



Shabbos Chizzuk

Inspirational & Interactive Divrei Torah
for the Shabbos Table

Issue #15

Parshas Vayeitzei

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Parsha Summary*

- **וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב** Yaakov leaves Be'er-Sheva and journeys to his uncle Lavan in Haran for a wife.
- **וַיִּחְלֶם** Yaakov prays at Har HaMoriah. While spending the night there, he dreams of a ladder connecting between heaven and earth with angels ascending and descending on it. Hashem stands over him and promises him and his descendents the entire land of Canaan. Yaakov vows that this place will be a House of G-d.
- **וַיֵּאמֶר לָבָן לַיַּעֲקֹב** Lavan agrees to give Yaakov his younger daughter, Rachel as a wife in return for 7 years of labor. Lavan deceives Yaakov on the wedding night and gives his elder daughter, Leah instead. Because Yaakov loved Rachel so much, Lavan allows Yaakov to marry Rachel a week later on condition that he works

an additional 7 years.

- **וַתֵּהֵר לֵאָה וַתֵּלֶד בָּן** Leah gives birth to 6 sons: Reuven, Shimon, Levi, Yehudah, Yissachar, and Zevulun and 1 daughter, Dinah. Rachel was barren at the time and gave Yaakov her maid Bilhah as a wife and they had 2 sons: Dan and Naphtali. Leah also gives her maid Zilpah to Yaakov as a wife and she gives birth to 2 sons: Gad and Asher. Finally, Rachel's prayers were answered and she gave birth to a son: Yosef.
- **וַיִּקָּם יַעֲקֹב** Yaakov departs from Haran with his wives, children, and livestock and all the wealth he had amassed and heads towards his father, Yitzchak in the Land of Canaan. Lavan pursues Yaakov but is warned by Hashem in a dream not to harm him. They make a peace treaty at Galed.

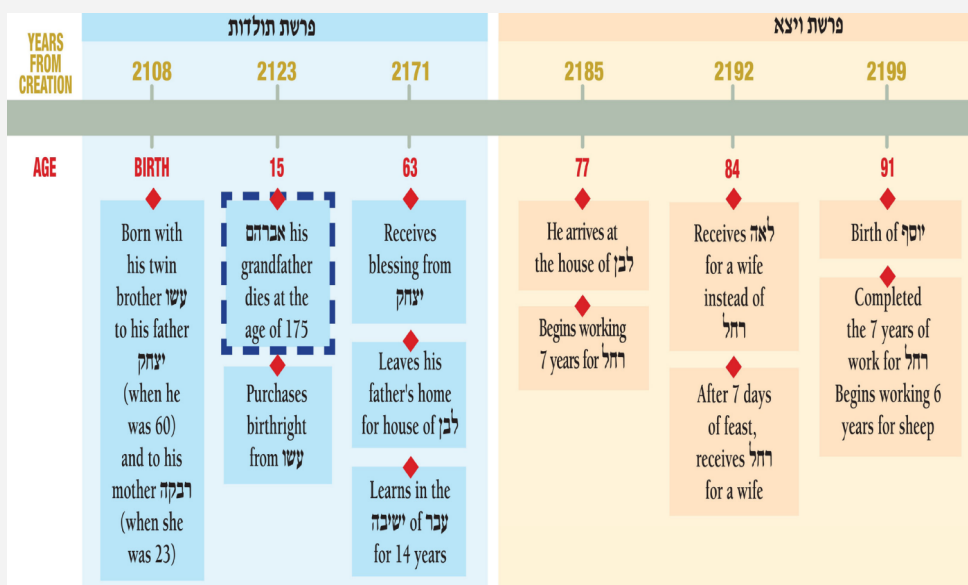
* Adapted from Chabad.org's Parsha in a Nutshell



Visions of History | By R' Hillel Haber שליט"א, Rosh Yeshiva Shaare Torah

(To receive a copy, please contact Yeshivas Shaare Torah)

Timeline of the Life of Yaakov Avinu in Parshas Toldos & Vayeitzei



Sefer HaChinuch Mitzvah Count

0*

* However, we are taught by our Sages, that of all the mitzvos in the Torah, "Talmud Torah K'neged Kulam" – the study of Torah is equivalent to all the other mitzvos. The *Vilna Gaon (Shenas Eliyahu)* explains that each and every word of Torah studied is considered its own separate mitzvah with Divine reward, unlike other mitzvos, where we only receive Divine reward for each act of mitzvah performed.



Parsha Trivia | Test your family at the Shabbos table with these trivia questions on the Parsha!

- What does "Vayeitzei" mean?
 And he (Yaakov) departed
- Where did Yaakov travel towards?
 Charan
- According to the *Midrash (Bereishis Rabba 68:11)* how many stones did Yaakov set under his head that eventually joined as one?
 12. The *Midrash* says that when the stones became one, Yaakov knew that he would establish 12 tribes that will become a unified nation.

❑ **What is mentioned in the Torah that may very well be the tallest item described in the whole Torah?** (From *Torah Teasers* by R' Rabbi Moshe Atik זצ"ל)

Ⓐ The ladder in the dream of Yaakov that stood on the ground and the top reached the heavens

❑ **Who was older, Leah or Rachel?** (From *Chabad.org* by R' Menachem Posner א"שליט"א)

Ⓐ Leah (*Bereishis* 29:16). Some say they were actually twins (*Seder Olam Rabbah* 2).



Dvar Torah | by Aharon Mikail

Hashem Is With You

After having left his parents and his hometown, Yaakov is now embarking on a journey leading him to becoming the next Patriarch of the Jewish nation. What message and promise does Hashem give Yaakov and his future children to provide them with constant strength and courage to achieve their mission?

וְהִנֵּה ד' נֹצֵב עָלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי ד'...וְהִנֵּה אֲנִי עִמָּךְ וְשָׁמַרְתִּיךָ בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר-תֵּלֵךְ וְהִשְׁבַּתִּיךָ אֶל-הָאָדָמָה הַזֹּאת כִּי לֹא אֶעְזָבְךָ עַד אֲשֶׁר אִם-עָשִׂיתִי אֶת אֲשֶׁר-דִּבַּרְתִּי לְךָ:

And behold! Hashem was standing over him, and He said, "I am Hashem...I am with you, I will guard you wherever you go and I will bring you back to this land, for I will not forsake you until I have done what I have promised you" (Bereishis 28:13, 15).

Hashem promised Yaakov that He will always be there for him every step of the way, to protect him and bring him to success. The greatest power, comfort, and assurance we have is knowing that Hashem is with us at all times. The *Be'er Mayim Chaim* comments here that since Hashem is the all-encompassing and all-powerful Master of the World and is always with us and on our side, therefore, we have everything and can achieve anything.¹ As R' Shalom Arush שליט"א writes, one who has *emuna* (faith in G-d) lacks nothing. A believer is full of vitality, believes in themselves, is eager to try new things, and has no unnecessary impediments.²

Hashem is also referred to as, "*HaMakom*" (the Place) because His glory surrounds the entire world and His Presence is all-embracing.³ Hashem is here, Hashem is there, Hashem is truly everywhere! As one of the first halachos and most fundamental virtues taught in the entire *Shulchan Aruch* (code of Jewish law) is: "*I place Hashem before me always.*"⁴ Setting G-d before oneself at all times not only strengthens one's *Yiras Shamayim* (awe and reverence of G-d) but also, to never forget that Hashem is always looking after them and is cheering them on, shouting, "*You could do this!*", "*You could learn my entire Torah and keep my mitzvos*", "*You could accomplish your greatest dreams!*".

May Hashem help us to always stay determined with our dreams and remember that He is always accompanying us along the way.

¹ Bereishis 28:15:1

² Yeshiva.co article, *Emuna From the Cradle*

³ *Baalei Brit Avraham*

⁴ *Rama Orach Chaim* 1:1, *Tehillim* 16:8

* Translations derived from Artscroll and Sefaria.org



A SHORT IDEA | From R' Dovid Kaplan שליט"א, Senior Lecturer at Yeshivas Ohr Somayach Jerusalem and Mashgiach Ruchani at Yeshivas Bais Yisroel Jerusalem

Everyone Has A Ladder

וַיְחַלֵּם וְהָנָה סֵלֶם מִצֵּב אֶרֶצָה וְרֵאשׁוֹ מִגִּיעַ הַשָּׁמַיְמָה וְהָנָה מִלְאֲכֵי אֱ-לֹהִים עֹלִים וְיֹרְדִים בּוֹ:

"He had a dream; a ladder was set on the ground and its top reached to the sky, and angels of G-d were going up and down on it." (Bereishis 28:12).

In his dream, Yaakov envisioned angels ascending and descending a ladder. However, Yaakov's ladder was not like a simple fireman's ladder. According to the Gemara's calculations ¹, the ladder was 8,000 *parsa'os* wide (about 32,000 km), wider than the entire earth! Why? What does the ladder symbolize and why was it so large?

The ladder represents spiritual growth. A ladder has rungs, and when climbing it, one must climb one rung at a time. A person can't jump levels or grow instantly. The ladder was bigger than the earth to teach us that there's room for everyone to get on this spiritual journey and grow. Intuitively, a person understands that they are a spiritual being and that they have to draw closer to their Creator. No one can say that the opportunity to become great is inaccessible to them. No one is telling us that we need to get from one opposite extreme to the next, but Hashem has provided us with a clear way and system to climb the rungs one by one. We all have a ladder, we all have a chance to become great, to accomplish, to change, to feel more and more enriched and closer to the Borei Olam.

¹ *Chullin 91B*. As the *Gemara* explains, The word "ascending [*olim*]," written in plural, indicates that there were a minimum of two angels ascending simultaneously. Likewise, the term "and descending [*veyordim*]," also in the plural, indicates that a minimum of two angels were descending simultaneously. And when they met one another there were a total of four in one place, so the ladder must have been wide enough to accommodate four angels. Angeles are 2,000 *parsa'os* wide.



Hilchos Shabbos | by. R' Mordechai Lebhav שליט"א author *Magen Avot*, Rosh Kollel
Link Kollel Los Angeles

Redacted by Dr. Emile Amzallag

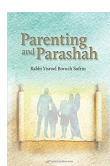
The Avot and the Shabbat Meal

Although not explicitly mentioned in the *Shuchan Aruch*, the Kabbalists mention that each one of the three Shabbat meals corresponds to one of the Avot. According to *Rabbi Avraham Azoulay (Or Hahama, vol. II, pg. 104c)*, each meal corresponds to the time of the day of the prayer that each of the Avot instituted. Thus, Friday night is Arvit which corresponds to Yaakov, the Shabbat day meal is related to Shacharit, which was instituted by Avraham, and Seuda Shelishit comes after Mincha, which was instituted by Yitzchak Avinu. Nevertheless, *Rabbi Moshe Cordovero (quoted in Or Hahama)* and most of the Kabbalists order the Avot differently and this is the accepted custom. The Friday night meal corresponds to Yitzchak Avinu, since the night is a time of Judgment and Yitzhak has the related attribute of *Gevura*. The daytime meal, as well, corresponds to Avraham. Seuda Shelishit Kabbalistically joins the energy of the night and day meals, just as the attribute of *Tiferet* of Yaakov joins the attributes of Avraham and Yitzhak. Many have the custom to say "Birshut _____ Avinu" prior to reciting the blessing of Hamotzi of the corresponding meal.

Interestingly, the *Arizal (Pri Etz Haim, Sha'ar 18, ch. 17)* writes that the Shabbat night meal saves us from the birth pangs of Mashiach, the day meal saves us from the agony of Gehinom, Seuda Shelishit saves us from suffering in the grave. Furthermore, he writes that Melave Malka, the meal eaten after Shabbat and which corresponds to David Hamelech, saves us from the war of Gog Umagog.

Another detail regarding the Shabbat meal involves dieting. *Rabbi Ben Zion Abba Shaul (Or LeZion, vol. II, ch. 21, § 3)* says that one should not refrain from delicious food on Shabbat as this can take away from Oneg Shabbat, the pleasure that one must experience on Shabbat. However, if a particular food is considered dangerous to one's health or if one may come to overeat, then the *Shulhan Aruch (O.H. 288:2)* writes that refraining from such a food or from overeating is considered one's Oneg Shabbat. Furthermore, a vegan or vegetarian can refrain from eating fish or meat on Shabbat, since even though these foods are a source of Oneg Shabbat, they are not an obligation. The *Arizal (Pri Etz Haim)*, however, writes that there is Kabbalistic benefit to eating fish on Shabbat.

Summary: The first, second and third meals of Shabbat correspond to Yitzhak, Avraham and Ya'akov, respectively. If one is dieting one should still partake of delicious food, but may refrain from eating food that is deleterious to one's health, or from overeating. One may refrain from fish or meat if one does not normally eat such foods.



Parenting and Parashah | שליט"א R' Yisroel Boruch Sufrin

Meeting the Challenge to Step Up

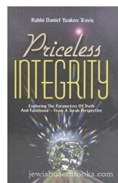
Parshas Vayeitzei begins with the words "Yaakov left Beer Sheva and went to Charan." We already learned of Yaakov's leaving Beer Sheva at the end of the previous Parshah, so why does the Torah repeat itself? What is the message we should glean from this reiteration of Yaakov's departure from Beer Sheva, a place of peace, to go to Charan, an area associated with strife?

The idea of leaving tranquility for strife presents a challenge for all of us. If Hashem wants us to fulfill a mission in this world, why does He not make our lives easy, allowing us to be good people and perform all His commandments simply? Why the need for a diaspora experience or a life full of challenges?

It is this question that the Torah answers for us by repeating the fact that Yaakov left Beer Sheva and went to Charan. Yaakov was about to build the Jewish nation and become the father of the twelve tribes; he is the link to the time when the Jews transformed from a small family into a great nation. At this pivotal time, he asked the same question we ask today: *Why not let me live in peace in my father's home and build the nation from the comfort and tranquility of Beer Sheva?*

The response is that to build a nation and fulfill our mission in life, we must prove that we can sustain positive behaviors even in an uncomfortable world. Being Yaakov in Beer Sheva in Rivkah and Yitzchak's home is an easy feat. Being Yaakov in Charan, however, is a tremendous accomplishment. Yaakov weathers the storm of life in Charan and is the catalyst for us to transform into a nation. Challenges create opportunities and, importantly, resilience. We can use Yaakov as an example to encourage our children to face all of life's challenges with an unbridled sense of wonder, confidence, and opportunity.

For Discussion: Think of a challenge you had to overcome to reach where you are today in your life.



Priceless Integrity: Exploring the Parameters of Truth and Falsehood From a Torah Perspective | by R' Daniel Travis שליט"א author *Praying with Joy* and *Rosh Kollel Toras Chaim*, Jerusalem

Emotional Realities

וַיְהִי בַבֹּקֶר וְהִנֵּה הוּא לְאֵה...¹

In the morning [Yaakov discovered that] it was Leah... (Bereishis 29:25).

Why didn't Yaakov discover this at night? Had she not been the same Leah at night as she was in the morning? At night, Yaakov felt he had adequate proof that she was Rachel, since he had given Rachel certain signs by which he might recognize her, which they had kept a secret between them. Yet when Rachel saw that her father was about to marry Leah to Yaakov in her place, she immediately revealed these signs to Leah, thinking, "I cannot allow my sister to be put to shame." She spared her sister's honor, although she was deceiving Yaakov in the process.¹

When one of the students of the great Torah sage and Rosh HaYeshivah Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer was released from the draft, everyone knew that the news would bring the Rav great joy. At that time, being drafted into the non-Jewish army meant almost certain death, and in any case it posed nearly insurmountable problems regarding Torah observance. One by one, his other students came to inform Rav Meltzer of the news. The Rosh HaYeshivah responded to each of his students with exactly the same enthusiasm as he had to the first student who related the news to him. Although Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer's reaction involved a certain amount of deception, for he gave each student the impression that he was hearing the news for the first time, one may do so for the sake of the well-being of another.² Since each of his students had taken the time and made the effort to bring the Rosh HaYeshivah the news, and each would derive tremendous pleasure from feeling that he had been the first to relate the information, Rav Meltzer did not want to disappoint any of them.

We all encounter similar situations frequently in our everyday lives. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach said that if someone tells us something that we have heard before, if we care about the speaker, we will be patient enough to hear it again, and will act as though we are hearing it for the first time.³ We should not consider this a waste of our time, since, in addition to the fact that we have gained tremendous merit in showing honor to others, we can often gain some new insight when we hear something a second time. In addition, it is a sign of humility to listen to them.⁴

By the same token, if someone is discussing a personal problem with us, although the problem may seem trivial, or an immature response, we must realize that from other's perspective it is a very serious matter, and we must demonstrate our concern. The Torah teaches us this principle when it describes the plague of locusts in Egypt: "...before them there were no such locusts... never after them will there be such [a plague of locusts.]"⁵ Rashi notes that in the times of the prophet Yoel⁶ there was a greater infestation. Since the Egyptians had already been devastated by other plagues, it was extremely difficult for them to deal with the locusts. Although there were more locusts in the days of Yoel, according to the Egyptians' emotional reality, their plague was actually worse than the one in Yoel's days.⁷

¹ Rashi on Bereishis 29:25

² Sha'arei Teshuvah 3:181. See also the article entitled, "Masters Of Disguise," on Bereishis 18:2

³ Cited in Titein Emeth L'Yaakov p. 130

⁴ Sefer Chasidim 15

⁵ Shemos 10:14

⁶ Yoel 2:2

⁷ Chasam Sofer, Shemos 10:14



Stories of Tzadikim | From R' Rafael Kramer שליט"א, author Breslov.org

Keep Climbing!

When Rabbi Noson of Breslov זצ"ל was still young, he was known to be an outstanding genius and Torah scholar. At some point in his life, he felt a lack in his Divine service and yearned for an even greater connection to Hashem. At one point, he became close to the great tzaddik, Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev זצ"ל.

One Motzei Shabbos, he attended a Melaveh Malkah with a group of chassidim. Being one of the youngest of the group, they appointed him and asked him to go out and buy some bagels for the meal. Reb Noson went out with a broken heart and burst into tears. He entered the local shul and began reciting Psalms. He reached Chapter 50, but could no longer continue. Reb Noson slipped down to the floor and burst into tears. He cried out to Hashem, *"Master of the world! Is this what I was created for? To buy bagels?"* He fell asleep and began to dream, and in his dream, he saw a ladder, which he attempted to climb without success. He got up, climbed again, but every time he reached a higher level, he fell even harder. Over and over again, he tried to climb up and then fell down, each blow hurting more than the last, until he no longer had the strength to climb back on.

Suddenly, he saw a man with a beard and a radiant face at the top of the ladder, encouraging him to continue climbing to reach the top. The man said to Reb Noson, *"Keep climbing, but hold yourself well!"* After hearing these words of encouragement, Reb Noson began to climb again and this time he managed to reach all the way to the top of the ladder. Reb Noson awoke from the dream, but the vision was engraved deeply on his heart. He went back to his friends who were still sitting at the Melaveh Malkah. They asked him what had taken so long, and he made some passing excuse. Not long afterwards, Reb Noson heard about Rebbe Nachman and decided to travel to Breslov to see him. As soon as he saw Rebbe Nachman, he recognized him as the man in the dream who had told him, *"Keep climbing, but hold yourself well!"* and who eventually became his Rebbe who taught him the ways of serving Hashem, and that is, to never ever give up! Reb Noson went on to become the leading student of Rebbe Nachman.



Maase Shehaya - Hashgacha Pratis Stories | R' Fischel Schachter שליט"א (Heard from StoriesToInspire.org)

The Power of Sincere Prayer

When Ashdod first started out to be a religious community, there was no direct bus line from Ashdod to Yerushalayim, one had to go to Bnei Brak first. A bus driver was going from Bnei Brak To Ashdod and there was a group of people on the bus. A bochur gets on and says to the driver, "I live in a Moshav called Nir Galim (a little further than Ashdod)." The driver said, "I pass there but it's not on my route." Since it's on his route, the boy insisted that he drop him off and the bus driver agreed to do him the favor.

He gets onto the bus and the driver drops him off at the bus stop of Nir Galim. At the same stop, there was an elderly woman sitting there with a large sum of bags. The lady asks the driver, "Are you going to Haifa?" The driver says, "Yes, but..."

She started loading all of her bags one after the other and some Avreichim even came out of the bus to help her with all of her belongings. Finally, the driver says to her, "What were you thinking? There is no bus to Haifa at this bus stop. The only reason I stopped was because I dropped off this bochur who asked me for a favor. Please explain to me why you were sitting there!"

She replies, "Look, I came to the bus stop and I had so many bags. They told me the bus to Haifa is on the other side of the street but there was no way I could cross the street with all of my bags! So I said, 'Ribono Shel Olam, I can't! Please bring the bus here.' That's all that happened! And then you stopped here."

When you think about this story, you see how Hashem prepares for us exactly what we should do, how we should do it, where we should go, and how we should go. He makes very complex connections. The bus driver could have refused to take the bochur to his stop but Hashem already had the next step prepared!



Scenes for the Soul | by. Ami Adler

In his blog, "Scenes for the Soul," (<https://scenesforthesoul.com/blog>) Ami shares a photo he has taken, along with some background details and a spiritual message that we can apply in our daily lives.



Along the Arches Trail - Red Canyon, Utah

The Background: This photograph was taken on the Arches Trail in Red Canyon (near Bryce Canyon National Park in Utah). The trail passes through amazing scenery and rock formations including arches and hoodoos. But, despite those more prominent features, the scene that really stood out for me was this one, which was essentially the debris on the side of the hill that the trail traversed. There was something so special about the glow of the sunlight peeking out from behind the log and the coloration of the rock in the center combined with the branches and pinecones that really created a magical scene.

The Message: I think the adage "stop and smell the roses" doesn't go far enough. Roses are beautiful and eye-catching, so we can understand that we need to take a moment from our busy lives and appreciate them. But I think we need to take this one step further and notice the beauty that surrounds us that may not be as obvious. Despite the larger and more impressive rock formations that were on display along this hike, the simple collection of natural elements and glowing light was something that I needed to slow down to appreciate. There is so much beauty in the things and the people around us,

we just need to open our eyes and our hearts. I also see in this picture a metaphor for the glowing heart and soul that lies beneath the surface of each of us (and might, over time, be covered by layers of debris) – and how we need to take a moment to appreciate the light inside ourselves and in those around us.



Zemiros | Seu She'arim (Tehillim 24) By. Akiva Jonas



Before Shabbos, scan the QR-Code above to listen and prepare this week's song for the Shabbos table!

Niggun-Melody

La'Shem ha'aretz umlo'ah teivel veyoshvei va, teivel veyoshvei va

Ki hu al yamim yesadah, ve'al neharos yechonena

Se'uh she'arim rasheichem, vehinasu pischei olam, veyavo Melech Hakavod

Mi hu zeh Melech Hakavod, Hashem Tzevakos Hu selah (x2)

Niggun-Melody

Hashem is the Master of Heaven and Earth, Creator of all we see

So we offer our thanks for this beautiful world, with song and praise to our King

Niggun-Melody



Jokes: Mitzvah Gedolah Lihiyot B'Simcha!

1. Hotels

Q) What kind of dreams do hotels have?

A) Suite dreams!

2. Rock

Q) What did the rock do when it rolled down the road?

A) It rock 'n' rolled!



Reader Submissions

We are super excited to announce the newest addition to the *Shabbos Chizzuk* Newsletter! We welcome and would love to include your Divrei Torah, art, stories, jokes, or any other idea you may have!

This Week's Challenge

Submit a Dvar Torah, art, story, or joke, and we will send you a free Hashem Loves U wristband of your choice! Please submit entries to info@HashemlovesU.com.

KEEP SHTEIGING!
#Torah is my life!

Wishing everyone a safe, healthy, beautiful, happy, uplifting, and restful Shabbos Kodesh!

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We would love to hear your thoughts, ideas, and suggestions! Contact info@HashemlovesU.com

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