי אֲשֶׁר־מָנַע
מִמֶּךָ פְּרִי־בֶטֶן:

— RASHI —

מִתָּה אָנֹכִי. מִכָּאן לְמִי שָׁאִין לוֹ בָּנִים שְׁחָשׁוּב כִּמְתָּ:
2 הִתַּחַת. וְכִי בְּמִקְוֹמוֹ אָנִי: אֲשֶׁר מָנַע מִמֶּךָ. אֶת אוֹמֶרֶת
שָׁאֲעָשָׂה כְּאָבָא, אָנִי אֵינִי כְּאָבָא, אָבָא לֹא הָיָה לוֹ בָּנִים,
אָנִי יֵשׁ לִי בָּנִים. "מִמֶּךָ מָנַע" וְלֹא מִמֶּנִּי:

35 הַפַּעַם אוֹדָה. שְׁנִטְלִיתִי יוֹתֵר מִחֻלְקִי, מַעֲתָה יֵשׁ
לִי לְהוֹדוֹת: 1 וְתִקְנֶאתָ רַחֵל בְּאַחֲתָהּ. קִנְיָה בְּמַעֲשִׂיהָ
הַטּוֹבִים, אֲמָרָה: אֵלּוּלִי שֶׁצָּדֵקָה מִמֶּנִּי, לֹא זָכָתָה לְבָנִים:
הִבָּה לִי. וְכִי כָּךְ עָשָׂה אֲבִירָא לְאִמָּךְ, וְהֵלֵךְ הִתְפַּלֵּל עָלֶיהָ:

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

Judah," since all Jews, by virtue of their souls, possess a natural, selfless devotion to God that transcends and supersedes their intellectual and emotional consciousness. And it is this quality that describes the essence of the Jewish soul.

This mode of relating to God is reflected in the *Amidah*, in which we stand humbly before God, communing with Him from our deepest essence.

The order in which these four brothers were born thus reflects the sequence in which our relationship with God develops, particularly on a daily basis in the morning liturgy: We first recite psalms and passages that remind us of Divine providence, enabling us to "see" God and thereby come to love him (Reuben). We profess this love in the first section of the *Shema*. But we then realize that God is much greater than whatever we see of Him in Divine providence, which inspires us to fear Him and be in awe of Him (Simeon), as we are reminded in the second section of the *Shema*. Aware of His awesome transcendence, we resolve to forsake the ephemeral illusions of this world and cling to Him (Levi) by studying His Torah and observing His commandments, as we affirm in the prayer following the *Shema* (which begins with the words "True and certain"). But studying the Torah reminds us that His essence is beyond any perception of Him than can possibly be grasped by our finite minds. We acknowledge (Judah) this awareness in the silent prayer, in which we stand before God Himself as humble servants standing before their master.¹¹⁶

35 She again conceived: Even after Leah had already been blessed with a few children, she still considered each subsequent child an additional blessing. This con-

trasts sharply with the attitude of those who advocate having small families. Some people erroneously think that if they have only a few children, they will be able to devote more attention and provide more material benefits to each one. Others think that they are somehow taxing God's abilities by forcing Him to sustain additional people. The story of Leah is one of the numerous places in the Torah that emphasize the beauty and blessing inherent in the birth of each additional child.¹¹⁷

She then ceased bearing children: The Hebrew names for all the songs of praise in the Bible appear in the feminine gender (*shirah*), with the exception of the last song, composed to be sung at the final Redemption, which is referred to in the masculine (*shir*). Our sages tell us that this alludes to the fact that just as women endure the pain of childbirth, so too are the songs we sung throughout history—and still sing today—tinged with the pain of exile. Only after the final Redemption will pain never visit us again, just as males do not suffer the pain of childbirth.¹¹⁸

That Leah ceased bearing children after Judah was born portends that Judah's descendant, the Messiah, will usher in an age in which pain and suffering will be no more.¹¹⁹

1 Rachel was jealous of her sister's good deeds: Petty jealousy, born of the egocentric fear that the other person's successes will somehow diminish our self-worth, is destructive and reprehensible. In contrast, the sort of jealousy Rachel felt toward Leah is constructive, since it spurs us on to improve our deeds. Our sages similarly state that "jealousy among [Torah] scholars increases wisdom."¹²⁰

116. *Sefer HaMa'amarim Melukat*, vol. 1, pp. 299-301; *Torah Or* 45a-45c; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 6, p. 121; *Hitva'aduyot* 5748, vol. 3, p. 526.

117. *Sichot Kodesh* 5740, vol. 3, p. 282. See above on 9:1. 118. See *Mechilta* on Exodus 15:1; *Tosafot* on *Pesachim* 116b, s.v. *Venomar*.

119. *Sefer HaSichot* 5752, vol. 1, p. 264 note 66. 120. *Bava Batra* 21a. *Hitva'aduyot* 5745, vol. 2, p. 870, citing *Or HaTorah*, *Bereishit*, vol. 1, 218a ff.

35 She again conceived and gave birth to a son and a twin daughter.¹¹¹ She said, "This time I will thank [odeh] God," for He has allowed me to give birth to more than my natural share of the total number of my husband's sons, and she therefore named him Judah [Yehudah]. She then ceased bearing children.

30:1 Rachel saw that she had not borne any children to Jacob; Rachel was therefore jealous of her sister's good deeds. Since the two sisters were otherwise identical in all aspects, Rachel concluded that it was in the merit of Leah's good deeds that she was blessed with children.¹¹² **She said to Jacob, "Is this how your father behaved when your mother was barren? Didn't he pray for her to conceive? Give me children, for if not, I will have no perpetuity and it will be as if I am dead."**

2 Jacob became angry with Rachel and said, "How can you compare me to my father? He felt justified in praying to God because he was childless. I, however, have children. He has denied *you* children, not me! Can I take the place of God, who has denied you the fruit of your womb?"

∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

32-35 Reuben...Simeon...Levi...Judah: In naming Reuben, Leah said, "God has seen my humiliation, for now my husband will love me." The words "seen" and "love" allude to the nature of Reuben's relationship with God. Reuben personified the relationship with God that results from "seeing" Godliness, which then inspires us to love Him.

"Seeing" Godliness means attaining a perception of it that is comparable to empirical apprehension. When we see something with our physical eyes, we are certain of its existence much more so than if we had only heard about it. A judge is therefore not allowed to rule on an incident that he himself witnessed, since his objectivity is thereby compromised; in contrast, when he only hears about the incident from witnesses, although he might believe them completely, his objectivity has nevertheless not been compromised.¹¹³

Similarly, we "see" Godliness when we become so aware of God's involvement in life that we are certain of His existence. This happens when we reflect upon Divine providence and see God's hand empirically—either in history, current events, or our personal lives. "Seeing" Godliness in this manner, as opposed to merely hearing about it philosophically, causes us to feel close to Him and love Him.

We focus on seeing Godliness while reciting the preliminary psalms and readings of our daily morning prayers (*Pesukei d'Zimra*), which are meant to impress upon us the magnitude of God's greatness. We are then prepared to avow our love for God when we recite the first paragraph of the *Shema*, in which we say, "And you shall love God..."¹¹⁴

In naming Simeon, Leah said, "God heard." Simeon

personified the relationship with God that results from intellectually or philosophically hearing about Godliness.

Even if we believe that which we hear and understand it completely, we are not affected as viscerally as we are by what we see. Similarly, when we hear about God, we may be intellectually convinced of His existence but, nevertheless, we have not actually experienced it.

On the other hand, the intellectual distance of hearing affords us the objectivity that seeing precludes. Instead of feeling subjectively close to God, we become overwhelmed by His transcendence and our smallness in comparison to Him. We then relate to God primarily with awe and reverence. The mode of relating to God personified by Simeon is reflected in the second paragraph of the *Shema*, in which we say, "If you will listen..."¹¹⁵

In naming Levi, Leah said, "my husband will become attached to me." Levi personified the relationship with God that results from attaching ourselves to Him by separating ourselves from the vanities of the world and immersing ourselves in His wisdom by studying the Torah. This mode of relating to God corresponds to the prayer following the *Shema*, which begins "True and certain..." and refers to the Torah.

In naming Judah, Leah said, "I will thank [or 'acknowledge'] God." Acknowledgment implies humility, a recognition and awareness of God that causes us to transcend our own limited perspectives. Judah personified the selflessness of the soul and its unconditional surrender to God. This is why all Jews, regardless of the tribe from which they originate, are called "Jews" (*yehudim*), meaning "descendants of the tribe of

¹¹¹. Rashi on 35:17 and 37:35, below. ¹¹². *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 5, p. 263, note 9, sub-note ***. ¹¹³. *Rosh HaShanah* 26b. ¹¹⁴. Deuteronomy 6:5. ¹¹⁵. *Ibid.* 11:13.

— ONKELOS —

3 ואמרתָּ הָא אִמְתִּי בְלָהָה עוֹלָם
לְוִתָּהּ וְתִלְדִּי וְאֵנָּה אֶרְבִּי וְאֶתְבְּנִי
אִף אֵנָּה מִנָּה: 4 וַיְהִיכֵת לָהּ יֵת
בְּלָהָה אִמְתָּהּ לֵאמֹנָה וְעַל לְוִתָּהּ
יַעֲקֹב: 5 וְעַדִּיאַת בְּלָהָה וַיִּלְדִּית
לְיַעֲקֹב בֶּרֶ: 6 וְאִמְרַת רַחֵל דְּנִנִּי יֵי
וְאִף קִבֵּל צְלוֹתִי וַיְהִי לִי בֶר עַל
כֵּן קִרַּת שְׁמָה דֵּן: 7 וְעַדִּיאַת עוֹד
וַיִּלְדִּית בְּלָהָה אִמְתָּהּ דְּרַחֵל בֶּר
תִּנְנִי לְיַעֲקֹב: 8 וְאִמְרַת רַחֵל קִבֵּל
יֵי בְעוֹתִי בְּאִתְחַנְנוּתִי בְּצְלוֹתִי
חֲמִידִית דִּיהִי לִי וְלִד בְּאִתְחַתִּי אִף
אֶתְיָהִיב לִי וְקִרַּת שְׁמָה נְפִתְלִי:
9 וְחֻזַּת לָאָה אֶרִי קִמַּת מִלְמִילָד
וְדִבְרַת יֵת זִלְפָּה אִמְתָּהּ וַיְהִיכֵת
יֵתָה לְיַעֲקֹב לֵאמֹנָה: 10 וַיִּלְדִּית
זִלְפָּה אִמְתָּהּ דְּלָאָה לְיַעֲקֹב בֶּר:

3 וְתֵאמֶר הִנֵּה אִמְתִּי בְלָהָה בָּא אֵלַיָּה וְתִלְדִּי עַל-בְּרָכִי
וְאִבְנָה גַם-אֲנֹכִי מִמֶּנָּה: 4 וְתִתֵּן-לּוֹ אֶת-בְּלָהָה שְׂפָחָתָהּ
לְאִשָּׁה וַיָּבֵא אֵלַיָּה יַעֲקֹב: 5 וַתֵּהֶר בְּלָהָה וְתִלְדִּי לְיַעֲקֹב
בֶּן: 6 וְתֵאמֶר רַחֵל דְּנִנִּי אֱלֹהִים וְגַם שָׁמַע בְּקֻלִּי וַיִּתֵּן
לִי בֶן עַל-כֵּן קִרְאָה שְׁמוֹ דֵּן: 7 וַתֵּהֶר עוֹד וְתִלְדִּי בְלָהָה
שְׂפָחַת רַחֵל בֶּן שְׁנֵי לְיַעֲקֹב: 8 וְתֵאמֶר רַחֵל נְפִתְלִי
אֱלֹהִים | נְפִתְלִי עַם-אֲחֵתִי גַם-יְכַלְתִּי וְתִקְרָא שְׁמוֹ
נְפִתְלִי: 9 וְתִרְאָ לָאָה כִּי עָמְדָה מְלֹדֶת וְתִקַּח אֶת-זִלְפָּה
שְׂפָחָתָהּ וְתִתֵּן אֶתָּה לְיַעֲקֹב לְאִשָּׁה: 10 וְתִלְדִּי זִלְפָּה
שְׂפָחַת לָאָה לְיַעֲקֹב בֶּן:

— RASHI —

הסכים על ידי. ואנקלוס תרגמו לשון תפלה, כמו:
נפתולי אלהים נתפללתי — בקשות החביבות לפניו,
נתקבלתי ונעתייתי באחותי: **נפתולי**. נתקבלה תפילתי.
ומדרש אגדה יש רבים בלשון נוטריקון: 10 **ותלד**
זלפה. בכלל נאמר הריון חוץ מזלפה, לפי שהיתה
בחורה מכלל ותינתק בשנים, ואין הריון נכר בה. וכדי
לרמות ליעקב נתנה לכן ללאה, שלא יבין שמקניסין
לו את לאה, שכן מנהגם לתן שפחה הגדולה לגדולה
וקטנה לקטנה:

3 **על ברכי**. כתרגומו: "ואנא ארבי": **ואבנה גם אנכי**.
מהו "גם"? אמרה לו: וקנה אברהם היו לו בנים מהגר,
וחגר מתניו כנגד שרה. אמר לה: וקנתי הכניסה צרתה
לבייתה. אמרה לו: אם הדבר הזה מעכב, "הנה אמתתי":
ואבנה גם אנכי ממנה. כשרה: 6 **דנני אלהים**. דנני
וחיבני וזכני: 8 **נפתולי אלהים**. מנחם בן סרוק פשו
במחברת "צמיד פתיל"⁴⁸ — חבורים מאת המקום
נתחברתי עם אחותי לזכות לבנים. ואני מפרשו לשון
"עקש ופתלתל"⁴⁹ — נתעקשתי והפצתי פצירות
ונפתולים הרבה למקום, להיות שזה לאחותי: **גם יכלתי**.

48. במדבר יט, טו. 49. דברים לב, ה.

INNER DIMENSIONS

[continued...] acronym appear before those of their respective mistresses. This reflects the unique significance of Jacob's marriages to the handmaids. If we are meant, both collectively as a people and as individuals, to consider ourselves God's "wives," then a handmaid represents an inferior level of relationship to God, a lower level of Divine consciousness. This is why Abraham and Jacob did not initially want to marry their handmaids: they did not want to descend to a lower level of Divine consciousness. The matriarchs, in contrast, recognized the need for their husbands' descent, since only thus could they elevate this lower level, as well. The matriarchs

therefore encouraged their husbands to marry their handmaids. This is why the names of the handmaids appear before those of the matriarchs.

In Kabbalistic terms, the matriarchs personified *malchut* of *Atzilut* as it exists in its native milieu, the world of *Atzilut*. The handmaids, on the other hand, personified *malchut* of *Atzilut* as it descends into the lower worlds. Precisely because the handmaids were able to descend into the lower worlds and elevate the powerful sparks of Divinity embedded there, they were able, through their association with Jacob, to reconstruct *malchut* itself, as personified by the matriarchs, enabling them to conceive.¹³¹

131. *Sefer HaSichot* 5752, vol. 1, p. 234.

3 So she said, “Learn, then, from your grandfather Abraham’s example. Although he had children with Hagar, he nevertheless still prayed to have children with Sarah.” Jacob replied, “Yes, but he did so only after Sarah demonstrated to God that she was so desperate for children that she was willing to let Abraham marry her handmaid in the hopes that, in this merit, would she also conceive.” Rachel responded, “If that is the only obstacle, then **here is my bondwoman Bilhah. Cohabit with her and let her bear you a child,** and I will raise her children **on my own lap,** i.e., as if they were my own, **and thus, through** the merit of sharing you with her, **I, too, will** bear children of my own and thereby **be built up** into a matriarch whose essence will be perpetuated, just like Sarah.”¹²¹

4 She gave him her handmaid Bilhah as a wife, and Jacob cohabited with her.

5 Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son and a twin daughter.¹²²

6 Rachel then said, “God has judged me [danani] and found me unworthy; therefore He made me barren. Now He has judged me again, this time favorably, and has also heard my prayer, and therefore He has given me a son.” She therefore named him Dan.

7 Rachel’s handmaid Bilhah once again conceived and bore Jacob a second son and twin daughter.¹²³

8 Rachel said, “I have persistently pleaded [niftalti] with God to be on par with my sister, and I have prevailed,” so she named him Naphtali.

9 When Leah realized that she had ceased bearing children, and saw that Rachel had given her handmaid to Jacob as a wife, **she also took her handmaid Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife.** Although Bilhah and Zilpah were sisters, they did not have the legal status of sisters, since, as the daughters of Laban’s concubine,¹²⁴ they were considered his property, devoid of any familial status. Jacob therefore did not violate the Torah’s prohibition of marrying two sisters by marrying them.¹²⁵

10 Zilpah, Leah’s handmaid/sister, bore Jacob a son and a twin daughter.¹²⁶ Zilpah was the youngest of Jacob’s four wives; since she had not yet begun menstruating, she did not experience any interrupted menses as a sign of pregnancy. Thus, there was no indication—neither to herself nor to others—that she had conceived until her abdomen began to swell in the final months of her pregnancy.¹²⁷

✧ INNER DIMENSIONS ✧

[4-9] Her handmaid Bilhah...her handmaid Zilpah: According to Rabbi Yitzchak Luria (the *Arizal*), the four primordial elements (fire, water, air, and earth) are derived from the four letters of God’s Name *Havayah*; specifically, the element of earth is derived from the final *hei*, which is associated with the *sefirah* of *malchut*.¹²⁸ In this context, he states that the verse “Iron is taken from the earth”¹²⁹ indicates

that iron is derived from *malchut*, which is the principle of femininity. Inasmuch as Jacob’s four wives are all manifestations of *malchut*, he notes further that the word for “iron” (ברזל) can also be seen as an acronym for Jacob’s four wives, Bilhah (בלהה), Rachel (רחל), Zilpah (זלפה), and Leah (לאה).¹³⁰

Surprisingly, the names of the handmaids in this

121. See above, 16:2. 122. Rashi on 35:17 and 37:35, below. 123. Rashi on 35:17 and 37:35, below. 124. Above, 29:16. 125. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 5, p. 236-8. 126. Rashi on 35:17 and 37:35, below. 127. Rashi; *Yefeh Toar* on *Bereishit Rabba* 71:9. 128. *Sefer HaLikutim* (*Arizal*) on Job 28. 129. Job 28:2. 130. *Sefer HaLikutim* (*Arizal*) on Genesis 49:11 and on Job 28.

ONKELOS

11 ואמרת לאה אתא גך וקרת
ית שמה גך: 12 וילדת זלפה
אמתא דלאה בר תנין ליעקב:
13 ואמרת לאה תושבחה הוה
לי ארי בכך ושכנני נשיא וקרת
ית שמה אשר: 14 ואזל ראובן
ביומי חצר חטין ואשבח יברוחין
בחקלא ואיתי יתהון ללאה אמה
ואמרת רחל ללאה הכי כען לי
מברוחי דברך: 15 ואמרת לה
העיר דדברת ית בעלי ולמשב אף
ית יברוחי דברי ואמרת רחל בכך
ישכוב עמך בליליא חלף יברוחי
דברך: 16 ועל יעקב מן חקלא
ברמשא ונפקת לאה לקדמותה
ואמרת לותי תיעול ארי מיגר
אגרתך בברוחי דברי ושכיב עמה
בליליא הוא: 17 וקבל ית צלותה
דלאה ועדיאת וילידת ליעקב בר
חמישי: 18 ואמרת לאה יהב ית
אגרי די יהבית אמת לבעלי וקרת
שמה יששכר: 19 ועדיאת עוד
לאה וילידת בר שתיתי ליעקב:

11 ותאמר לאה בגד {בא גך} ותקרא את־שמו גך:
12 ותלד זלפה שפחת לאה בן שני ליעקב: 13 ותאמר
לאה באשרי כי אשרוני בנות ותקרא את־שמו אשר:
14 וילד ראובן בימי קציר־חטים ומצא דודאים
בשדה ויבא אתם אל־לאה אמו ותאמר רחל אל־לאה
תנינא לי מודאי בגך: 15 ותאמר לה המעט קחתך
את־איתי ולקחת גם את־דודאי בני ותאמר רחל לכן
ישכב עמך הלילה תחת דודאי בגך: 16 ויבא יעקב מן
השדה בערב ויצא לאה לקראתו ותאמר אלי תבוא
בי שכר שכרתך בודאי בני וישכב עמה בלילה
הוא: 17 וישמע אלהים אל־לאה ותהר ותלד ליעקב בן
חמישי: 18 ותאמר לאה נתן אלהים שכרי אשר־נתתי
שפחתי לאישי ותקרא שמו יששכר: 19 ותהר עוד
לאה ותלד בן־שני ליעקב:

RASHI

בני ותרגומו: "ולמיסב": לכן ישכב עמך הלילה. שלי
היתה שכיבת לילה זו, ואני נותנה לך תחת דודאי
בגך. ולפי שזולתה במשכב הצדיק, לא זכתה להקבר
עמו: 16 שכר שכרתך. נתתי לרחל שכרה: בלילה
הוא. הקדוש ברוך הוא סיעו, שיצא משם וישכר:
17 וישמע אלהים אל לאה. שהיתה מתאנה ומחזרת
להרבות שבטים: 20 זבד טוב. בתרגומו: יזבלני. לשון
"בית זבל"⁵⁴, הירביריירא"ה בלעז⁵⁵ — בית מדור.
מעתה לא תהא עקר דירתו אלא עמי, שיש לי בנים
בגך כל נשיו:

11 בא גך. בא מול טוב, כמו⁵⁰: גך גדי וסנוק לא.
ודומה לו⁵¹: "הערכים לגד שלחן". ומדרש אגדה⁵²
שנולד מהול, כמו⁵³: "גדו אילנא". ולא ידעתי על
מה נכתבה תבה אחת. דבר אחר: למה נקראת תבה
אחת? "בגך" כמו "בגדת ב" בשבאת אל שפחתי,
כאיש שבגד באשת נעורים: 14 בימי קציר חטים.
להגיד שבחן של שבטים, שעת הקציר היה ולא פשט
ידו בגזל להביא חטים ושעורים, אלא דבר ההפקר
שאין אדם מקפיד בו: דודאים. סיגלי, עשב הוא.
ובלשון ישמעאל "יסמין": 15 ולקחת גם את דודאי
בני. בתמיה — ולעשות עוד זאת לקח גם את דודאי

50. שבת ס, ב. 51. ישעיה סה, יא. 52. סימן יא. 53. דניאל ד, כ. 54. מלכים ח, יג. 55. אירוח, לינה.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

as children, unable to fully comprehend the precepts
of the Torah, they knew to mimic the behavior of their

father, who was scrupulously honest in all his deal-
ings.¹³⁷

INNER DIMENSIONS

[18] **Issachar:** The name Issachar in Hebrew is
spelled with two letter *sin's* (יששכר). However, the
second *sin* is not pronounced.¹³⁸

Issachar excelled in, and therefore personified, the
study of the Torah,¹³⁹ which comprises two dimen-

sions: exoteric and esoteric. These two dimensions
are alluded to by the repetition of the letter *sin* in
Issachar's name. The second *sin* alludes to the eso-
teric dimension of Torah and therefore is not pro-
nounced.¹⁴⁰

137. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 3, p. 793. 138. See *Torah Shleimah* on this verse for a collection of the various opinions as to how the name "Yisachar" should be pronounced. 139. See below, 49:14. 140. *Hitva'aduyot* 5712, vol. 1, p. 156, quoting Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson.

11 When Zilpah gave birth, **Leah said, “Good fortune [gad] has come,” so she named the newborn Gad.** “Still,” she said to Jacob, “you betrayed me [*bagad*] when you agreed to be intimate with my handmaid, for since I already had borne you children, you did not have to consent to my offer.” Although Leah herself had given her handmaid to Jacob, she felt that he should have refused. Additionally, formal permission does not necessarily imply sincere acquiescence.¹³²

Gad was born circumcised.

12 **Leah’s handmaid Zilpah** once again conceived, and (as during her first pregnancy) did not experience any physiological indication of pregnancy until her abdomen began to swell. When she **bore a second son** and twin daughter¹³³ **to Jacob, Leah said,**

13 “Now that I have borne yet another son through my handmaid, **I will be praised, for young women will praise [*ishru*] me on this account,” so she named him Asher.**

◆ *Fourth Reading* 14 **Reuben was taking a walk during the season of the wheat harvest and found some mandrakes in the field.** Even though it was the harvest season, when cut grain is lying in the fields and readily available for the taking, Reuben did not take any, for it did not belong to him. Rather, he took mandrakes, which were ownerless growing wild. Mandrakes can be made into a potion for female fertility; knowing that she wanted to have more children,¹³⁴ **he brought them to his mother Leah. Rachel, having witnessed this, said to Leah, “Please give me some of your son’s mandrakes, for she also wanted to have children.”**

15 **She answered her, “Is it not bad enough that you have taken away my husband? Do you have to also take away my son’s mandrakes?” Rachel replied, “Tonight it is my turn to cohabit with Jacob, but since I would rather have those mandrakes, therefore I propose that Jacob sleep with you tonight, in exchange for your son’s mandrakes.”**

16 **When Jacob returned from the field in the evening, Leah went out to greet him before he went to Rachel’s tent and said, “You are to come to me this evening, for I have hired you from Rachel with my son’s mandrakes.” He cohabited with her that night.**

17 **God listened to Leah, i.e.,** He took note of her efforts to bear Jacob as many sons as possible, **and restored her fertility. She conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son together with a twin daughter.**¹³⁵

18 **Leah said, “God has granted me my reward [*sachar*] for having given my handmaid to my husband,” so she named him Issachar.**

19 **Leah once again conceived and bore Jacob a sixth son, together with a twin daughter.**¹³⁶

∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

14 **Reuben did not take any, for it did not belong to him:** Although Reuben was a mere child, no more than five years old at the time, he possessed the moral maturity of an adult. This demonstrates the quality of

training that the tribes received in the house of their father Jacob. Although everyone around them freely took from the wheat and barley of others, the children of Jacob knew that they must behave differently. Even

132. See commentaries to *Shulchan Aruch, Even HaEzer* 76:5. *Igrot Kodesh*, vol. 15, p. 67. 133. Rashi on 35:17 and 37:35, below. 134. *Zohar* 1:134b. 135. Rashi on 35:17 and 37:35, below. 136. Rashi on 35:17 and 37:35, below.

ONKELOS

20 וְאִמְרַת לֵאמֹר יְהִי יְיָ יִתְּנָה לִי חֶלֶק טֹב הַדָּא זְמָנָא יְהִי מְדוּרָה דְּבַעְלִי לְוִיתִי אֲרִי יְלִידִית לֵא שְׂתָא בְּנִין וְקָרַת יֵת שְׂמָה זְבוּלוֹן: 21 וּבִתָּר בֶּן יְלִידַת בְּרִתָּא וְקָרַת יֵת שְׂמָה דִּינָה: 22 וְעַל דְּכָרְנָא דְּרַחֵל קָדָם יְיָ וְקָבַל צְלוּתָהּ יְיָ וְיִהְיֶה לָּהּ עַדוּי: 23 וְעַדִּיאַת וְיִלְדִית בֶּרֶךְ וְאִמְרַת כְּנֵשׁ יְיָ יֵת חֲסוּדִי: 24 וְקָרַת יֵת שְׂמָה יוֹסֵף לְמִימְרֵי יוֹסֵף יְיָ לִי בֶרֶךְ אֲחֵר:

20 וְתֹאמַר לֵאמֹר זְבוּלִי אֱלֹהִים | אֶתִּי זְבוּלִי טוֹב הַפַּעַם יִזְבְּלֵנִי אִישִׁי כִּי־יִלְדֵתִי לוֹ שֵׁשָׁה בָנִים וְתִקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ זְבוּלוֹן: 21 וְאַחֵר יִלְדָה בֵּת וְתִקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמָהּ דִּינָה: 22 וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת־רַחֵל וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים וַיִּפְתַּח אֶת־רַחֲמָהּ: 23 וַתַּהַר וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן וַתֹּאמֶר אֶסְף אֱלֹהִים אֶת־חֲרָפְתִּי: 24 וְתִקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ יוֹסֵף לְאֹמֶר יוֹסֵף יְהוָה לִי בֶן אַחֵר:

RASHI

הבית"ה⁵⁹, "אספו נגהם"⁶⁰, "וירחף לא יאסף"⁶¹, לא יטמן: חרפתי. שהייתי לחרפה, שאני עקרה, והיו אומרים עלי שאעלה לחלקו של עשו הרשע. ומדרש אגדה⁶²: כל זמן שאין לאשה בן, אין לה במי לתלות סרוונה, משיש לה בן תולד בו — מי שבר כלי זה? בנה. מי אכל תאנים אלו? בנה: 24 יוסף ה' לי בן אחר. יודעת הייתה בנבואה שאין יעקב עתיד להעמיד אלא שנים עשר שבטים, אמרה: יהי רצון שאותו שהוא עתיד להעמיד יהא ממני. לכן לא נתפללה אלא על בן אחר:

21 דִּינָה. פֶּרְשׁוֹ רַבּוּתִינֵינוּ⁵⁶, שְׁדָנָה לֵאמֹר דִּין בְּעֶצְמָה: אִם זֶה זָכָר, לֹא תִהְיֶה רַחֵל אַחֲוִיתִי בְּאֶחָת הַשְּׁפָחוֹת. וְהַתְּפִלָּה עָלֶיהָ וְנִקְבָּה: 22 וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת רַחֵל. זָכָר לֵאמֹר שִׁמְנִיָּה לְאַחֲוִיתָהּ, וְשִׁדְוִיתָהּ מִצָּרָה שְׂלֵא תַעֲלֶה בְּגוּרָלוֹ שֶׁל עֶשָׂו, שְׂמָא יִגְרֶשְׁנָה יַעֲקֹב לְפִי שְׂאִין לָהּ בָּנִים. וְאַף עֶשָׂו הִרְשִׁיעַ כִּף עָלָה בְּלָבוֹ, כְּשִׁשְׁמַע שְׂאִין לָהּ בָּנִים. הוּא שִׁסֵּד הַפִּיט⁵⁷: "הָאֲדָמֹן כְּבִט שְׂלֵא חָלָה, צָבָה לְקַחְתָּהּ לוֹ וְנִתְּבַהֲלָה": 23 אֶסְף. הַכְּנִיסָה בְּמָקוֹם שְׂלֵא תִרָּאָה, וְכֵן: "אֶסְף חֲרָפְתִּינוּ"⁵⁸, "וְלֹא יֵאָסֵף

56. ברכות ט, א. 57. קרובות דראש השנה שחרית. 58. ישעיה ד, א. 59. שמות ט, יט. 60. יואל ד, טו. 61. ישעיה ס, כ. 62. בראשית רבה עג, ה.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

The same holds true for prayer. Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi writes that people who are engaged in earning their livelihood in the mundane world incorrectly assume that they cannot pray as passionately and deeply as those who spend their lives fully immersed in the realm of Torah. The truth, however, is that the time they spend and the stress they experience outside the realm of Torah spur them on to greater passion in prayer and the ability to feel a limitless love for God.¹⁴⁷

This is why it is the lot of most of our people to lead lives like Zebulun's, either immersed in the mundane world earning a living or as community activists. For it is precisely through sustaining and augmenting our Divine consciousness in such milieus that the purpose of creation is realized.¹⁴⁸

24 May God add another son for me: Spiritually, Rachel's prayer encapsulates Joseph's mission in life—to

turn "another," a seeming stranger, into a "son." Joseph's life consisted of taking the ultimate "other," the mundane world, which appears to be "another," separate from God, into something that evinces its Divine "lineage" and source.

In this, Joseph is our inspiration to reach out to those who seem estranged from God and reveal to them that they are in reality "sons," i.e., children, of God, quite at home in fulfilling God's will.¹⁴⁹

This transformation is alluded to by the fact that the literal "other son" whom God granted Rachel was first named Ben-Oni, meaning "the son of my sorrow," but was afterward given the more optimistic name "the son of the south," meaning "the son born in the Land of Israel."¹⁵⁰

Joseph's name also alludes to the path of personal repentance, wherein one transforms oneself from an es-

A CLOSER LOOK

[21] She prayed for a girl, in order to save her sister Rachel from humiliation...she name her Dinah: The Written Torah does not make any mention of this prayer, nor does it tell us why Leah named her

daughter "Dinah." This indicates that Leah kept this prayer private so as not to shame Rachel, for whom she had prayed.¹⁵¹

147. Torah Or 9a. 148. Likutei Sichot, vol. 30, pp. 136-140. 149. Hitva'aduyot 5743, vol. 2, p. 783. 150. Hitva'aduyot 5743, vol. 2, p. 633. 151. Sichot Kodesh 5732, vol. 1, pp. 177-178.

20 Then Leah said, “God has indeed given me a superlative portion in my husband’s household: I myself have borne him the same number of sons that his other three wives will bear him together. Now my husband will surely make his chief¹⁴¹ abode [zevul] with me,” and she named him Zebulun.

21 After that, Leah conceived again. When she learned that she was pregnant, she prayed for a girl, in order to save her sister Rachel from humiliation. Since she knew that Jacob was destined to have only twelve sons, and that she herself had already borne him six and the handmaids two each, leaving two, it followed that if this child of hers were to be a boy, her sister Rachel would be able to have only one son at most. This would leave Rachel with fewer sons than each of the handmaids. As a result of her prayer, the baby boy she was carrying in her womb was miraculously transformed into a girl. Thus, **she gave birth to a daughter, and she named her Dinah** [“judgment”], recalling how she had “judged” herself and determined that she was not willing to be the cause of her sister’s humiliation.

22 Then God remembered how Rachel had similarly saved Leah from humiliation when, on Leah’s wedding night, she divulged the secret signs Jacob had given her. In addition, Rachel was now afraid that Jacob might divorce her because she was barren, and that Esau might then try to marry her. **God hearkened to her prayers and opened her womb** (i.e., made her fertile).

23 She conceived and gave birth to a son, along with a twin daughter,¹⁴² **and she said, “God has taken away my disgrace:** until now, people belittled me for being childless and tormented me by insinuating that I will fall into Esau’s clutches. Furthermore, now that I have a son, my husband will no longer be able to blame me alone for everything that goes wrong.”

24 She named him Joseph [“May He add”], saying, **“May God add [yoseif] another son for me.”** Since she knew that Jacob was destined to father only one more son, she therefore did not pray for any more than one. Joseph was born circumcised.¹⁴³

During the fourteen years Jacob worked for Laban, Laban fathered some sons, as well.¹⁴⁴

✧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ✧

20 His chief [permanent] abode: The tribe of Zebulun was primarily composed of merchants, as Jacob later prophesied in his blessings to this son: “Zebulun shall dwell by the ship’s harbor.”¹⁴⁵ In naming Zebulun, Leah prophetically articulated the notion that the chief and permanent home of the Divine consciousness as personified by Jacob is in the business life that Zebulun would come to represent.

We know, however, that Jacob “lived in the tents” of Torah study.¹⁴⁶ How can the spiritual pursuit of the Torah find its “permanent home” on the mundane terrain of Zebulun?

The answer is that we can make Divine consciousness

truly and permanently part of this world only when we attain this consciousness while engaging in the pragmatic lifestyle of Zebulun. If we remain aloof from the mundane life, the spiritual strength and resilience of our souls remain untested. When, however, we are heavily involved in the affairs of this world and still set aside time for the study of Torah, the *permanence* inherent in our soul—its ability to assert itself even while outside its natural context—is revealed, and we create a permanent home for God.

In this respect, the Torah study of a “Zebulun” is infinitely superior to that of someone who is fully but solely immersed in “the tent of the Torah.”

¹⁴¹ See *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 30, p. 135. ¹⁴² Rashi on 35:17 and 37:35, below. ¹⁴³ *Bereishit Rabbah* 84:6, cited by Rashi on 37:2, below. ¹⁴⁴ Rashi on v. 27, below. ¹⁴⁵ Genesis 49:13. ¹⁴⁶ Above, 25:27.

— ONKELOS —

25 וְהָיָה כִּד לְיֵלֶדֶת רַחֵל יֵת יוֹסֵף
וְאָמַר יַעֲקֹב לְלֶבֶן שְׁלַחֲנִי וְאָחֵר
לְאַחֲרֵי וּלְאַרְעֵי: 26 חָב יֵת נָשִׁי
וְיֵת בְּנֵי דִי פְלַחֲתִי יִתָּר בְּהוֹן
וְאִזִּיל אָרִי אֶת יִדְעָתָּ יֵת פְּלַחֲנִי
דִי פְלַחֲתָּ: 27 וְאָמַר לֵה לְבָן אִם
כָּעֵן אֲשַׁכְּחִית רַחֲמִין בְּעֵינֶיךָ נְסִיתִי
וּבְרַכְנִי יֵי בְדִילָךְ: 28 וְאָמַר פֶּרֶשׁ
אֲגֵרָךְ עָלֵי וְאֶתָּן: 29 וְאָמַר לֵה
אֶת יִדְעָתָּ יֵת דִי פְלַחֲתָּ וְיֵת דִי
הָיָה בְּעֵירָךְ עֲמִי: 30 אָרִי וְעִיר דִי
הָיָה לָךְ קְדָמִי וְיִתְקִיף לְסִגֵּי וּבְרִירָךְ
יֵי יִתָּר בְּדִילִי וּכְעֵן אִימָתִי אֶעֱבֹד
אֶף אֲנָא לְבִיתִי: 31 וְאָמַר מָה אֶתָּן
לָךְ וְאָמַר יַעֲקֹב לֹא תִתֶּן לִי מִדְּעַם
אִם תַּעֲבִיד לִי פִתְגָמָא הָדִין אֲתוּב
אַרְעֵי עָנָךְ אֲשֶׁר:

25 וְהָיָה כִּדְרָה רַחֵל אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל־
לְבָן שְׁלַחֲנִי וְאֶלְכָה אֶל־מְקוֹמִי וּלְאַרְצֵי: 26 תָּנָה אֶת־
נָשִׁי וְאֶת־יְלָדֵי אֲשֶׁר עֲבַדְתִּי אֹתָךְ בָּהֶן וְאֶלְכָה בִּי אֵתָה
יִדְעָתָּ אֶת־עֲבַדְתִּי אֲשֶׁר עֲבַדְתִּיךָ: 27 וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו לְבָן
אִם־נָא מַעֲשֵׂאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ נְחִשְׁתִּי וּבְרַכְנִי יְהוָה בְּגִלְלָךְ:
חֲמִישִׁי 28 וַיֹּאמֶר נָקֵבָה שְׂכָרְךָ עָלֵי וְאֶתָּנָה: 29 וַיֹּאמֶר
אֵלָיו אֵתָה יִדְעָתָּ אֶת אֲשֶׁר עֲבַדְתִּיךָ וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר־הָיָה
מִקְנֶךָ אִתִּי: 30 כִּי מַעֲטִי אֲשֶׁר־הָיָה לְךָ לְפָנַי וּפְרִיץ לְרֹב
וּבְרִיךְ יְהוָה אֹתָךְ לְרִגְלִי וְעֵתָה מָתִי אֶעֱשֶׂה גַם־אֲנֹכִי
לְבִיתִי: 31 וַיֹּאמֶר מָה אֶתָּן לְךָ וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב לֹא־תִתֶּן־לִי
מֵאוֹמָה אִם־תַּעֲשֶׂה־לִּי תְרֻמָּה הַזֹּה אֲשִׁיבָה אֶרְעָה צֹאנְךָ
אֲשִׁמְרֶה:

— RASHI —

בָּנִים, שְׁנֵאמַר⁶⁵: "וַיִּשְׁמַע אֶת דְּבָרֵי בְנֵי לְבָן": 28 נָקֵבָה
שְׂכָרְךָ. כְּתָרְגוּמוֹ: "פֶּרֶשׁ אֲגֵרָךְ": 29 וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר הָיָה
מִקְנֶךָ אִתִּי. אֶת חֲשָׁבוֹן מַעֲוֹט מִקְנֶךָ שֶׁבֶּא לְיָדִי מִתְחַלָּה,
כְּמָה הָיָה: 30 לְרִגְלִי. עַם רִגְלִי, בְּשִׁבְלִי בִּיאַת רִגְלִי בְּאֵת
אֲצִלָּךְ הַבְּרָכָה, כְּמוֹ: "הָעַם אֲשֶׁר בְּרַגְלִיךָ"⁶⁶, "לָעַם אֲשֶׁר
בְּרַגְלִי"⁶⁷, הַבָּאִים עִמִּי: גַּם אֲנֹכִי לְבִיתִי. לְצִרְךָ בֵּיתִי.
עֲכָשׁוּ אֵין עוֹשִׁין לְצִרְכֵּי אֱלָא בְּנֵי, וְצִרְךָ אֲנִי לְהִיּוֹת
עוֹשֶׂה גַם אֲנִי עִמָּהֶם לְסִמְכָן. וְהוּא "גַּם":

25 כִּדְרָה רַחֵל אֶת יוֹסֵף. מִשְׁנׁוּלָד שִׁטְנוֹ שֶׁל
עֶשׂו, שְׁנֵאמַר⁶⁸: "וְהָיָה בֵּית יַעֲקֹב אֲשֶׁר בֵּית יוֹסֵף לְהִבָּה
וּבֵית עֶשׂו לְקֶשׁ". אֲשֶׁר בְּלֹא לְהִבָּה אֵינוֹ שׁוֹלֵט לְמִרְחֹק,
מִשְׁנׁוּלָד יוֹסֵף — בְּטַח יַעֲקֹב בְּהַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, וְרִצָּה
לְשׁוּב: 26 תָּנָה אֶת נָשִׁי וְגו'. אֵינִי רוֹצֵה לְצֹאֵת כִּי אִם
בְּרִשׁוֹת: 27 נְחִשְׁתִּי. מִנְחָשׁ הָיִיתִי, נְסִיתִי בְּנַחוּשׁ שְׁלִי,
שֶׁעַל יָדָךְ בָּאָה לִי בְּרָכָה. כְּשֶׁבֹאֵת לְכָאן לֹא הָיָה לִי בָנִים,
שְׁנֵאמַר⁶⁹: "וְהָיָה רַחֵל בְּתוֹ בָּאָה עִם הַצֹּאן", אֲפֹשֶׁר יֵשׁ
לוֹ בָנִים וְהוּא שׁוֹלֵחַ בְּתוֹ אֲצִל הָרוּעִים? וְעֲכָשׁוּ הָיָה לוֹ

63. עובדיה א, יח. 64. בראשית כט, ו. 65. בראשית לא, א. 66. שמות יא, ח. 67. שופטים ח, ה.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

The words for "another son" (*ben acher*) can also be read as "a different son," meaning that even someone who is already a "son" can reach still higher levels of holiness, becoming an entirely different person.¹⁶⁰

25 In the merit of his newborn son's unique spiritual qualities: As will be explained in the Overviews to *parashat Mikeitz* and *parashat Vayigash*, Joseph personified the ability to engage the world proactively—even descending into the realm of evil in order to elevate it—and emerge unscathed. This rendered him uniquely suited to confront Esau successfully.

27 It is on your account that God blessed me: Inasmuch as the mission of making the world into God's home has devolved principally upon the Jewish people, any facet of the world that assists a Jew in fulfill-

ing his or her Divine mission thereby achieves its ultimate purpose. Thus, the presence of Jewish people in a place—especially the presence of Jews who are consciously loyal to their Divine mission—brings blessing to that place.¹⁶¹

During our exile, we are dependent to a certain extent upon the benevolence of the other nations. Nonetheless, we must always remember that, conversely, enlisting the help of non-Jews in our Divine mission helps them fulfill their Divine purpose, thereby bringing blessing upon them, as well.

This explains why, historically,¹⁶² the presence of the majority of the Jewish people in a particular country has, in most cases, made that country into the world's leading power.¹⁶³

160. *Hitva'aduyot* 5745, vol. 2, p. 1111. 161. *Bereishit Rabbah* 73:8; *Sifrei*, *Eikev* 11:10; *Berachot* 42a, etc. 162. *Torat Chaim*, *Bereishit* 92a. 163. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 20, pp. 136-138, 142-143.

Jacob's Payment

25 In the year 2199, the fourteen years that Jacob had agreed to work for Laban in exchange for Rachel and Leah were up. At the same time, Rebecca's wet nurse Deborah arrived in Padan Aram, sent by Rebecca to inform Jacob that Esau's hatred toward him had abated to the extent that it was now safe for him to return to Canaan.¹⁵² Jacob therefore began to think about returning to Canaan, but despite his mother's reassurances, he was afraid to risk a confrontation with his openly-rancorous brother. But **when Rachel gave birth to Joseph** that same year, Jacob sensed that God would protect him from Esau in the merit of his newborn son's unique spiritual qualities. **Jacob** therefore then felt confident enough to undertake the journey home, and **said to Laban, "Please send me on my way, and I will go to my home and to my land."**

26 **Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and I will go, for you know that during the time I worked for you I completely fulfilled the terms of my contract."**

27 **Laban said to him, "If only I would find favor in your eyes and you would stay!"¹⁵³ I have learned by divination that it is on your account that God blessed me with sons. Until your arrival, I only had daughters."¹⁵⁴**

◆ **Fifth Reading 28 But Jacob had no plans to stay. So Laban then said, "Specify your payment due from me, and I will pay you accordingly."**

29 **So Jacob said to him, "You know very well how faithfully I have toiled for you, and just how few were your livestock that you placed with me to herd when I first began working for you."**

30 **For the little you had before my arrival has increased substantially, and God has blessed you on my account.** Until now, I have worked solely for you and your benefit, leaving my sons to work for their own subsistence. **But now, if I continue to work only for your benefit, when will I have a chance to provide for my own household, as well?** I now need to help my sons, because they cannot put aside anything for the future from the little they produce by themselves."

31 **Laban asked, "So what shall I give you?"**

Jacob said, "Do not give me anything outright. If you will do this one thing for me, I will continue to pasture your flocks and to tend them:

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

tranged "other" into a "son" who belongs.

Significantly, the name Joseph (meaning "addition") does not apply to the transformed "other" but to the person who transforms this "other." This is because by transforming others, we also gain additional holiness and connection with God.¹⁵⁵

Let us not feel inadequate and incapable of effecting such transformation; after all, we do not work unaided. The verse reads, "may God add for me another son" —

we are merely God's "hands," and it is really He who welcomes His estranged sons home.¹⁵⁶

Joseph was successful in transforming others because he himself was perfectly righteous. The Torah describes Joseph as "beautiful of form and beautiful of appearance,"¹⁵⁷ alluding to the fact that he fulfilled the Torah in its entirety.¹⁵⁸ The lesson for us is that the closer we are to achieving spiritual perfection, the easier it is for us to positively affect the lives of others.¹⁵⁹

^{152.} *Sefer HaYashar*; cf. Rashi on 35:8, below. ^{153.} Seforno. ^{154.} Above, 29:6. ^{155.} *Hitva'aduyot* 5745, vol. 5, p. 2877. ^{156.} *Hitva'aduyot* 5745, vol. 2, p. 1112. ^{157.} Genesis 39:6. ^{158.} See above on 29:17. ^{159.} *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 1, p. 79.

— ONKELOS —

32 אַעבר בָּכֶל־צֹאֲנֵי הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה מִשֵּׁם כָּל־שֶׁהָ נֶקֶד וּמִלּוֹא וְכָל־שֶׁהָחוּם בְּבִשְׂבִים וּמִלּוֹא וְנֶקֶד בְּעֵזִים וְהָיָה שְׂכָרִי: 33 וְעִנְתָּה־בִּי צִדְקָתִי בַּיּוֹם מֵחֵר כִּי־תָבוֹא עָלַי שְׂכָרִי לְפָנֶיךָ כֹּל אֲשֶׁר־אֵינְנִי נֶקֶד וּמִלּוֹא בְּעֵזִים וְחוּם בְּבִשְׂבִים גָּנוּב הוּא אֵתִי: 34 וַיֹּאמֶר לָבָן הֵן לִי יְהִי כְּדַבְּרְךָ: 35 וַיֹּסֶר בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא אֶת־הַתִּישִׁים הַעֲקָרִים וְהַטְּלָאִים וְאֵת כָּל־הָעֵזִים הַנֶּקֶדוֹת וְהַטְּלָאֹת כֹּל אֲשֶׁר־לָבָן בּוֹ וְכָל־חוּם בְּבִשְׂבִים וַיִּתֵּן בְּיַד־בְּנָיו:

— RASHI —

תלדנה הנקבות דגמתן מכאן ואילך: 33 וענתה בי וגו'. אם תחשדני שאני נוטל משלך כלום — תענה בי צדקתי, כי תבוא צדקתי ותעיד על שכרי לפניה, שלא תמצא בעדרי כי אם נקדים וטלואים. וכל שתמצא בהן שאינו נקד או טלוא או חום — בידוע שגנבתיו לה, ובגנבה הוא שריו אצלי: 34 הן. לשון קבלת דברים: לו יהי כדברך. הלואי שתחפץ בכך: 35 ויסר. לכן ביום ההוא וגו': התישים. עזים וזכרים: כל אשר לכן בו. כל אשר היתה בו חבבורות לבנות: ויתן. לכן ביד בנניו:

32 נקד. מנמר בחבבורות דקות כמו נקדות. פוינטור"א בלעז⁶⁸: וטלוא. לשון טלאים, חבבורות רחבות: חום. שחום, דומה לאדם. ר"ש בלעז⁶⁹. לשון משנה⁷⁰: שחמתית ונמצאת לבנה, לענין התבואה: והיה שכרי. אותן שילדו מכאן ולהבא נקדים וטלואים בעזים, ושחומים בבשבים — יהיו שלי, ואותן שישגן עקשו — הפרש מהם והפקידם ביד בניה, שלא תאמר לי על הנולדים מעתה: אלו היו שם מתחלה. ועוד, שלא תאמר לי: על ידי הזכרים שהן נקדים וטלואים

68. נקוד. 69. אדם. 70. בנא בתרא פג, ב.

any animal that is **neither white-speckled nor white-blotted among the goats, or neither solid black nor solid brown among the sheep, is in my possession by theft.**"

34 Laban replied reluctantly, for he suspected that Jacob was up to something, "Very well, let it be as you say." Being an experienced breeder, Laban knew that offspring usually inherit their parents' coloring and markings. Thus, by removing the gene-pool of the type of goats and sheep that Jacob was proposing to take, Laban stood to get the majority of the next generation of the flock. So logically, he had no reason to refuse Jacob's request.¹⁶⁷

But Laban also knew that Jacob could produce animals colored or marked differently from their parents by having the parents look at other animals of different coloring or marking while mating. This, Laban understood, was why Jacob wanted to keep some of the white-marked goats and sheep for himself.

35 Aware of this, Laban tried to further tip the odds in his favor. **On that day**, Laban also **removed the he-goats** that were **white-ankle-ringed**¹⁶⁸ (which Jacob had not mentioned in his proposal)—**in addition to all the white-speckled and white-blotted he-goats and all the white-speckled and white-blotted she-goats** (which Jacob *had* mentioned)—in order to make it impossible for Jacob to have his female goats look at them while mating and thereby produce offspring with white markings. In order to make it even harder to produce goats with white

164. Rashi on Shabbat 77b, s.v. BeReisha. See Isaiah 1:18; Psalms 147:16; Song of Songs 4:1-2, 6:5-6; Daniel 7:9. 165. Radak. 166. Mizrahi; Nachmanides. 167. Abarbanel on v. 14, above. 168. Rashi on v. 39, below.

32 As you know, the majority of goats are solid black or brown, while the minority have some white markings on them. These white markings come in four varieties: speckles (see Figure 29), blotches (see Figure 30), ankle-rings (see Figure 31), and belts (see Figure 32). As you also know, the majority of sheep are solid white, while the minority are black or brown, with or without white markings (see Figure 33).¹⁶⁴ I propose that you let me take some of the goats and sheep born from now on that are in the minority, i.e., the goats that are born white-speckled or white-blotched and the sheep that are born solid brown or black. I want you to feel comfortable with this arrangement; therefore, in order to (a) allay any suspicion on your part that I am expropriating any of these types of goats and sheep that are already in the flock, and (b) minimize the probability that the offspring of the flock born from now on will be of these types, **let me pass** with you¹⁶⁵ **through all your flocks today. Remove from there every white-speckled or white-blotched he-goat,**¹⁶⁶ as well as **every solid-black or solid-brown lamb, and every white-blotched or white-speckled she-goat.** Segregate these irregular types of sheep and goats and give them over into the care of your sons. The remainder of the flock, which I will tend, will include all the regular animals plus the white-ankle-ringed and white-belted goats and the black or brown sheep with any white markings. The sheep and goats that they bear from now on with the markings and colorings of those you segregated **shall be my payment.** The rest shall be yours.

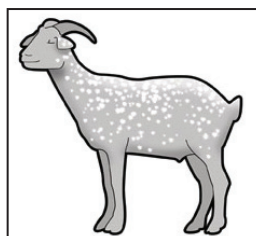


Figure 29: A Speckled Goat

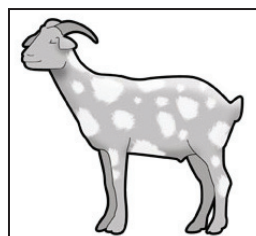


Figure 30: A Blotched Goat

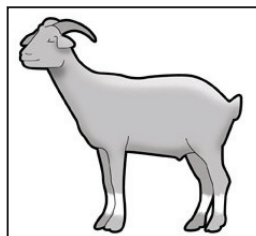


Figure 31: An Ankle-Ringed Goat

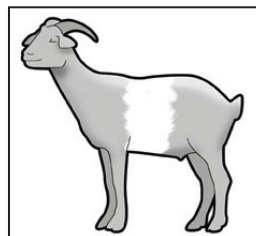


Figure 32: A Belted Goat

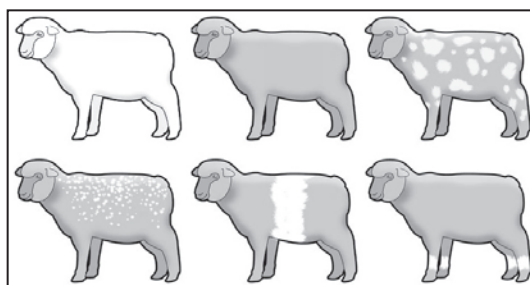


Figure 33: Varieties of Sheep

Animal and Characteristic		Under Care of:
Goats (normally solid black or solid brown)	white-speckled	Laban's sons
	white-blotched	Laban's sons
	white-ankle-ringed	Jacob
	white-belted	Jacob
	solid black or brown	Jacob
Sheep (normally solid white)	solid black or brown	Laban's sons
	black or brown with any white marking	Jacob
	solid white	Jacob

33 **And at some time in the future,** if you ever suspect me of having appropriated any of your flock, **my integrity will testify on my behalf regarding my payment:**

ONKELOS

36 וְשֵׁם הַדָּךְ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים בֵּינוּ וּבֵין יַעֲקֹב וַיַּעֲקֹב רָעָה
 אֶת־צֹאן לָבָן הַנּוֹתֶרֶת: 37 וַיִּקְחֵהֶּן לֹא יַעֲקֹב מִקָּל לְבָנָה
 לָח וְלוֹ וְעֶרְמוֹן וַיַּפְצֵל בָּהֶן פְּצָלוֹת לְבָנוֹת מַחֲשֵׁף הַלָּבָן
 אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַמִּקְלוֹת: 38 וַיִּצַּג אֶת־הַמִּקְלוֹת אֲשֶׁר פָּצַל
 בְּרֹהֲטִים בְּשִׁקְתוֹת הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר תָּבֵאן הַצֹּאן לְשִׁתּוֹת
 לְנֹכַח הַצֹּאן וַיַּחֲמֶנָה בְּבֹאֵן לְשִׁתּוֹת:

RASHI

לשון תחיבה ונעיצה הוא בלשון ארמית, והרבה נש
 בתלמוד: דציה ושלפה⁷⁵, דץ בה מיד⁷⁶. "דציה" כמו
 "דעצה", אלא שמקצר את לשונו: ברהטים. במרוצות
 המים, בברכות העשויות בארץ להשקות שם הצאן:
 אשר תבאן וגו'. ברהטים אשר תבאנה הצאן לשותות,
 שם הציג המקלות לנכח הצאן: ויחמנה. הבהמה רואה
 את המקלות והיא נרתעת לאחוריה, והזכר רובעה
 ויולדת כיוצא בו. רבי הושעיא אומר: המים נעשין נרע
 במעיהן, ולא היו צריכות לזכר, וזהו: "ויחמנה" וגו'.

71. הושע ד, יג. 72. צפצפה כעזנית. 73. אלקר — עץ נמוך שפריו אגוזים חומים בהירים וראויים לאכילה. 74. עץ ערמון. 75. שבת נ, ב. 76. חולין צג, ב.

with white markings, Jacob used the following method to induce the goats under his care to produce offspring with white markings: he **took himself fresh aspen sticks, hazel sticks, and chestnut sticks, and peeled white stripes in them by exposing the underlying white layer of the sticks**. On one type of stick he peeled off white pieces resembling speckles; on the second type of stick, strips resembling blotches; and on the third type of stick, strips resembling ankle-rings.¹⁷⁴

38 When it was time for the goats to mate, **he displayed the sticks that he had peeled**, placing them in the water running through the troughs where the flocks came to drink, facing the animals. He brought the she-goats to drink; when they saw the sticks in the water, they were startled and recoiled, posturing themselves unwarily into their mating position. **Thus they mated** with the he-goats **when they came to drink**.

INNER DIMENSIONS

[37] He took...aspen...hazel...and chestnut: The combination of these different-colored sticks typifies the attribute of Jacob, which is *tiferet* (harmony and beauty).¹⁷⁵

Specifically, the aspen sticks embodied *chochmah*, the hazel sticks embodied *binah*, and the chestnut sticks embodied *da'at*. By placing these sticks in the watering troughs, he drew Divine intellect into the emotions. This is exactly what we accomplish by wearing *tefilin*.¹⁷⁶

However, unlike *tefilin*, which are holy objects, Jacob's sticks remained ordinary sticks when he was done using them. This is because before the Torah was given, physical objects could not absorb holiness.¹⁷⁷

He peeled white stripes in them: Although Jacob's sticks were both red and white, he peeled additional white streaks in them in order to give supremacy to white, which signifies *chesed* ("kindness"). This is because in order to harmonize kindness and severity, kindness must dominate.¹⁷⁸

174. Rabbeinu Bachya. 175. *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5732, p. 124; cf. Zohar 1:161a ff. 176. Zohar 1:161a ff (in *Sitrei Torah*); *Mikdash Melech ad loc.* 177. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 1, p. 72. 178. *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5721, p. 312.

markings, Laban removed **all** the black and brown *sheep*¹⁶⁹ **with white markings** (which Jacob had not mentioned)—**in addition to all the** solid-black and solid-**brown sheep** (which Jacob *had* mentioned)—so Jacob could not have his *goats* look at these sheep while mating.¹⁷⁰ Nonetheless, Laban did not remove the female goats with white ankle-rings or the white-belted goats, because he felt that Jacob would not let him go so far as to remove *all* possibility of producing goats with white markings. Similarly, he did not remove the solid-brown or solid-black goats, because their absence would have precluded Jacob from having his *sheep* look at them while mating and thereby produce brown or black offspring; again, he felt that Jacob would not let him go so far as to remove *all* possibility of producing the offspring he wanted as payment.

By removing these additional types of animals, Laban implicitly included these types among those that would belong to Jacob. But, as stated, he believed that he had markedly reduced the probability that any such animals would be born.¹⁷¹

Finally, in order to further reduce the number of newly-born animals that would belong to Jacob, Laban also removed all the robust goats and sheep from those that he left Jacob, i.e., all the goats that were solid black, solid brown, or white-belted, plus the white-ankle-ringed she-goats, and all the sheep that were solid white.¹⁷²

He left all the aforementioned animals that he took **in the charge of his sons**, and left Jacob only the weak and/or sterile goats without white markings and the weak and/or sterile sheep that were not brown.

Animal & Characteristic				Division Accord- ing to Original Agreement	Actual Division Ac- cording to Laban's Unilateral Changes
Goats (normally solid black or solid brown)	white-speckled			to Laban	to Laban
	white-blotched			to Laban	to Laban
	white-ankle-ringed	males		to Jacob	to Laban
		females	robust	to Jacob	to Laban
			weak	to Jacob	to Jacob
	white-belted	robust		to Jacob	to Laban
		weak		to Jacob	to Jacob
	solid black or brown	robust		to Jacob	to Laban
weak		to Jacob	to Jacob		
Sheep (normally solid white)	solid black or brown			to Laban	to Laban
	black or brown with any white marking			to Jacob	to Laban
	solid white	robust		to Jacob	to Laban
		weak		to Jacob	to Jacob

36 He then separated himself and his flocks **from Jacob by a distance of a three-day journey**. This was more than enough time to ensure that the animals that had been segregated not breed with the rest, but Laban also wanted to ensure that the flocks under Jacob's care would not even be able to look at the segregated animals and thereby reproduce under their influence.¹⁷³ **Jacob continued pasturing the rest of Laban's flocks.**

37 Since Laban had left Jacob with almost no way of genetically producing goats

169. Nachmanides, *s.v. VeTa'am VaYasar*. 170. *Yeriot Shelomo*. 171. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 35, p. 133, note 24. 172. Rashi on v. 36. 173. *Likutei Anshei Shem*.

— ONKELOS —

39 וְאִתִּיחֲמָא עֲנָא בְּחוּטְרִיא וִילִידָא עֲנָא רְגוּלִין נְמוּרִין וְרָקוּעִין: 40 וְאִמְרִיא אִפְרִישׁ יַעֲקֹב וְיִהְיֶה בְּרִישׁ עֲנָא כָּל דְּרָגוּל וְכָל דְּשָׁחוּם בְּעֲנָא דְּלָבָן וְשׁוּי לֵה עֲדָרִין בְּלַחְדוּהִי וְלֹא עֲרִיבְנוֹן עִם עֲנָא דְּלָבָן: 41 וְהָיָה בְּכָל עֶדֶן דְּמִתְיַחֲמֵן עֲנָא מִבְּכֶרְתָּא וּמִשׁוּי יַעֲקֹב יֵת חוּטְרִיא לְעֵינֵי עֲנָא בְּרִהֲטִיא לִיחְמוּתָהוֹן בְּחוּטְרִיא: 42 וּבְלִקִּישׁוֹת עֲנָא לֹא מִשׁוּי וְהָיוּ לְקִישִׁיא לְלָבָן וּבְכִירִיא לְיַעֲקֹב:

39 וַיִּחְמוּ הַצֵּאן אֶל־הַמִּקְלֹת וַתֵּלֶדְן הַצֵּאן עֲקָדִים נִקְדִּים וּמְלֵאִים: 40 וְהַפְּשָׁבִים הִפְרִיד יַעֲקֹב וַיִּתֵּן פָּנֵי הַצֵּאן אֶל־עֲקָד וְכָל־חֹם בַּצֵּאן לָבָן וַיֵּשֶׁת לוֹ עֲדָרִים לְבָדּוֹ וְלֹא שָׁתָם עַל־צֵאן לָבָן: 41 וְהָיָה בְּכָל־יָחַם הַצֵּאן הַמִּקְשָׁרוֹת וְשֵׁם יַעֲקֹב אֶת־הַמִּקְלֹת לְעֵינֵי הַצֵּאן בְּרִהָטִים לִיחְמָנָהּ בַּמִּקְלֹת: 42 וּבַהֲעֲטִיף הַצֵּאן לֹא יֵשָׁים וְהָיָה הָעֲטָפִים לְלָבָן וְהַקְשָׁרִים לְיַעֲקֹב:

— RASHI —

שְׁפָרְשֵׁתִי: 41 הַמִּקְשָׁרוֹת. כְּתִירוֹמוֹ: הַבְּכִירוֹת, וְאִין לֹא עַד בְּמִקְרָא לְהוֹכִיחַ עֲלֵיו. וּמִנַּחֵם חִבְרוֹ עִם: "אֲחִיתִּפֹּל בְּקִשְׁרִים", "וַיְהִי הַקֶּשֶׁר אִמֶּץ"⁷⁸, אוֹתָן הַמִּתְקַשְּׁרוֹת יִחַד לְמַהֵר עֲבוּרָן: 42 וּבַהֲעֲטִיף. לְשׁוֹן אַחֲרֵי, כְּתִירוֹמוֹ: "בְּלִקִּישׁוֹת". וּמִנַּחֵם חִבְרוֹ עִם "הַמִּחְלָצוֹת וְהַמַּעֲטָפוֹת"⁷⁹, לְשׁוֹן עֲטִיפַת כְּסוּת, כְּלוּמָר, מִתְעַטְפוֹת בְּעוּרָן וּצְמָרָן וְאִינָן מִתְאַוּוֹת לְהִתְיַחֵם עַל יְדֵי הַזִּקְרִים:

39 אֶל הַמִּקְלֹת. אֶל מִרְאוֹת הַמִּקְלֹת: עֲקָדִים. מִשְׁנִים בְּמָקוֹם עֲקָדָתָן, הֵם קִרְסוּלֵי יְדֵיהֶם וְרִגְלֵיהֶם: 40 וְהַפְּשָׁבִים הִפְרִיד יַעֲקֹב. הַנּוֹלָדִים עֲקָדִים וְנִקְדִּים הַבְּדִיל וְהִפְרִיד לְעֲצָמָן, וַעֲשֶׂה אוֹתָן עֶדֶר עֶדֶר לְבָדּוֹ, וְהוֹלִיף אוֹתוֹ הָעֶדֶר הָעָקוֹד לְפָנֵי הַצֵּאן, וּפָנֵי הַצֵּאן הַהוּלָכוֹת אַחֲרֵיהֶם צוּפוֹת אֲלֵיהֶם. וְהוּא שָׁנְאָמֵר: "וַיִּתֵּן פָּנֵי הַצֵּאן אֶל עֲקָד", שֶׁהָיוּ פָּנֵי הַצֵּאן אֶל הָעֲקָדִים וְאֶל כָּל חוֹם שֶׁמִּצָּא בַּצֵּאן לָבָן: וַיֵּשֶׁת לוֹ עֲדָרִים. כְּמוֹ

77. שְׁמוּאֵל ב טו, לֹא. 78. שֵׁם, יב. 79. יִשְׁעִיָה ג, כב.

herd under Jacob's care to the herd under his sons' care. Rather than trouble Jacob with the cumbersome task of peeling a stick resembling a belted pattern, God had an angel bring the he-goats of these three types back from the herd under Laban's sons' care and re-place them in the herd under Jacob's care so they would reproduce in kind.¹⁸²

INNER DIMENSIONS

[42] God had an angel bring the he-goats of these three types back: As explained above, in breeding Laban's flock, Jacob was drawing Divine consciousness into physical reality. There are two types of Godly energy that create and power the world: the energy that tailors itself to the limitations of physical reality (what we know as "nature"), and the energy that transcends the natural order of physical reality (which is revealed to us in the form of "miracles").¹⁸³ In order to elicit the levels of Divine consciousness associated with each of these two types of Godly energy, he employed both natural and supra-natural means in predetermining the colorings of the animals.

The reason that the naturally-bred animals are referred to as "blotched," while the supra-naturally-bred animals are referred to as "belted," is as follows: Rashi defines "belted" as being encompassed by a white band, which was formed by a number of white blotches that bled into each other. In contrast, the blotches on the simply "blotched" animals did not overlap. The fact that the blotches on the "belted" animals joined to form one continuous band alludes to God's encompassing, transcendent creative energy (*sovev kol almin*). In contrast, the discrete blotches allude to God's limited creative energy (*memalei kol almin*), which tailors itself to every aspect of creation individually.¹⁸⁴

182. Rashi on 31:10, below. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 35, pp. 131-133. 183. Cf. *Akeidat Yitzchak*, gate 38. 184. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 35, pp. 131-136.

39 Since **the animals mated at the sight of the sticks, the young that the animals then produced were all white-ankle-ringed, white-speckled, and white-blotched.** Miraculously, none of the offspring were born with their parents' coloring or markings, but rather with those of the sticks. In some cases, the water miraculously impregnated the females without their actually having mated with the males. Jacob also used the sticks to produce some solid-black and solid-brown sheep with white markings.

Jacob did not have to employ any extraordinary techniques to produce brown sheep, since Laban had left brown goats in his care. When the sheep-mating season arrived, he simply segregated all the brown goats from the rest and placed them in front of the sheep. The sheep looked at the brown goats while mating and bore brown offspring.

40 After a few mating seasons, Jacob had successfully produced a sufficient quantity of white-marked animals to regulate the breeding naturally, no longer having to resort to the use of the sticks.¹⁷⁹ Laban had taken all the black and brown sheep and goats with white markings except for the weak, ankle-ringed female goats, which he had left in Jacob's care.¹⁸⁰ To these, Jacob added the white-marked sheep he had produced. **Jacob segregated these white-marked sheep. He had the rest of the goat-flock face the white-ankle-ringed and otherwise white-marked sheep and goats, so they would produce offspring with white markings. And as he did previously, he had his sheep face all the black and brown goats among Laban's flock. He made himself separate herds for this purpose and did not let them intermingle with the rest of Laban's flocks.**

41 Moreover, **whenever the stronger, early-bearing female animals were in heat, Jacob would place the sticks in the currents of water in full view of the animals, so that they would be stimulated by means of the sticks.**

42 **But he did not place them in the water when the weaker, later-bearing animals were in heat.** Thus, even though Laban had left him the weaker animals, Jacob selectively bred the relatively stronger ones for himself: **the weaker, late-born offspring became Laban's, and the healthier, early-born offspring became Jacob's.**

When Laban noticed the prolific increase in the types of animals that had originally been designated for Jacob, he attempted to unfairly adjust the odds in his favor by unilaterally reinterpreting the terms of the agreement to mean that these types of animals were designated for him. But in response, Jacob simply adjusted his breeding techniques accordingly, so that the next time the animals reproduced, they did so in his favor. Laban continued to unilaterally change the terms in his own favor, but Jacob always managed to adjust his techniques accordingly, so the flocks continued to reproduce in his favor.¹⁸¹

At one point, Laban informed Jacob that the goats that he was to receive as payment would be all those that were ankle-ringed, white-speckled, and white-belted; he then went ahead and transferred all the he-goats with these markings from the

179. Chizkuni; Abarbanel s.v. *VaYeilech Reuvein*. 180. V. 35, above. 181. Below, 31:7-9.

— ONKELOS —

43 ותקוף גברא לחדא לחדא והווי לה עאן סגיאן ואמקון ועבדין וגמלין וחמרים: 31:1 ושמע ית פתגמי בני לכן למימר נסיב יעקב ית כל די לאבונא ומדי לאבונא קנא ית כל נכסא האלין: 2 וחזא יעקב ית סבר אפי לכן והא ליתוהי עמה כמאתמלי ומדקמוהי: 3 ואמר יי ליעקב תוב לארע אבהתך ולילדותך ויהי מימרי בסעך: 4 ושלח יעקב וקרא לרחל וללאה לחקלא לות ענה: 5 ואמר להן חזי אנא ית סבר אפי אבוכן ארי ליתוהי עמי כמאתמלי ומדקמוהי ואלהה דאבא הוה בסעדי: 6 ואתן ידעתין ארי בכל חילי פלחית ית אבוכן: 7 ואבוכן שקר בי ואשני ית אגרי עשר זמנין ולא שבקה יי לאבאשא עמי: 8 אם פדין הוה אמר נמורין יהי אגרי וילדן כל ענא נמורין ואם פדין הוה אמר רגולין יהי אגרי וילדן כל ענא רגולין:

43 ויפרץ האיש מאד מאד ויהי לו צאן רבות ושפחות ועבדים וגמלים וחמרים: 31:1 וישמע את דברי בני-לכן לאמר לקח יעקב את כל-אשר לאבינו ומאשר לאבינו עשה את כל-העבד הזה: 2 וירא יעקב את-פני לכן והנה איננו עמו בתמול שלשום: 3 ויאמר יהוה אל-יעקב שוב אל-ארץ אבותיך ולמולדתך ואהיה עמך: 4 וישלח יעקב ויקרא לרחל וללאה השדה אשר-צאנו: 5 ויאמר להן ראה אנכי את-פני אביכן כי-איננו אלי בתמול שלשם ואלהי אבי הוה עמדי: 6 ואתנה ידעתי כי בכל-פתי עבדתי את-אביכן: 7 ואביכן התל בי והחלה את-משפירתי עשרת מנים ולא-נתנו אליהם להרע עמדי: 8 אם-כה יאמר נקדים יהיה שכרך וילדו כל-הצאן נקדים ואם-כה יאמר עקדים יהיה שכרך וילדו כל-הצאן עקדים:

— RASHI —

שקיא היתה עקר הבית, שבשבילה נודד יעקב עם לכן. ואף בניה של לאה מודים בדבר, שהרי בעו ובית דינו משפט יהודה אומרים⁸¹: "כרחל וכלאה אשר בנו שתיקהם" וגו', הקדימו רחל ללאה: 7 עשרת מנים. אין "מנים" פחות מעשרה: מנים. לשון סכום כלל החשבון, והן עשירות, למדנו, שהחליף תנאו מאה פעמים:

43 צאן רבות. פרות ורבות יותר משאר צאן: ושפחות ועבדים. מוכר צאנו בדרמים וקרים, ולוקח לו כל אלה: 1 עשה. כנס, כמו⁸⁰: "ויעש חיל ויף את עמלק": 3 שוב אל ארץ אבותיך. ושם "אהיה עמך", אבל בעודך מחבר לטמא אי אפשר להשרות שכינתי עליך: 4 ויקרא לרחל וללאה. לרחל תחלה ואחר כך ללאה,

80. שמואל א יד, מח. 81. רות ד, יא.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

are not aware of ourselves as independent entities; we are like sheep: humble and self-effacing.

Before leaving the Holy Land for Charan, Jacob evinced more the parent-child relationship with God. He spent his days immersed in studying the Torah, an occupation which requires us to be acutely aware of our own existence as we use our intellect to understand what we have learned. In journeying to the spiritually-dark world of Charan to fulfill his mission there, Jacob set aside his personal growth to become a selfless "sheep."

After Jacob acquired an abundance of sheep, "he was able to sell them...and, with these profits, purchase handmaids...servants...camels and donkeys." Spiritu-

ally, this means that he realized that with self-negation alone he could not fulfill his mission; he would have to employ additional aspects of his personality. Jacob knew that enlisting these other aspects (alluded to as "handmaids, servants, camels, and donkeys"¹⁹¹) would involve acting with self-awareness and self-assertion, which might undermine the self-negation he was seeking to cultivate in order to succeed in his encounter with Laban. He therefore "purchased" each of these aspects with "sheep," i.e., his experience of these aspects was predicated on and permeated with selflessness. This is also why Jacob continued to maintain sheep as his primary asset, so that his actions would always be permeated with selflessness.¹⁹²

191. See Torah Or 24c; Torat Chaim, Bereishit 185d. 192. Likutei Sichot, vol. 15, pp. 252-257. See below on 32:6.

43 The man thus became exceedingly prosperous. He owned abundant and prolific flocks, which commanded a high market price, so he was able to sell them at significant profit and, with these profits, purchase **handmaids**—who proved to be as fertile as his flocks¹⁸⁵—after having first purchased **servants** to assist him in caring for his flocks. He then also purchased **camels and donkeys**.¹⁸⁶

31:1 Jacob then heard what was being said by Laban's sons: "Jacob expropriated everything belonging to our father, and from our father's property he amassed all this wealth."

2 Jacob observed from the look on Laban's face that his attitude towards him was not the same as in earlier days.

Jacob's Departure

3 God then said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your birthplace. There, I will be with you, but here, as long as you remain associated with the wicked Laban, My presence cannot dwell among you and your family."¹⁸⁷

4 So Jacob sent word and summoned Rachel and Leah—in that order, for Rachel was the acknowledged principal matron of Jacob's household—**to the field where his flock was, and said to them,**

5 "I can see from the look on your father's face that his attitude towards me is not as it was in earlier days. He suspects me of having swindled him out of his wealth, **but the reality is that the God of my father has been with me,** aiding me during all these years."¹⁸⁸

6 You well know that I served your father with all my power,

7 yet your father deceived me and changed the conditions of my payment a hundred times, but God did not let him harm me.

8 If he would say, 'Your payment will be the speckled ones,' then all the animals would produce speckled offspring, and if he would say, 'Your payment will be the ankle-ringed ones,' then all the animals would produce ankle-ringed offspring.

❧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ❧

43 The man thus became exceedingly prosperous: The Torah uses the word "exceedingly" to connote a level of success beyond the norm. Aside from his material wealth, Jacob also attained spiritual wealth: he succeeded in raising all of his children to follow in the righteous ways of Isaac and Abraham; furthermore, he did not produce a single wicked Esau or Ishmael.

This verse underscores the message of this entire *parashah*—that Jacob reached true spiritual success precisely because of his spiritually-successful involvement with Charan and the material world.¹⁸⁹

He owned prolific flocks: Jacob earned his livelihood by working primarily with sheep, and he was paid principally with sheep. This was because spiritually, sheep represent the type of relationship with God that we must cultivate during our "sojourn with Laban," that is, when we are involved in the mundane world.

Our shepherd-flock relationship with God differs from our parent-child relationship with Him.¹⁹⁰ In the parent-child relationship, we consider ourselves independent entities, apart from God, loving Him as a child loves a parent. In the shepherd-flock relationship, we

^{185.} *Sichot Kodesh* 5740, vol. 1, pp. 454-455. ^{186.} Rashi here and on 31:18, below. *Sichot Kodesh* 5740, p. 509. ^{187.} Cf. above, 13:14. ^{188.} Onkelos. ^{189.} *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 1, pp. 63-65; *Sichot Kodesh* 5740, vol. 1, pp. 448-451. ^{190.} *Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 2:45.

ONKELOS

9 ואפריש יי מן בעירא דאבוקן ויהב לי: 10 וזהו בעדן דאתיחמא ענא וזקפית עיני וחזית בחלמא והא תישאי דסלקין על ענא רגולין נמורין ופציחין: 11 ואמר לי מלאכא דיי בחלמא יעקב ואמרית הא אנא: 12 ואמר זקוף בען עיניך וחזי כל תישאי דסלקין על ענא רגולין נמורין ופציחין ארי גלי קדמי ית כל די לבן עביר לה: 13 אנא אלהא דאתגלית עלק בבית אל די משחתא תמן קמא די קיימתא קדמי תמן קים בען קום פוק מן ארעא הקדא ותוב לארע ילדותך: 14 ואתיבת רחל ולאח ואמרקא לה העוד בען לנא חלק ואחסנא בבית אבונא: 15 הלא נכראן אתחשבנא לה ארי ונבנא ואכל אף מיכל ית כספנא: 16 ארי כל עותרא די אפריש יי מאבונא דילנא הוא ודבנינא וכען כל די אמר יי לה עביר:

9 ויצל אלהים את־מקנה אביכם ויתן־לי: 10 ויהי בעת יתם הצאן ואשא עיני וארא בחלום והנה העתדים העלים על־הצאן עקדים נקדים וברדים: 11 ואמר אלי מלאך האלהים בחלום יעקב ואמר הנני: 12 ואמר שא־נא עיניך וראה כל־העתדים העלים על־הצאן עקדים נקדים וברדים כי ראיתי את כל־אשר לבן עשה לך: 13 אנכי האל בית־אל אשר משחת שם מצבה אשר נדרת לי שם נדר עתה קום צא מן־הארץ הזאת ושוב אל־ארץ מולדתך: 14 ותען רחל ולאח ותאמרנה לו העוד לנו חלק ונחלה בבית אבינו: 15 הלא נכריות נחשבנו לו כי מכרנו ויאכל גם־אכול את־כספנו: 16 כי כל־העשר אשר הציל אלהים מאבינו לנו הוא ולבנינו ועתה כל אשר אמר אלהים אליך עשה:

RASHI

על ידך מלשוב, כלום אנו מייחלות לירש מנכסי אבינו כלום בין הזכרים? 15 הלא נכריות נחשבנו לו. אפלו בשעה שדרך בני אדם לתת נדניא לבנותיו בשעת נשואין, נהג עמנו כנכריות, "כי מכרנו" לה, שעבדת אותו בנו ארבע עשרה שנה ולא נתנו לה אלא בשכר הפעלה: את כספנו. שעבד דמי שכר פעלתך: 16 כי כל העשר. "כי" זה משמש בלשון "אלא". כלומר, משל אבינו אין לנו כלום, אלא מה שהציל הקדוש ברוך הוא מאבינו שלנו הוא: הציל. לשון הפריש. וכן כל לשון הצלה שבמקרא לשון הפרשה, שמפרישו מן הרעה ומן האויב:

10 והנה העתדים. אף על פי שהבדילים לבן כלם שלא יתעברו הצאן דגמתן, היו המלאכים מביאין אותן מעדר המסור ביד בני לבן לעדר שביר יעקב: וברדים. תרגומו: "ופציחין", פיישי"ד בלעז⁸², חוט של לבן מקיף את גופן סביב, חברבורת שלו פתוחה ומפלשת מן אל ון, ואין לי להביא עד מן המקרא: 13 האל בית אל. כמו "אל בית אל", ה"ה" ותר, ודרך מקראות לדבר בן, כמו⁸³: "כי אתם באים אל הארץ כנען": משחת שם. לשון רבוי וגדלה, כשנמשח למלכות, כר⁸⁴: "ויצק שמן על ראשה" להיות משוחה למזבח: אשר נדרת לי. וצריך אתה לשלמו, שאמר⁸⁵: "ויהי בית אלהים", שתקריב שם קרבנות: 14 העוד לנו חלק. למה נעבד

82. מנפיש. 83. במדבר לד, ב. 84. בראשית כח, יח. 85. שם, כב.

INNER DIMENSIONS

[continued...] phose into "profiles" (*partzufim*) or human-like figures, capable of interacting with one another. As mentioned above, the "belts" around these sheep were composed of different blotches

that bled into each other, forming one continuous band, similar to the way the *sefirot* in this stage each contain elements of all the others, enabling them to combine with one another.¹⁹⁷

197. *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5655, pp. 138 ff; *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5720, p. 101; sources cited there and in *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 35, pp. 133 ff.

9 In this way God redeemed¹⁹³ your father's livestock from him and gave them to me.¹⁹⁴

10 It happened just recently that, when your father told me that my payment from among the goats would be all those that were ankle-ringed, white-speckled, and white-belted, and then he removed all the he-goats of these types from the herd under my care, that **I looked up during the mating season of the flocks and beheld in a dream that the bucks mounting the she-goats were in fact ankle-ringed, white-speckled, and white-belted.** God sent an angel to bring these he-goats back to the herd under my care.¹⁹⁵

11 And in the same dream an angel called to me and said, 'Jacob,' and I replied, 'Here I am.'

12 He said, 'Raise your eyes, and you will see that all the bucks mounting the she-goats are ankle-ringed, white-speckled, and white-belted, for I have seen everything that Laban is doing to you and I was sent to return the bucks to the herd you are tending.'

13 The angel then spoke to me in God's name, saying, 'I am the God of Bethel, the place where you consecrated a monument as an altar, and made a vow to Me to offer up sacrifices on it.¹⁹⁶ Now arise and leave this land, and return to the land in which you were born.' "

14 Rachel and Leah responded, saying to him, "Why should we have any objection to leaving? Do we still have a share and inheritance in our father's household, now that he has sons?!"

15 Why, even when he gave us to you in marriage, **we were even considered by him as strangers, for** not only did he not give us any dowry, **he sold us** to you in exchange for fourteen years of labor! **And** after that, instead of paying you to work for him for the past six years, **he spent** what should have been **our wage-money** on himself and only gave you what you managed to breed out of his flock!

16 The only thing that belongs to us and to our children is all the wealth that God took away from our father. So now, do whatever God has instructed you."

✧ INNER DIMENSIONS ✧

[10] Ankle-ringed, white-speckled, and white-belted: The three types of animals Jacob produced from Laban's flocks signify the three distinct stages in the spiritual evolution of reality from its source in God's oneness into plurality.

Laban, whose name means "white" (*lavan*), alludes to the "supernal whiteness" (*loven ha-elyon*), or non-composite uniformity of God's simple essence.

The "ankle-ringed" (*akudim*) animals refer to the initial, embryonic stage of creation, in which the ten *sefirot* share one "vessel" or context, much as the

limbs of an embryo are undifferentiated. In this context, the "lights" of the ten *sefirot* are to be imagined as being different bands of color striped or "ringed" on one vessel.

The "speckled" (*nekudim*) animals refer to the next stage of creation, in which each of the ten *sefirot* possesses its own vessel but, like an immature youth, is too self-absorbed to tolerate each other. Here, the ten *sefirot* are to be imagined as discrete "speckles."

The "belted" (*berudim*) animals refer to the final stage of creation, in which the ten *sefirot* metamor-

193. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 8, p. 78. 194. Above, 30:42. 195. Above, 30:42. 196. Above, 28:16-22.

ONKELOS

17 וְקָם יַעֲקֹב וַיֵּטֵל יָת בְּנוֹהֵי וְיָת
נִשְׁוֹהֵי עַל גְּמָלָיָא: 18 וְדַבֵּר יָת
כָּל גִּיתוּהֵי וְיָת כָּל קִנְיָנָה דִּי קִנָּא
גִּיתוּהֵי קִנְיָנָה דִּי קִנָּא בְּפָדִין אָרָם
לְמִימֵי לֹות יִצְחָק אַבּוּהֵי לְאַרְעָא
דְּכְנָעָן: 19 וְלָבָן אָזַל לְמַגֵּז יָת
עֵנָה וַנְּסִיבַת רַחֵל יָת עֲלֻמְנִיָּא דִּי
לְאַבּוּהָא: 20 וְכִסִּי יַעֲקֹב מִן לָבָן
אַרְמָאָה עַל דְּלֹא חָוִי לָהּ אָרִי
אָזַל הוּא: 21 וְאָזַל הוּא וְכָל דִּי לָהּ
וְקָם וַעֲבַר יָת פָּרֶת וְשׁוּי יָת אַפּוּהֵי
לְטוּרָא דְּגֻלְעָד: 22 וְאַתְחֵנָּא לְלָבָן
בְּיוֹמָא תְּלִיתָאָה אָרִי אָזַל יַעֲקֹב:
23 וְדַבֵּר יָת אַחֲוֵי עֲמָה וְיִרְדָּף
בְּתֵרוּהֵי מִהֶלֶךְ שְׂבָעָא יוֹמִין וְאַדְבָּק
יָתָה בְּטוּרָא דְּגֻלְעָד: 24 וְאַתָּא
מִימֵר מִן קָדָם יִ לֹות לָבָן אַרְמָאָה
בְּחֻלְמָא דְּלִילִיָּא וְאַמֵּר לָהּ אֶסְתַּמֵּר
לָךְ דְּלִמָּא תְּמַלִּיל עִם יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁבַּע
עַד בֵּישׁ:

ששי 17 ויקם יעקב וישא את־בָּנָיו ואת־נָשָׁיו על־
הגמלים: 18 וינהג את־כל־מקנהו ואת־כל־רֶבֶשׁוֹ אֲשֶׁר
רָכַשׁ מִקְנֵה קִנְיָנוֹ אֲשֶׁר רָכַשׁ בְּפָדִין אָרָם לְבֹוא אֶל־יִצְחָק
אָבִיו אֶרְצָה כְּנָעַן: 19 וּלְבָן הֵלֵךְ לְגִזּוֹ אֶת־צֵאֲנוֹ וַתִּגְנֹב
רַחֵל אֶת־הַתֵּרָפִים אֲשֶׁר לְאִבֶּיהָ: 20 וַיִּגְנֹב יַעֲקֹב אֶת־
לֵב לָבָן הָאֲרָמִי עַל־בְּלִי הַיָּד לֹא כִּי בִרְחָ הוּא: 21 וַיִּבְרַח
הוא וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ וַיָּקָם וַיַּעֲבֹר אֶת־הַנֶּהָר וַיֵּשֶׁם אֶת־
פָּנָיו הַר הַגִּלְעָד: 22 וַיֵּגֶד לְלָבָן בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי כִּי בָרַח
יַעֲקֹב: 23 וַיִּקַּח אֶת־אֲחִיו עִמּוֹ וַיִּרְדָּף אַחֲרָיו דֶּרֶךְ שִׁבְעַת
יָמִים וַיִּדְבֹּק אֹתוֹ בְּהַר הַגִּלְעָד: 24 וַיָּבֹא אֱלֹהִים אֶל־לָבָן
הָאֲרָמִי בַחֲלֹם הַלַּיְלָה וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הִשְׁמַר לָךְ פֶּן־תִּדְבֹּר
עִם־יַעֲקֹב מִטּוֹב עַד־רָע:

RASHI

כל אותן שלשה ימים שהלך המגיד להגיד ללבן —
הלך יעקב לדרכו, נמצא יעקב רחוק מלבן ששה ימים
ובשביעי השיגו לבן. למדנו, שכל מה שהלך יעקב
בשבעה ימים הלך לבן ביום אחד, שנאמר: "וירדף
אחריו דרך שבעת ימים", ולא נאמר: "וירדף אחריו
שבעת ימים": 24 משוב עד רע. כל טובתן של רשעים,
רעה היא אצל הצדיקים:

17 את בָּנָיו ואת נָשָׁיו. הקדים וזכרים לנקבות. ועשו
הקדים נקבות לזכרים, שנאמר: "ויקח עשו את נָשָׁיו
ואת בָּנָיו וגו'": 18 מקנה קנינו. מה שקנה מצאנו,
עבדים ושפחות וגמלים וחמורים: 19 לגזו את צאנו.
שנתן ביד בָּנָיו דרך שלשת ימים בינו ובין יעקב: וַתִּגְנֹב
רַחֵל את התרפים. להפריש את אביה מעבודה זרה
נתבונה: 22 ביום השלישי. שהרי דרך שלשת ימים
היה ביניהם: 23 את אחיו. קרוביו: דֶּרֶךְ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים.

86. בראשית לו, ו.

INNER DIMENSIONS

[continued...] explicit will. We are therefore able to exercise our will in choosing to perform them. But the second type stems from God's implicit will, which transcends His explicit will. We therefore cannot actively choose to perform these commandments.

Similarly, there were two types of Divine sparks embedded in Laban's domain: (a) those that were rooted in God's explicit will and could therefore be redeemed through Jacob's conscious efforts and (b) those that were rooted in the Divine essence and therefore could not be redeemed through conscious

effort. During the years that Jacob spent with Laban, he succeeded in redeeming and elevating all of the sparks of holiness belonging to the first type that were trapped in Charan. The latter type of sparks could only be redeemed through some sort of Divine initiative.

As we have seen,²⁰¹ in his Divine source, Laban embodies the non-composite uniformity of God's simple essence. Allegorically, then, Laban's pursuit of Jacob signified the Divine essence initiating the process of redeeming the second sort of sparks.²⁰²

201. On v. 10, above. 202. *Or HaMeir* cited in *Or HaTorah, Bereishit*, vol. 5, pp. 869a ff; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, pp. 260-262.

◆ **Sixth Reading 17** So Jacob set out toward the promised homeland, the setting wherein he would carry out God's directive to transform the physical world into His home. Jacob wished to demonstrate that the reason he had gone to Padan Aram and married his wives in the first place was to father children who would help him fulfill his Divine mission. Therefore, although proper etiquette and the concern for educating children to honor their parents would have dictated that Jacob place his wives in front of his children, he **put his children first**, followed by **his wives, on the camels**.¹⁹⁸

18 He led away all his livestock, together with all the possessions that he had amassed—the purchases he had made with the profit from the sale of his animal property—the handmaids, servants, camels, and donkeys¹⁹⁹ that he had acquired in Padan Aram, to go to his father Isaac in Canaan.

19 Meanwhile, Laban had gone off to shear his sheep, which were in the care of his sons, three days' journey from Jacob's herd. When Jacob and his family set out, **Rachel stole the idols that belonged to her father**, hoping in this way to wean him from idolatry.

20 Jacob duped Laban the Aramean by not telling him that he was fleeing,

21 and he fled with all he owned. He set out and crossed the Euphrates River and headed for Mount Gilead.

22 On the third day after Jacob left, Laban was informed that Jacob had fled.

23 So, on the fourth day, he took along his kinsmen and pursued him for the distance of a seven-day journey, catching up with him at nightfall at Mount Gilead (see Figure 35).

24 God appeared to Laban the Aramean in a dream that night, and said to him, "Beware of speaking with Jacob, either with good or bad intent. Even if you decide to speak nicely to him, you have proven yourself so evil that he would rather not have anything to do with you."



Figure 35: Jacob Flees from Laban.

INNER DIMENSIONS

[23] **He...pursued him:** The Torah's commandments can be grouped into those that can be performed intentionally, such as giving charity, and those that can only be performed through some unintended circumstance, such as the commandment to leave

the forgotten sheaf for the poor.²⁰⁰ (Although leaving a forgotten sheaf for the poor is a conscious act, forgetting the sheaf to begin with cannot be, since one cannot consciously forget something.)

The first type of commandment stems from God's

¹⁹⁸. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 30, pp. 141-144. Cf. 36:6, below. ¹⁹⁹. Above, 30:43. ²⁰⁰. Deuteronomy 24:19.

ONKELOS

25 וַיִּשָּׁג לָבֶן אֶת־יַעֲקֹב וַיַּעֲקֹב יָת יַעֲקֹב וַיַּעֲקֹב פָּרַס
 ית משכנה בטורא ולבן אשרי ית
 אחוהי בטורא דגלעד: 26 ואמר
 לבן לייעקב מא עבדת וכסית מני
 ודברת ית בנתי כשבית חרבא:
 27 למא אשמרת למיזל וכסית מני
 ולא חוית לי ושלחתך פון בחדוא
 ובתשבחון בתפין ובכנרין: 28 ולא
 שבקתני לנשקא לבני ולבנתי
 כען אסבילת למעבד: 29 אית
 חילא בידי למעבד עמכון בישא
 ואלהא דאבוכון ברמשא אמר לי
 למימר אסתמר לך מלמולא עם
 יעקב מטב עד ביש: 30 וכען מיזל
 אזלתא ארי חמדא חמידת לבית
 אבון למא נסיבתא ית דחלתי:
 31 ואתיב יעקב ואמר ללבן ארי
 דחלית ארי אמרית דלמא תינוס
 ית בנתך מני: 32 אתר די תשכח
 ית דחלתך לא יתקום קדם אחנא
 אשתמודע לך מא דעמי וסב לך
 ולא ידע יעקב ארי רחל נסיבתון:
 33 ועל לבן במשכנא דיעקב
 ובמשכנא דלאה ובמשכנא
 דרתין לחינתא ולא אשכח ונפק
 ממשכנא דלאה ועל במשכנא
 דרחל: 34 ורחל נסיבת ית צלמניא
 ושויתנן בעביטא דגמלא ויתיבת
 עליהון ומשש לבן ית כל משכנא
 ולא אשכח:

25 וישג לבן את־יעקב ויעקב תקע את־אהלו בחר
 ולבן תקע את־אחיו בחר הגלעד: 26 ויאמר לבן לייעקב
 מה עשית ותגנב את־לבבי ותנהג את־בנתי כשביות
 חרב: 27 למה נחפאת לברח ותגנב אותי ולא־הגדת
 לי ואשלחך בשמחה ובשרים בתך ובכנור: 28 ולא
 נטשתני לנשק לבני ולבנתי עתה הסבלת עשוי: 29 יש
 לאל ידי לעשות עמכם רע ואלהי אביכם אמר | אמר
 אלי לאמר השמר לך מדבר עם־יעקב מטוב עד־רע:
 30 ועתה הלך הלכת כי־נכסף נכספתה לבית אביך
 למה גנבת את־אלהי: 31 ויען יעקב ויאמר ללבן כי
 יראתי כי אמרתי פן־תגזל את־בנותיך מעמי: 32 עם
 אשר תמצא את־אלהיך לא יחיה נגד אחינו הבר־
 לך מה עמדי וקח־לך ולא־ידע יעקב כי רחל גנבתם:
 33 ויבא לבן באהל־יעקב | ובאהל לאה ובאהל שתי
 האמהות ולא מצא ויצא מאהל לאה ויבא באהל רחל:
 34 ורחל לקחה את־התרפים ותשמש בכר הנמל
 ותשב עליהם וימשש לבן את־כל־האהל ולא מצא:

RASHI

יעקב תדיר אצלה, וכן הוא אומר: "בני רחל אשת
 יעקב", ובבלין לא נאמר "אשת יעקב", ויבא באהל
 רחל. כשיצא מאהל לאה חזר לו לאהל רחל, קדם
 שחפש באהל האמהות. וכל כך למה? לפי שהיה מכיר
 בה שהיא משמשנית: 34 בכר הגמל. לשון כרים
 וכסתות, כתרוממו: "בעביטא דגמלא", והיא מרדעת
 העשויה כמין כר. ובערובין⁹¹ שנינו: הקיפוה בעביטין.
 והן עביטי גמלים, בשטי"ל בלעז⁹²:

26 כשביות חרב. כל חיל הבא למלחמה קרוי "חרב".
 27 ותגנב אתי. גנבת את דעתי: 29 יש לאל ידי. יש
 בך וחיל בידי "לעשות עמכם רע". וכל "אל" שהוא
 לשון קדש, על שם עזוז ורב אונים הוא: 30 נכספתה.
 חמדת. והרבה יש במקרא: "נכספה וגם כלתה נפשי"⁸⁷,
 "למעשה ידיך תכסף"⁸⁸: 31 כי יראתי וגו'. השיבו
 על ראשון ראשון, שאמר לו: "ותנהג את בנתי" וגו':
 32 לא יחיה. ומאותה קללה מתה רחל בדרך: מה
 עמדי. משלה: 33 באהל יעקב. הוא אהל רחל, שהיה

87. תהלים פד, ג. 88. איוב יד, טו. 89. פסוק כו. 90. בראשית מו, יט. 91. טו, א. 92. אקף.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

able. When we consider how long the exile has continued, we might erroneously feel that our longing has not born any fruit. The truth is, however, that the more

pain we feel over the intolerable length of the exile, the more we should intensify our longing for the Redemption.²⁰⁵

205. Hittva'aduyot 5746, vol. 1, pp. 655-656, 664-665.

25 The next morning, **Laban overtook Jacob's entourage. Jacob had already pitched his tent on the mountain, and Laban along with his kinsmen also set up his camp on Mount Gilead.**

26 Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done? You duped me and led my daughters away like prisoners of war!"

27 Why did you flee surreptitiously, deceiving me and telling me nothing? Why, had you told me you wanted to leave, I would have sent you off with rejoicing and songs, with drum and with lyre!

28 You did not even let me kiss my grandsons and daughters. You have now acted foolishly and will suffer the consequences.

29 It is within in my power to do you harm, but the God of your father spoke to me last night and said, 'Beware of speaking with Jacob, either with good or bad intent.'

30 Why is it that **you departed** this way **now**? I cannot fathom this, **because you longed repeatedly** over the last six years **for your father's home**;²⁰³ nevertheless, you never before attempted to flee. You always discussed the situation with me and I explained to you why it was worth your while to stay with me. And you have done well; I have made you very wealthy.²⁰⁴

And why did you steal my gods?"

31 Jacob responded to Laban's questions in the order in which they were posed to him. He said to Laban, "I fled because I was afraid, for I thought that you might take your daughters away from me by force.

32 As for your idols, **anyone** among my household members **with whom you find your gods shall not live! In the presence of our kinsmen, identify for yourself whatever of yours is in my possession and take it back."** Jacob did not realize that Rachel had stolen them; it was on account of Jacob's inadvertent curse that Rachel died on the journey.

33 So Laban entered Rachel's—i.e., Jacob's—tent first, since she was his primary wife—and only after that did he enter Leah's tent. He then searched Rachel's tent a second time. Finally, he searched **the tents of the two bondwomen, but he found nothing.** The reason **he went back into Rachel's tent** to search it again **when he left Leah's tent** was because he knew Rachel to be meddlesome, and he suspected her of having stolen his idols.

34 Now Rachel had taken the idols and placed them inside the camel's saddle, and sat on them, so when Laban rummaged through the entire tent, he found nothing.

❧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ❧

30 You longed repeatedly for your father's home: As we have seen, Jacob's sojourn with Laban portended our own sojourn in exile. Just as Jacob was never comfortable in his place of exile and constantly yearned

to return to his father's home, so must we, too, yearn for our Father's "home." No matter how successful we are in fulfilling our Divine mission in exile, we must never allow ourselves to feel complacent or comfort-

203. Above, 30:25-27. 204. *Hitva'aduyot* 5746, vol. 1, pp. 655-656, 664-665.

ONKELOS

35 וְאָמַרְתָּ לְאִבּוֹהָא לֹא יִתְקַף בְּעֵינֵי רַבּוּנֵי אַרִי לֹא אִבּוֹל לְמִקָּם מִן הַדְּמָה אַרִי אוֹרַח נִשְׁנִי לִי וְגַלֵּשׁ וְלֹא אֲשַׁכַּח יֵת צְלֻמְנָא: 36 וְתִקְוִי לְיַעֲקֹב וְנִצָּא עִם לָבָן וְאֶתֵּיב יַעֲקֹב וְאָמַר לְלָבָן מָא חֻבִּי מָא סוֹרְחָנִי יֵת כָּל מְנִי מָא אֲשַׁכַּחַת מִכָּל מְנִי בֵיתָךְ שׁוֹי הָכָא קָדָם אַחֵי וְאֶחָיִךְ וְיִכְחֹן בֵּין תְּרוּנָא: 38 דָּנָן עֲשְׂרִין שָׁנִין אָנָּה עִמָּךְ רַחֲלִיךְ וְעוֹיָךְ לֹא אֶתְכִּילוּ וְדָכְרִי עָנָךְ לֹא אָכְלִית: 39 דִּתְבִּירָא לֹא אֵיתִיתִי לְוֹתָךְ דִּהּוֹת שְׁנִיא מִמְּנִינָא מְנִי אֵת בְּעִי לֵה נִטְרִית בִּימְמָא וְנִטְרִית בְּלִילָא: 40 הָוִיתִי בִּימְמָא אָכְלִנִי שְׂרָבָא וְגַלְדָּא נָחַת עָלֵי בְלִילָא וְגַדַּת שְׁנֵיתִי מִעֵינֵי: 41 דָּנָן לִי עֲשְׂרִין שָׁנִין בְּבֵיתָךְ פְּלַחְתָּךְ אַרְבַּע עָשָׂר שָׁנִין בְּתֵרִין בְּנֵתָךְ וְשִׁית שָׁנִין בְּעָנָךְ וְאֲשֵׁנִית יֵת אַגְרִי עֲשֵׂר וּמִנִּין:

35 וְתֹאמַר אֶל-אֲבִיהָ אֶל-יִחָר בְּעֵינֵי אֲדָנִי כִּי לֹא אוֹכַל לָקוּם מִפְּנֵיךְ כִּי-יֵרָדָךְ נָשִׁים לִי וַיַּחַפֵּשׂ וְלֹא מִצָּא אֶת-הַתְּרָפִים: 36 וַיִּחָר לְיַעֲקֹב וַיִּרְבַּ בְּלָבָן וַיַּעַן יַעֲקֹב וַיֹּאמֶר לְלָבָן מַה-פָּשְׁעִי מַה חַטָּאתִי כִּי דָלַקְתָּ אֹתִי: 37 כִּי-מִשְׁשַׁת אֶת-כָּל-כְּלִי מַה-מִּצָּאתָ מִכָּל כְּלִי-בֵיתְךָ שֵׁים כֹּה נִגַּד אַחֵי וְאֶחָיִךְ וַיִּכְחוּ בֵּין שְׁנֵינוּ: 38 זֶה עֲשָׂרִים שָׁנָה אֲנִכִּי עִמָּךְ רַחֲלִיךְ וְעוֹיָךְ לֹא שָׁכְלוּ וְאִילִי צֹאנְךָ לֹא אָכְלִיתִי: 39 טֶרְפָּה לֹא-הִבֵּאתִי אֵלֶיךָ אֲנִכִּי אֶחָטָנָה מִיָּדִי תִבְקֶשֶׁנָּה גִּנְבֹתִי יוֹם וַיִּגְנַבְתִּי לָיְלָה: 40 הָיִיתִי בַּיּוֹם אָכְלִנִי חֶרֶב וְקָרַח בְּלִילָה וַתִּגְדַּד שְׁנֵיתִי מִעֵינֵי: 41 זֶה-לִּי עֲשָׂרִים שָׁנָה בְּבֵיתְךָ עֲבַדְתִּיךָ אַרְבַּע-עָשָׂר שָׁנָה בְּשֵׂתִי בְּנֵתְךָ וְשֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים בְּצֹאנְךָ וַתַּחֲלֶנָּה אֶת-מִשְׁכַּבְּתִּי עֲשֶׂרֶת מָנִים:

RASHI

אֶחָטָנָה. תְּרָגוּמוֹ: "דִּהּוֹת שְׁנִיא מִמְּנִינָא" שְׁהִיְתָה נִפְקֶדֶת וּמִחֲסָרְתָּ, כְּמוֹ: "וְלֹא נִפְקֶד מִמֶּנּוּ אִישׁ", תְּרָגוּמוֹ: "וְלֹא שְׁנֵיא": גִּנְבֹתִי יוֹם וַיִּגְנַבְתִּי לָיְלָה. גִּנְבֹת יוֹם אִזְּ גִּנְבֹת לָיְלָה, הִכָּל שְׁלֵמֹתִי: גִּנְבֹתִי. כְּמוֹ: "רַבְתִּי בַּגּוֹיִם שְׂרָתִי בְּמִדִּינוֹת"⁹², "מִלְאֵתִי מִשְׁפֹּט"⁹³, "אֶהְבֵּתִי לְדוֹשׁ"⁹⁴: 40 אָכְלִנִי חֶרֶב. לְשׁוֹן "אִשׁ אָכְלָה"⁹⁵: וְקָרַח. כְּמוֹ: "מִשְׁלִיךְ קָרַחוֹ", תְּרָגוּמוֹ: "גִּלְדָּא": שְׁנֵיתִי. לְשׁוֹן שְׁנָה: 41 וַתַּחֲלֶנָּה אֶת מִשְׁכַּבְּתִּי. הָיִיתָ מִשְׁנָה תְּנָאִי שְׁבִינִינִי, מִנְקֶד לְטִלוֹא וּמִעֲקָדִים לְבָרִדִּים:

36 דָּלַקְתָּ. רַדְפָּת, כְּמוֹ: "עַל הָהָרִים דָּלְקִינוּ", וְכְמוֹ: "מִדְּלֹק אַחֲרֵי פִלְשְׁתִּים": 37 וַיִּכְחוּ. וַיִּכְרְרוּ עִם מִי הָדִין. אֶפְרוֹבִי"ר בְּלַעְזִי: 38 לֹא שָׁכְלוּ. לֹא הִפִּילוּ עֲבוּרָם, כְּמוֹ: "רָחֹם מִשְׁכִּיל"⁹⁶, "תִּפְלֹט פָּרְתוֹ וְלֹא תִשְׁכַּל"⁹⁷: וְאִילִי צֹאנְךָ. מִכָּאן אֶמְרוּ: "אֵיל בֶּן יוֹמוֹ קָרוֹי "אֵיל". שָׂאם לֹא בֶן, מַה שְׁבָחוּ, אֵילִים לֹא אָכַל אָכַל כְּבָשִׁים אָכַל, אִם בֶּן גֹּזֶל הוּא: 39 טֶרְפָּה. עַל יְדֵי אַרִי וְזֹאב: אֲנִכִּי אֶחָטָנָה. לְשׁוֹן "קָלַע בָּאָבֶן אֶל הַשְּׁעָרָה וְלֹא יִחָטָא"⁹⁸, "אֲנִי וּבְנֵי שְׁלֹמֹה חָטָאִים"⁹⁹, חֲסָרִים. אֲנִכִּי אֶחָטָרְנָה, אִם חֲסָרָה חֲסָרָה לִי, שְׁ"מִיָּדִי תִבְקֶשֶׁנָּה": אֲנִכִּי

93. איכה ד, יט. 94. שמואלא יז, גג. 95. לְבָרַךְ. 96. הוֹשֵׁעַ ט, יד. 97. אִיּוֹב כא, י. 98. בַּבָּא קַמָּא סה, ב. 99. שׁוֹפְטִים כ, טז. 100. מַלְכִּים א, כא. 101. בַּמְדַּבֵּר לֹא, מִט. 102. איכה א, א. 103. יִשְׁעָה א, כא. 104. הוֹשֵׁעַ י, יא. 105. דְּבָרִים ד, כד. 106. תְּהִלִּים קמז, יז.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

psalms: "I am for peace, but when I speak, [my enemies] are for war."²¹⁴ Spiritually, this means that although we seek to fulfill our Divine mission in peace, unencumbered by the adversity of spiritual darkness and temptation, God presents us with challenges and tests. Nonetheless, when we cultivate the proper attitude, these tests not only do not distract us from our Divine mission; on the contrary, they call forth our inner strength and joy.

As we have seen, Jacob's sojourn with Laban prefigures our sojourn in exile. Like Jacob, we too are immersed in intense spiritual darkness. It is not difficult for us to at times to despond and cry out in desperation, "From where will my aid come?" But it is precisely at

such moments that we are enjoined to recall that the very purpose of the darkness is to elevate us to greater heights, to bring us to the time of true spiritual enlightenment in the messianic age. When we focus on the ultimate goal and objective, we are not only undeterred by the darkness of exile, we are filled with joy.

In practical terms, we learn from Jacob that as we pursue our mundane affairs, immersed in "Charan," we can—and must—simultaneously pursue holy matters. Whenever we have a free moment, we should use it for prayer or studying the Torah. We are then assured of God's assistance in helping us fulfill the mission for which we were sent to "Charan."²¹⁵

214. Psalms 120:7. 215. Likutei Sichot, vol. 20, pp. 124-128, vol. 3, pp. 791-792. See Hayom Yom, 21 Kislev, 11 Tevet, 9 Adar I, 7 Adar II.

35 She said to her father, “Let my lord not be upset that I cannot rise before you, for it is my time of the month.” He searched, but did not find the idols.

36 Jacob was angered, and he took up his grievance with Laban. Jacob spoke up and said to Laban, “What is my crime and what is my guilt, that you have hotly pursued me?

37 Look, you rummaged through all my belongings—what did you find of all your household objects? Place it here, in front of my kinsmen and yours, and let them adjudicate the dispute between the two of us!

38 During these twenty years that I have been with you, your ewes and she-goats never miscarried, nor did I ever eat a ram or anything else from your flocks.

39 I never brought you an animal maimed by a wild beast; even though I was not required to absorb its loss, I would bear its loss because you would unfairly exact its value from my hand. Furthermore, I absorbed the loss of every stolen animal, whether it was stolen by day or by night.

40 This is how I existed: I was consumed by day by scorching heat and at night by frost, and sleep deserted my eyes.

41 It is now twenty years that I have been in your household—fourteen years I worked for you for your two daughters, and six years for your flocks—and you changed the conditions of my payment, that is, the type of animals I was to receive, a hundred times.²⁰⁶

✧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ✧

40 Consumed by day by scorching heat and at night by frost, and sleep deserted my eyes: Our bodies belong to God; we therefore have no right to afflict them or injure them.²⁰⁷ Nevertheless, we derive from Jacob’s behavior that in order to earn a living, we are permitted to engage in work that might afflict the body.²⁰⁸ Spiritually, this means that Jacob sacrificed his own comfort in order to redeem the sparks of holiness embedded in Laban’s domain. Like Jacob, we too should engage in our Divine mission even at the expense of our personal comfort.²⁰⁹

Sleep deserted my eyes: Jacob was so devoted to his work that throughout the twenty years he worked for Laban, he never lay down to sleep.²¹⁰ As we have seen, Jacob saw his work as a means of harnessing the holy energy that existed in Laban’s domain.

He was also well aware of Laban’s efforts to corrupt him and to thwart his spiritual success. Jacob therefore never “slept,” but rather remained constantly vigilant, ensuring that he remain true to the ideals of Torah so that he would succeed in his mission.

Jacob remained focused on his mission by constantly immersing himself in prayer. The Midrash relates that Jacob recited psalms, particularly Psalms 120-134, all of which open with the words “A song of ascents.”²¹¹

These fifteen psalms correspond to the fifteen years in which the lives of all three patriarchs overlapped.²¹² By reciting these psalms, Jacob evoked the merit and strength of his father and grandfather, which, together with his own merits and strength, enabled him to withstand the spiritual darkness of Charan.

Additionally, the content of these fifteen psalms related poignantly to Jacob’s situation. When he said the words, “I lift my eyes to the mountains, from where will my aid come? My aid comes from God, Creator of heaven and earth,”²¹³ he reinforced his conviction that he could not rely solely on his own efforts, but had to invoke God’s help to succeed.

These fifteen psalms are all entitled “songs,” denoting joy, for by renewing our trust in God, we renew our confidence in our success. Thus, Jacob managed to remain joyful despite his disheartening sojourn with Laban, for he realized that through this sojourn, he would grow spiritually and merit fathering righteous children, who were to become the foundations of the Jewish people. Jacob could be joyful because his constantly renewed faith allowed him to foresee the immense rewards of his tribulations.

The ideal of remaining joyful despite adversity is expressed in the final verse of the first of these fifteen

206. Above, v. 7. 207. Commentary of Rabbi David ben Zimri on *Mishneh Torah*, *Sanhedrin* 18:7. 208. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, *Choshen Mishpat*, *Nizkei Guf* 1:4; *Kuntres Acharon* (ad loc.) 2. 209. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 1, pp. 77-78. 210. *Bereishit Rabbah* 68:11. 211. Ibid. 212. *Yosef Tehilot* (Chida) on psalm 120. See above on 25:7. 213. Psalms 121:1-2.

— ONKELOS —

42 אלולפון אלהה דאבא אלהה
דאברהם ודחיל לה יצחק הנה
בסעדי ארי כען ריקן שלחתני
ית עמלי וית לאות ידי גלי קדם
יי ואוכח ברמשא: 43 ואתיב לכן
ואמר לייעקב בנתא בנתי ובניא
בני וענא עני וכל די את חזי דיילי
הוא ולבנתי מה אעבד לאלין
יומא דין או לבניהון דיילידא:
44 וכען אתא נגור קים אנא ואת
יהי לסהיד ביני ובינך: 45 ונסיב
יעקב אבנא וקפה קמא: 46 ואמר
יעקב לאחוזי לקוטו אבני ונסיבו
אבנין ועבדו דגורא ואכלו תמן
על דגורא: 47 וקרא לה לכן יגר
שהדותא ויעקב קרא לה גלעד:
48 ואמר לכן דגורא הדין סהיד
ביני ובינך יומא דין על כן קרא
שמה גלעד: 49 וסכותא די אמר
יסף מימרא דין ביני ובינך ארי
נתפסי גבר מחברה: 50 אם תעני
ית בנתי ואם תסב נשין על בנתי
לית אנש עמנא חזי מימרא דין
סהיד ביני ובינך:

42 לוֹלֵי אֱלֹהֵי אָבִי אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם וַפְּחַד יִצְחָק הִיָּה לִי
כִּי עָתָה רִיקָם שְׁלַחְתָּנִי אֶת־עֲנִי וְאֶת־יָנִיעַ כְּפִי רֹאֵה
אֱלֹהִים וַיּוֹכַח אִמְשׁ:

שביעי 43 וַיַּעַן לָכֵן וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־יַעֲקֹב הַפְּנוֹת בְּנֹתַי וְהַבְּנִים
בְּנֵי וְהַצֵּאן צֵאֲנִי וְכָל אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה רֹאֶה לִי־הוּא וְלַבְּנֹתַי
מִה־אֶעֱשֶׂה לְאֵלֶּה הַיּוֹם אוֹ לַבְּנִיהֶן אֲשֶׁר יֵלְדוּ: 44 וְעָתָה
לֵכָה נִכְרְתָה בְּרִית אֲנִי וְאַתָּה וְהִיָּה לְעֵד בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ:
45 וַיִּקַּח יַעֲקֹב אֲבֹן וַיְרִימָהּ מִצֵּבָה: 46 וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב
לְאָחִיו לְקַטְו אֲבָנִים וַיִּקְחוּ אֲבָנִים וַיַּעֲשׂוּ־גִל וַיֹּאכְלוּ שָׁם
עַל־הַגִּל: 47 וַיִּקְרָא־לוֹ לָכֵן יֵגֶר שְׁהֻדוּתָא וַיַּעֲקֹב קָרָא לֹו
גִּלְעָד: 48 וַיֹּאמֶר לָכֵן הַגִּל הַזֶּה עֵד בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ הַיּוֹם עַל־
כֵּן קָרָא־שְׁמוֹ גִּלְעָד: 49 וְהַמִּצֵּפָה אֲשֶׁר אָמַר יִצְחָק יְהוּה
בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ כִּי נִסְתַּר אִישׁ מִרְעֵהוּ: 50 אִם־תִּעֲנֶנָּה אֶת־
בְּנֹתַי וְאִם־תִּתְקַח נָשִׁים עַל־בְּנֹתַי אֵין אִישׁ עִמָּנוּ רֹאֵה
אֱלֹהִים עַד בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ:

— RASHI —

שהדותא. תרגומו של "גלעד": 48 על כן קרא שמו
גלעד. גל עד: 49 והמצפה אשר אמר וגו'. והמצפה
אשר בחר הגלעד, וכמו שכתוב²²⁰: "ויעבר את מצפה
גלעד". ולמה נקרא שמה "מצפה"? לפי שאמר כל אחד
מהם לחברו: "יצף ה' ביני ובינך", אם תעבר את חברי:
כי נסתר. ולא נראה איש את רעהו: 50 בנתי בנתי.
שתי פעמים, אף בלהה וולפה בנותיו היו מפילגש: אם
תענה את בנתי. למנוע מהן עונת תשמיש:

42 ופחד יצחק. לא רצה לומר "אלהי יצחק", שאין
הקדוש ברוך הוא מיוחד שמו על הצדיקים בחייהם.
ואף על פי שאמר לו בצאתו מבאר שבע²²¹: "אני ה'
אלהי אברהם אביך ואלהי יצחק", בשביל שבהו עיניו
והרי הוא כמת. ויעקב נתירא לומר: "ואלהי" ואמר
"ופחד": ויוכח. לשון תוכחה הוא, ולא לשון הוכחה:
43 מה אעשה לאלה. איך תעלה על לבי להרע להן:
44 והיה לעד. הקדוש ברוך הוא: 46 לאחיו. הם בניו,
שהיו לו אחים, נגשים אליו לצרה ולמלחמה: 47 יגר

107. בראשית כח, יג. 108. שופטים יא, כט.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

Laban's claim also exists on a deeper level. He understood that Jacob was involved in the material world only for the sake of refining it, and he was also aware that God is the true and sole source of sustenance. But, Laban claimed, one who wrestles with a filthy opponent will soon himself become filthy.²²⁰ Our involvement with mundane activities, regardless of our intentions, perforce corrupts us, marring our previously unsullied connection with God. Involvement in the

business world demands total immersion in the culture and approach of that world, forcing us to behave similarly to our colleagues.

The truth, however, is that when our involvement in the material world is firmly based on purely spiritual intentions, we do not become sullied or corrupted. On the contrary: we are elevated. With the proper precautions, we will not only not be influenced by our environment, but sanctify it, and grow spiritually from the challenge.²²¹

220. Tanya, chapter 28. 221. Hitva'aduyot 5716, vol. 3, pp. 83-85.

42 If the God of my father—the God of Abraham, who is the object of Isaac’s dread—had not been with me, you would now have sent me off empty-handed! But God saw my plight and the toil of my hands, and He rebuked you last night. Jacob did not refer to God as “the God of Isaac,” for Isaac was still alive, and God does not usually refer to Himself as “the God of” a person during his lifetime.²¹⁶

◆ **Seventh Reading 43 Laban responded and said to Jacob, “The daughters are my daughters, the children are my grandchildren, the flocks are my flocks, and all that you see is mine! As to my daughters, how could I do anything injurious to them today, or to the children they have borne?**

44 So come now, let us make a covenant, I and you, and may God be a witness between me and you.”

45 Jacob then took a stone and erected it as a monument.

46 Jacob said to his kinsmen—his sons—“Gather stones,” so they took stones and formed a mound, and they ate there on the mound.

47 Laban named it Yegar Sahaduta [Aramaic for “Mound of Testimony”], and Jacob named it Gal-Ed [Hebrew for the same].

48 Laban said, “This mound shall be a witness between you and me today.” It was therefore named Gal-Ed,

49 and also The Mitzpah [“the Lookout”], for Laban had said, “May God keep watch between me and you when we are out of each other’s sight and cannot observe each other, that we not violate our covenant.

50 If you ill-treat my daughters by refusing them their conjugal rights, or marry other women in addition to my daughters—though there may be no one else present observing us, be aware that God is a witness between me and you.”

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

42 If the God of my father—the God of Abraham, Isaac’s dread—had not been with me: As we have mentioned, Abraham personified love and kindness (*chesed*) and Isaac personified stringency and awe (*gevurah*). Jacob was the embodiment of the third of the ten Divine attributes, beauty (*tiferet*), meaning a harmonious blending of opposites. Jacob successfully blended the traits of Abraham and Isaac; he was therefore able to state that both the God of Abraham and the Dread of Isaac were with him, i.e., synthesized and incorporated into his life.²¹⁷

43 The children are my children, the flocks are my flocks: Laban’s claim against Jacob can be understood as the eternal dispute between the spiritual “Laban”—the voices from within and without that seek to thwart our spiritual progress—and the spiritual “Jacob”—our Divine souls. “Laban” says to us:

“I am willing to concede that you should live *your* life Jewishly. After all, you belong to the old generation, so it’s okay for you to be old-fashioned. But I’m not will-

ing to yield the children—the new generation. Why should they grow up adhering to these outdated rituals? These children are the product of modern times and should be raised in the spirit of modernity and progress!

“Furthermore, your obstinate adherence to religious observance is only acceptable in the synagogue, when you are praying or studying the Torah. But when you are outside the synagogue, ‘tending your flocks’ and pursuing your livelihood, you must do it my way. You must leave behind the Torah’s moral and ethical standards of behavior and conduct business in the ‘normal,’ unscrupulous manner. Otherwise, how do you expect to earn a living?”²¹⁸

The response to Laban’s claim is obvious: Although materiality may appear to be the domain of Laban alone, it is in fact very much part of God’s domain; our mission is to elevate it and sanctify it by conducting our affairs in accordance with the Torah’s lofty expectations of us.²¹⁹

^{216.} Above, 28:13. ^{217.} *Sichot Kodesh* 5739, vol. 1, p. 300; *Sefer HaMa’amarim* 5720, p. 106. ^{218.} *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 3, p. 790. ^{219.} *Hitva’aduyot* 5742, vol. 2, pp. 900-901.

ONKELOS

51 וַיֹּאמֶר לָבָן לַיַּעֲקֹב הָאֵל דְּגִוְרָא
הָדִין וְהָאֵל קָמְתָא דִּי אַקְיָמִית בִּינִי
וּבִינָךְ: 52 סְהִיד דְּגִוְרָא הָדִין וְסְהִידָא
קָמְתָא אִם אָנָּא לֹא אַעֲבֵר לְוַתְךָ
יֵת דְּגִוְרָא הָדִין וְאִם אֵת לֹא תַעֲבֵר
לְוַתִּי יֵת דְּגִוְרָא הָדִין וְיֵת קָמְתָא
הָאֵל לְבִישׁוֹ: 53 אֱלֹהִים דְּאַבְרָהָם
וְאֱלֹהִים דְּנָחוֹר יְדוּנוּן בִּינָנָא אֱלֹהִים
דְּאַבְרָהָם וְקִיָּים יַעֲקֹב בְּדַחֲחִיל
לֵה אַבְרָהָם יַעֲקֹב: 54 וְנָכִיס יַעֲקֹב
נָכִסְתָּא בְּטוֹרָא וְקָרָא לְאַחֻזֵּי
לְמִיכַל לְחָמָא וְאַכְלוּ לְחָמָא וּבְתוֹ
בְּטוֹרָא: 32:1 וְאַקְדִּים לָבָן בְּצַפְרָא
וְנָשִׁיק לְבִגְדֵי וּלְבִגְדֵי וּבִרְיָךְ
יִתְחַזֵּן וְאִזֵּל וְתֵב לָבָן לְאַתְרָהּ:
2 וַיַּעֲקֹב אִזֵּל לְאַרְחָהּ וַעֲרֵעָהּ בָּהּ
מִלְּאַבְיָא דִּי:

51 וַיֹּאמֶר לָבָן לַיַּעֲקֹב הִנֵּה הַגִּל הַזֶּה וְהִנֵּה הַמִּצְבָּה
אֲשֶׁר יָרִיתִי בֵּינִי וּבֵינָךְ: 52 עַד הַגִּל הַזֶּה וְעַד הַמִּצְבָּה
אֲסִי־אֲנִי לֹא־אֶעֱבֹר אֵלֶיךָ אֶת־הַגִּל הַזֶּה וְאִם־אֵתָּה לֹא־
תַעֲבֹר אֵלַי אֶת־הַגִּל הַזֶּה וְאֶת־הַמִּצְבָּה הַזֹּאת לְרַעְיָה:
53 אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם וְאֱלֹהֵי נָחוֹר יִשְׁפְּטוּ בֵּינֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵי
אֲבִיהֶם וַיִּשְׁבַּע יַעֲקֹב בְּפָתוֹר אָבִיו יַעֲקֹב: 54 וַיִּזְבַּח יַעֲקֹב
זֶבֶח בָּהָר וַיִּקְרָא לְאֶחָיו לְאָכַל־לֶחֶם וַיֹּאכְלוּ לֶחֶם וַיְלִינוּ
בָּהָר:

מפסיד 32:1 וַיִּשְׁבַּע לָבָן בְּפָתוֹר וַיִּנְשֹׁק לְבִגְדֵי וּלְבִגְדֵי
וַיְבָרֶךְ אֶתְהֶם וַיִּזְלַךְ וַיֵּשֶׁב לָבָן לְמִקְמוֹ: 2 וַיַּעֲקֹב הָלַךְ
לְדַרְכּוֹ וַיִּפְגְּעוּ־בּוֹ מַלְאַכֵי אֱלֹהִים:

RASHI

זֶבֶח. שְׁחַט בְּהֵמוֹת לְמִשְׁתָּה: לְאַחֻזֵּי. לְאוֹהֲבֵי שְׁעֵם
לָבָן: לְאָכַל לֶחֶם. כָּל דְּבַר מֵאָכַל קְרוֹי "לֶחֶם", כְּמוֹ:
"עֲבַד לֶחֶם רַב"¹¹¹, "נִשְׁחַזְיָתָה עַץ בְּלִחְמוֹ"¹¹²: 2 וַיִּפְגְּעוּ
בּוֹ מַלְאַכֵי אֱלֹהִים. מַלְאַכִּים שֶׁל אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּאוּ
לְקָרְאָתוֹ, לְלוֹוֹתוֹ לְאַרְצָהּ:

51 יָרִיתִי. כְּמוֹ¹⁰⁹: "יָרָה בַּיָּם", כִּזֶּה שֶׁהוּא יוֹרָה הַחֵץ:
52 אִם אֲנִי. הָרִי "אִם" מְשֻׁמֵּשׁ בְּלִשׁוֹן "אֲשֶׁר", כְּמוֹ¹¹⁰:
"עַד אִם דְּבָרְתִי דְּבָרִי": לְרַעְיָה. לְרַעְיָה אִי אֵתָה עוֹבֵר,
אָכַל אֵתָה עוֹבֵר לְפָרְקֻמְטָא: 53 אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם. קֹדֶשׁ:
וְאֱלֹהֵי נָחוֹר. חוֹל: אֱלֹהֵי אֲבִיהֶם. חוֹל: 54 וַיִּזְבַּח יַעֲקֹב

109. שְׁמוֹת טו, ד. 110. בְּרֵאשִׁית כד, לג. 111. דְּנִיאל ח, א. 112. יִרְמְיָה יא, יט.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

days of exile, we enjoy the protection of both types of angels: those who protect us in our temporary sojourn in the lands of the Diaspora, as well as those who have left the Land of Israel in order to escort us back. Know-

ing that God has provided us with both types of angels affords us a heightened appreciation of the significance of our mission, as well as the strength of purpose to remain focused upon its completion.²²⁹

A CLOSER LOOK

[54] Jacob then slaughtered animals on the mountain: As a rule, the Torah does not detail the preparations made for feasts²³⁰ unless there is what to be learned from the particulars of the preparations. The Torah therefore goes into great detail in describing the feast Abraham prepared for the angels,²³¹ for ex-

ample, in order to demonstrate Abraham's hospitality, which should serve as an example for us. In this verse, because Jacob was eating with people who had not undertaken to follow the Torah's laws, as he had, he had to slaughter the animals himself, to ensure that the meat would be kosher.²³²

INNER DIMENSIONS

[1] Laban arose early in the morning, kissed his grandsons and his daughters, and blessed them: As we have seen,²³³ Laban in his Divine source embodies the Divine essence. Spiritually, then, Laban's kiss alludes to God's "kissing" Jacob's children and

all his future descendants, granting them the ultimate experience of oneness with God's essence.

This revelation of the Divine essence gave Jacob the strength to overcome Esau's angel, whom Jacob encountered shortly afterward.²³⁴

229. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 25, pp. 150-158. 230. See, for example, 19:3 and 21:8 above. 231. Above, 18:6-8. 232. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 35, p. 185. 233. On 31:10, above. 234. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, p. 263.

51 Even though he had merely suggested that they make a covenant but had not actually participated in erecting the monument, **Laban said to Jacob, “Here is this mound, and here is the monument that I have erected between me and you.**

52 **This mound shall be a witness, and the monument shall be a witness, that I will not cross over to you beyond this mound, and that you will not cross over to me beyond this mound and this pillar, with hostile intent.** We may, however, cross beyond it for business purposes.

53 **May the God of your grandfather Abraham, the gods of my grandfather Nachor, and the gods of Abraham’s and Nachor’s father Terach, judge between us.” Jacob swore by the Dread of his father Isaac.**

54 **Jacob then slaughtered animals on the mountain for a celebratory feast, and invited all his kinsmen to eat a meal together.** Jacob slaughtered the animals himself in order to adhere to the Torah’s laws of kosher slaughter.²²² **They had a meal and spent the night on the mountain.**

◆ **Maftir 32:1 Laban arose early in the morning, kissed his grandsons and his daughters, and blessed them. Then Laban left and returned to his home.**

2 **Jacob continued on his way, and angels of God who were stationed in the Land of Israel went out to greet him and escort him back.** Since their mission was to bring him into the Land of Israel, they were permitted by God to leave its borders²²³ for this purpose and join the angels that had been accompanying him up until then.²²⁴

✧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ✧

52 **I will not cross over to you...you will not cross over to me...with hostile intent. We may, however, cross beyond it for business purposes:** Upon parting from his father-in-law, Jacob symbolically expressed these conditions for their continued relationship—which allowed for some interaction between him and Laban—by constructing a mound of stones. As opposed to a solid wall, a mound is a collection of unconnected stones, signifying that the separation is not absolute.²²⁵ Spiritually, this means that Jacob was not erecting an impenetrable barrier between himself and the realm of Laban. He would continue to enter Laban’s realm for the “business” of harnessing the sparks of holiness that reside there, but he would do so while remaining detached from the Laban-like approach to life.

Similarly, the “mound” we erect to distinguish between ourselves and the mundane world around us must be left semi-permeable. Although we must cross that mound in order to conduct our business of sanctifying the material world, we at the same time must remain aloof from its materialism.²²⁶

2 **Since their mission was to bring him into the Land of Israel, they were permitted by God to leave its borders for this purpose:** In other words, when Jacob left the Land of Israel, the angels of the Land of Israel could

not be permitted to leave its borders to escort him.²²⁷ But when he returned, they were permitted to leave its borders, since leaving the land for the express purpose of welcoming him and accompanying him back was not considered “leaving” the land.

On a deeper level, the change in the angels’ behavior reflects their distinct roles:²²⁸

When Jacob was on his way to Charan, the angels were sent as an escort to provide him with the spiritual power necessary to succeed in his mission there. When he returned, the angels were sent to complete the work he had done in elevating the environment outside the Land of Israel. Once Jacob had done all he was able to do on his own, and after Laban had pursued him and kissed his children, etc. (as explained in our comments on the previous verse), God concluded Jacob’s mission by sending the angels of the Land of Israel, who left its borders to sanctify the land outside it with the sanctity of the Land of Israel.

These two functions of the angels have their parallel in our exile from the Land of Israel and our return to it. When we were exiled from the Land of Israel in order to sanctify the entire world, God granted us the spiritual power to succeed in this mission. And in these final

222. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 35, p. 185. 223. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 25, p. 150-153. 224. Above, 28:12. 225. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 5, p. 129. 226. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 3, p. 794. 227. Above, 28:13. 228. See above on 28:11.

— ONKELOS —
 3 ואמר יעקב בד חזנון משריתא
 מן קדם יי דא וקרא שמא דאתרא
 יהווא מתנים:

3 וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב בְּאִשֶּׁר רָאִים מַחְנֵה אֱלֹהִים זֶה וַיִּקְרָא
 שְׁמֵהֶם מַתָּנִים: פ פ פ

קמ"ח פסוקים. מחני"ם סימן.

— RASHI —

חסלת פרשת ויצא

3 **מחנים.** שתי מחנות, של חוצה לארץ שבאו עמו עד
 כאן, ושל ארץ ישראל שבאו לקראתו:

3 When Jacob saw them, he said, “This is God’s encampment,” and he named that place **Machanaim** [“Twin Camps”] (See Figure 36).

The *Haftarah* for *parashat Vayitzei* may be found on p. 350.



Figure 36: From Gilead to Machanaim



Haftarah for Vayeitzei

Hosea 11:7–12:14

In *parashat Vayeitzei*, Jacob flees from his brother Esau; in this *haftarah* we read how we read how God helped Jacob survive the machinations of his rich but scheming father-in-law Laban. In this *haftarah*, God compares the Jews of the northern kingdom to just such a false and cheating merchant.

11:7 My people of Israel, i.e., the northern kingdom's ten tribes **vacillate over returning to Me**. When they are called by the prophets to repent for a certain misdeed, **they do not agree to uphold it together**. ⁸ Nevertheless, **how can I give you over** to your enemies, Ephraim; how can I **hand you over**, Israel? How can I **make you desolate like Admah**, or ruined like Tzevoyim, which were destroyed with Sodom and Gomorrah?²⁴ **My heart has turned over within Me**, all My regrets have been aroused. ⁹ I will not act on My burning wrath, I will not relent from My promised goodness to destroy Ephraim, for I am God, who keeps His word, and not a man who changes his mind. I am the Holy One in your midst, and I will not make My abode in a different city.

¹⁰ They will follow God when He roars like a lion, for He will roar to signal the end of the exile, and His children will hasten back from their exile in the west.

¹¹ Trembling, they will hasten like a bird from Egypt and like a dove from the land of Assyria, and I shall settle them in their homes. Thus has God spoken.

12:1 Ephraim (the northern kingdom)

surrounded Me with falsity and the House of Israel with deceit; but the southern kingdom of Judah still rules with the fear of God, and is faithful to the Holy One.

² Ephraim seeks the companionship and guidance from the words of the air; he pursues the east wind; all day long he abounds in lies and robbery; he seals a covenant with Assyria and delivers oil to Egypt to bribe them to be his ally.

³ God tells His grievance against Israel to Judah so they not wonder why He punishes them; He will visit retribution upon the descendants of Jacob in accordance with his conduct; He will repay him according to his exploits. ⁴ In the womb, Jacob held his brother's heel, and in his prime he prevailed over Esau's guardian angel. ⁵ He mastered the angel and triumphed, and the angel wept and implored him, "Let Him find us in Bethel and there He will speak with us."

11:7 וְעַמִּי תִלְוֵאִים לְמִשׁוּבָתִי וְאֶל־עַל־
יִקְרָאֵהוּ יַחַד לֹא יְרוּמֹם: ⁸ אֵיךְ אֶתֶּנֶךָ אֶפְרַיִם
אֲמֹנֶנֶךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵיךְ אֶתֶּנֶךָ כְּאַדְמָה אֲשִׁימֶךָ
בְּצִבְאִים נִהַפֶּךָ עָלַי לִפְנֵי יַחַד נִכְמְרוּ נְחוּמִי:
⁹ לֹא אֶעֱשֶׂה חֶרֶן אִפִּי לֹא אָשׁוּב לְשַׁחַת
אֶפְרַיִם כִּי אֵל אֲנִכִּי וְלֹא־אִישׁ בְּקִרְבֶּךָ קָדוֹשׁ
וְלֹא אָבוֹא בְּעִיר: ¹⁰ אֲחֲרֵי יְהוָה יִלְכוּ בְּאֶרֶץ
יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי־הוּא יִשְׁאֹג וַיִּחְדְּרוּ בָנִים מִיָּם:
¹¹ יִחְדְּרוּ כְצִפּוֹר מִמִּצְרַיִם וּכְיוֹנָה מֵאַרְצָן
אֲשׁוּר וְהוֹשִׁבְתִּים עַל־בְּתִיָּהֶם נֶאֱמַר־יְהוָה:
12:1 סִבְבִּנִי בְכַחַשׁ אֶפְרַיִם וּבְמַרְמָה בֵּית
יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיְהוֹדֶה עַד רֹד עַם־אֵל וְעַם־קְדוֹשִׁים
נֶאֱמָן: ² אֶפְרַיִם רָעָה רוּחַ וְרִדָּף קָדִים כָּל־
הַיּוֹם בָּזָב וְשׂוֹד יִרְבֶּה וּבְרִית עַם־אֲשׁוּר יִכְרֹתוּ
וְשָׁמֶן לְמִצְרַיִם יוֹבֵל: ³ וְרִיב לִיהוָה עַם־יְהוָה
וּלְפָקֶד עַל־יַעֲקֹב בְּדֶרֶכָיו כִּמְעַלְלָיו יִשִּׁיב
לוֹ: ⁴ בַּבֶּטֶן עָקַב אֶת־אֲחִיו וּבְאוֹנוֹ שָׁרָה
אֶת־אֱלֹהִים: ⁵ וַיִּשֶׁר אֶל־מִלְאָךְ וַיִּכָּל בָּכָה
וַיִּתְחַנֵּן־לוֹ בֵּית־אֵל וּמִצְאָנוּ וְשֵׁם יְדָבָר עֲמָנוּ:

24. Genesis 19:25.

6 Just as I was then, so am I now **God, the God of Hosts; He is recalled by the Name of God.** Had you followed Me wholeheartedly like Jacob, I would have treated you as I treated him. **7 And you, trusting in your God** and His promise and support, **shall return to Him; just practice loving-kindness and justice, and then you may place constant hope in your God.**

8 But instead, like a merchant with false scales in his hand, who loves to defraud, **9 Ephraim said, "I have indeed grown wealthy; I have secured power for myself; in all of my toils they will not find in me any iniquity or transgression. Why, then, should I worship God?"** Moreover, your first king, Yaravam son of Nevat, argued that since Joseph's brothers declared themselves Joseph's slaves,²⁵ and he is Joseph's descendant, and whatever a slave owns belongs to its master, then all the Jews' property is his!

10 To this, I reply: I, God, have been your God ever since the land of Egypt. The wealth your forefathers took from Egypt was because of Me. And just as I knew in Egypt who was a firstborn and who was not, so do I know who is cheating with his scales and who is not. Instead of saying "in all my toils, they will not find in me any sin," you should have said, "all my toils will not suffice to atone for my sins!" Furthermore, Yaravam son of Nevat, you remembered how Joseph's brothers declared themselves his slaves, but the prohibition against idols in the Ten Commandments you did not remember, for you have erected idols in Bethel and Dan.

Therefore, I shall remove all the cheating merchants from your midst, and instead, **I shall yet bring forth from you scholars of the Torah and settle you in tents as in the days of old,** when Jacob studied the Torah in the tents of Shem and Ever. **11 I spoke to the prophets to admonish you and bring you back to the proper path, and I granted them many visions, and through the prophets I appeared in many likenesses and spoke in metaphors** so My message would be understood by the people.

12 If evil befalls Gilead, surely it is their own fault, because they were false, for they sacrificed oxen to idols in Gilgal; indeed, their altars were as numerous as mounds of stones on the furrows of the fields.

13 Even before I helped Jacob prevail over Esau's guardian angel, I guarded him when he fled to the field of Aram, and there Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he herded sheep. 14 As for your disdain for the prophets, remember that God brought Israel up from Egypt through a prophet, and through a prophet they were protected.

6 ויהוה אלהי הצבאות יהוה זכרו: 7 ואתה באלהיך תשוב חסד ומשפט שמר וקנה אל-אלהיך תמיד: 8 בנעז בידו מאונן מרמה לעשק אהב: 9 ויאמר אפרים אך עשרתי מצאתי און לי כל-יגיעי לא ימצאו לי עון אשר-חטא: 10 ואנכי יהוה אלהיך מארץ מצרים עד אושיבך באהלים כימי מועד: 11 ודברתי על-הנביאים ואנכי חזון הרביתי וביד הנביאים אדמה: 12 אם-גלעד און אך שוא היו בגלגל שורים זבחו גם מזבחותם בגלים על תלמי שדי: 13 ויברח יעקב שדה ארם ויעבד ישראל באשה ובאשה שמר: 14 ובנביא העלה יהוה את-ישראל ממצרים ובנביא נשמר:



25. Genesis 50:18.

Dedicated in honor of our children

**Nathan, Yitzchok,
Moshe Lev,
and Gilana**

*May you continue to grow in the ways
of our holy Torah*

Yuri and Deana Pikover

