

OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

PARSHA INSIGHTS

WHAT'S IN A NAME

"She conceived and bore a son and declared 'This time let me gratefully praise Hashem,' therefore she called his name Yehuda...." (29:35)

When someone does something good to you, how many times do you say 'Thank you'?

Once? Twice? Maybe three times? How about whenever you see them? How about for the rest of your life?

How about for all eternity?

The Talmud tells us that from the day that Hashem created the universe, no-one gave thanks to Him until Leah thanked Him for her fourth child. (Rabbi Yochanan in the name of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai — Berachos 7b)

How could it possibly be that before Leah no one had ever thanked Hashem?

Were Avraham, Sarah, Yitzchak, Rivka and Yaakov all ingrates?

Also, why did Leah herself wait until her fourth child to thank Hashem? Weren't three children enough of a blessing?

The answer is that Leah knew through prophetic insight that there were destined to be 12 tribes of Israel. Since Yaakov had four wives, when Leah bore her fourth child she realized that Hashem had given her more than her fair share. (Rashi)

It was this realization that she had been given more than she deserved that awoke in Leah the recognition that she really didn't 'deserve' any of her children; **that everything in life is a gigantic gift from the Master of the Universe.**

It wasn't that no-one had thanked Hashem at all until Leah, rather no one had thanked Him as Leah did.

With this fourth child, Leah want-

ed to say 'Thank you' to Hashem in a unique and wonderful way. She called the baby 'Yehuda,' which comes from the root 'to thank.' So that throughout all the generations until the end of time, whenever anyone would call their son Yehuda, they would be perpetuating the praise and the gratitude that Leah felt for Hashem when she named her son 'Yehuda.'

•Adapted from Mizmor Lesodah by Rabbi Daniel Travis

"A 'love' which takes, expands time, but a giving love compresses it."

STONE TALK

"And he took from the stones of the place, and he placed them around his head, and he lay down in that place." (28:11)

The Midrash tells us that the twelve stones all wanted the merit of being the stone on which the great tzaddik, Yaakov, would lay his head.

A few verses later the Torah talks of one stone, implying that the stones had subsequently all become one. What is the significance of the stones being transformed into one?

The twelve stones represent the twelve tribes of Israel. The argument between the stones was about which tribe was the essence of the Jewish People.

Was it Levi and his descendants of the priesthood who performed the

service in the Holy Temple? Or was it Yissachar who would learn Torah? Or was it Zevulun who through his business acumen would support Yissachar so that he could concentrate on Torah study?

Each of the stones claimed that it was the essence of the Jewish People, until Hashem took them all and made them into one. For no one part of the Jewish People is its essence. Rather, the essence of Israel is unity, for only in unity can it fulfill its purpose, which is to reflect the Oneness of the Creator who unites everything into One.

•Heard from Rabbi Calev Gestetner

ULTIMATE NAME - DROPPING

"It is in my power to do you all harm; but the G-d of your father addressed me last night, saying, 'Beware of speaking with Yaakov either good or bad.'" (31:29)

If Lavan was trying to frighten Yaakov by telling him "It is in my power to do you all harm....," why does he then destroy his credibility by admitting that Hashem told him to 'Beware of speaking with Yaakov either good or bad'?

Such is the way of those who lust for status in the eyes of others.

They are quite prepared to trip themselves up just to 'drop' an important name. And Lavan could not resist the ultimate name-dropping — telling Yaakov that Hashem had spoken to him — even though it would completely emasculate his threats.

• Heard from Rabbi Mordechai Perlman

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Fleeing from Eisav, Yaakov leaves Be'er Sheva and sets out towards Charan, the home of his mother's family. After a fourteen year stopover in the Yeshiva of Shem and Ever, he resumes his journey and comes to Mount Moriah, the place where his father Yitzchak was brought as an offering, and the future site of the *Beis Hamikdash*. He lays down to sleep and has a prophetic dream of angels ascending and descending on a ladder between heaven and earth. Hashem promises him the Land of Israel, that he will father a great nation and he will be guarded by Divine protection everywhere. Yaakov awakens and vows to build an altar there and tithe all that he will receive. Then he travels to Haran and meets his cousin Rachel at the well. He arranges with her father, Lavan, to work seven years for her hand in marriage, but Lavan deceives Yaakov, and substitutes Rachel's elder sister, Leah. Yaakov then commits himself to work another seven years in order to also marry Rachel. Leah bears him four sons — Reuven,

Shimon, Levi and Yehuda — the first Tribes of Israel. Rachel is jealous that she cannot conceive, and gives her handmaiden Bilhah to Yaakov. Bilhah bears Dan and Naftali. Leah also gives Yaakov her handmaiden Zilpah, who bears Gad and Asher. Leah now gives birth to Yissachar, Zevulun, and a daughter, Dina. Hashem finally blesses Rachel with a son, Yosef. Yaakov decides to leave Lavan, but Lavan, aware of how much wealth Yaakov has made for him, is reluctant to let him go, and concludes a contract of employment with him. Lavan tries again to swindle Yaakov, but is unsuccessful, and Yaakov becomes extremely wealthy. Twenty years later, Yaakov, aware that Lavan has become resentful of his wealth, takes advantage of his father-in-law's temporary absence, and flees with his family. Lavan pursues them but is warned by Hashem not to harm them. A covenant is agreed upon by Yaakov and Lavan, and Lavan returns home. Yaakov continues on his way to face his brother Eisav.

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SING MY SOUL
INSIGHTS INTO THE SHABBOS ZEMIROS

MAH YEDIDUS "HOW BELOVED..."

*"A Semblance of the World
to Come is the Shabbos
Day of rest"*

The word *may'ain* as we pronounce it in this song is understood as "a taste of" and refers to the Shabbos experience as a microcosm of the ultimate joy of the World to Come. The very same letters, however,

form the word "*ma'ayan*" which means a spring. This communicates the concept of our earthly Shabbos connected to the World to Come, from which, like a spring, flows an experience of eternal joy. Both interpretations are complementary. We receive a taste of the World to Come on Shabbos because we actually plug into the spiritual spring flowing from it.

Dedicated in Memory of
Irwin Edward Koppel, OBM

Yisrael Isser ben Alexander Koppel, z"l
12th Kislev 5729

by his daughter Cheryl Steinberg
and grandchildren Elana Miriam and Yisrael Isser

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. When Yaakov traveled to Charan, the Torah stresses that he departed from Be'er Sheva. Why?
2. On the night of his dream, Yaakov did something he hadn't done in 14 years. What?
3. In his dream, Yaakov saw angels going up and down. What were the missions of these angels?
4. Why did Hashem promise Yaakov "I am with you" (28:15)?
5. What is "the gate of Heaven" (28:17)?
6. Why did Yaakov rebuke the shepherds?
7. Why did Yaakov cry when he met Rachel?
8. Why did Yaakov come empty-handed to Lavan's house?
9. Why did Lavan run to greet Yaakov?
10. Why were Leah's eyes tender?
11. How old was Yaakov when he married Leah and Rachel?
12. Why did Rachel envy Leah?
13. Who was Yaakov's fifth son?
14. "Hashem remembered Rachel" (30:22). What did He remember?
15. What does 'Yosef' mean? Why was he named that?
16. Before Yaakov arrived, Rachel tended Lavan's sheep. Why didn't Lavan's sons tend his sheep?
17. Why did Rachel steal Lavan's *terafim*?
18. Where are there two Aramaic words in this week's Parsha?
19. Who was Bilhah's father? Who was Zilpah's father?
20. Who escorted Yaakov into *Eretz Yisrael*?

BONUS QUESTION?

When Yaakov left to Charan he was 63, and had learned Torah all his life; first from Avraham and later from Yitzchak. Why then — despite his father's directive to find a wife — did he suddenly need to delay 14 years in the Yeshiva of Shem and Ever?

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

"It was the next morning, and behold! She was Leah!" (29:25).

The entire night, the wedding guests sang "*Hilaiya! Hilaiya!*" Not until morning did Yaakov realize that they had been hinting at her true identity: "*Hee Leah*" — "*She is Leah!*" (The Hebrew word '*hee*' means '*she is.*')

• *Da'as Zekenim MiBaalei HaTosefos*

HAFTORAH: HOSHEA 11:17 - 14:10

HEALTH FOOD

"For the ways of Hashem are just — the righteous will walk in them, but the evil will stumble on them." (14:10)

There was once an outstandingly generous man who stinted neither money nor effort in welcoming guests into his home. Once, he made a large banquet for anyone who wanted to come, and laid on the most sumptuous and expensive foods.

One of the guests had a fragile constitution. Nevertheless, he set about gorging himself on all the delights. Not surprisingly, the result was that he became seriously ill.

The man was furious with the host, accusing him of ruining people's health.

The host replied "*Please ask the other guests if the food has upset their health. Unfortunately, your health is frail. That's why the food upset you. This banquet was provided only for people who are healthy.*"

The spiritually blind say that Hashem hates people, weighing them down with the burdensome yoke of *mitzvos*; that He creates only obstacles to a life of freedom.

What a colossal mistake! The *tzaddik* not only sees himself as enriched and ennobled by keeping *mitzvos*, but **he derives his very sustenance and life-force from them.**

That is what the prophet is telling us here: "*The ways of Hashem are just*" and "*the righteous will walk in them,*" — i.e., the righteous will thrive on them. But for those who view the ways of Hashem as a heavy burden, "*the evil will stumble on*

them" — the spiritually blind see *mitzvos* as nothing more than a killjoy.

The radiance of the *tzaddikim*, however, testifies to the quality of the 'diet.'

• *Kochav m'Yaakov in Mayana shel Torah*

A FRIEND IN HIGH PLACES

"You corrupted yourself, Israel, for your help is only through Me." (13:9)

A great king once asked one of the sages of Israel why it was, that at the time of the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* so many thousand of Jews were slain.

The sage replied that the Jewish People had always trusted that Hashem would save them, and He had always protected them. They had never concerned themselves with the strategies of war; rather they had always poured out their hearts in prayer and offerings.

Therefore, when the Jewish People sinned and consequently lost Hashem's protection, they were bereft of any defense at all. They fell before their enemies like the standing crop before the scythe, like lambs abandoned by their shepherd, torn by the teeth of wolves.

The Jewish People are the lamb amongst the 70 wolves. The lamb is not protected by F-16s or the military might of any world-power — however broad its shoulders may be. The Jewish People have only one Friend. But He is the only Friend we need.

• *Based on Ahavas Yehonason in Mayana shel Torah*

WEEKLY DAF

CHULLIN 89 - 95

THE RELUCTANT GUEST

It is forbidden to deceive someone even if there is no financial loss. Rabbi Meir cites several examples of how one can be guilty of dishonest behavior by giving the impression that he is doing a favor to another when he actually has no intention of doing so.

One of these is the case of a host urging a guest to eat in his home when he knows that this guest has absolutely no intention of eating there, and the only motivation of the host is to deceptively earn the gratitude of the guest who thinks that the invitation is sincere. In similar fashion, he should not offer one of his dining guests a large amount of servings when he knows that there is no possibility that he will accept them.

An interesting observation is made by one of the great legal authorities, Rabbi Yehoshua Wolk, author of the *Sefer Meiras Ainayim*, commentary on the *Shulchan Aruch Choshen Mishpat*. In both cases Rabbi Meir stresses the fact that the host is making an extraordinary effort — “urging” his recalcitrant guest to eat, or offering a “large amount” to one who will not accept. If one, however, makes a polite offer once or twice for his guest to eat, or presents him with moderate servings, he is not considered guilty of deception, because this is the normal etiquette of hospitality even though the host knows he will be refused. If he fails to make such a gesture he may even be guilty of embarrassing the reluctant guest. Other guests see him enter and leave without receiving an invitation and, unaware that it is the

guest’s custom not to eat out, may assume that he received no invitation because he is not worthy of one.

One commentary even suggests a support for this distinction from the story of Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair (*Chullin* 7b) who never accepted invitations to eat by others, but did so when the Sage Rebbie offered. He explained to Rebbie that this reluctance to eat by other Jews was not based on any disdain for them, “for Jews are holy people,” but because of his fear that some of them could not afford to entertain him, while others who could afford to do so failed to do so wholeheartedly. Tosefos points out that the latter type of Jew who invites the sage only out of shame, rather than sincerity, is still considered “holy.” This would seem to indicate that an insincere invitation based on courtesy is not considered deception. (In his commentary on the Tur, the aforementioned Rabbi Wolk challenges this proof because the recipient of an insincere invitation may indeed end up eating, while our case deals with a guest who will definitely not.)

• *Chullin* 94a

A MERGER OF STONES

On his way from Be’er Sheva to Charan, Yaakov *Avinu* stopped off at Mount Moriah where he spent the night. In preparing his bed, one passage (28:11) states that he took stones from the area and placed them as a pillow, while another passage (28:18) refers to this pillow in the singular, as the stone. Rabbi Yitzchak resolves thus the apparent conflict: Each of the many stones which

Yaakov took for his pillow began to demand the privilege of having this *tzaddik’s* head rest upon it. They were therefore miraculously merged into a single stone.

In his commentary on Chumash, Rashi cites this explanation from our section of the Talmud, but combines it with a Midrash (*Bereishis Rabbah* 68:11) which relates that Yaakov placed the stones *all around his head* like a drainpipe as a protective barrier against wild beasts. How do we reconcile this Midrash with Rabbi Yitzchak’s explanation about a pillow?

One of the commentaries offers the following resolution:

Yaakov placed one stone as a pillow and then piled other stones all around it so that it appeared like a drainpipe which has a floor and three sides. Even though each stone in this array was serving the *tzaddik* in his effort to sleep securely, all of the other stones envied the privilege accorded to the one stone serving as a pillow which would receive the head of the holy man. When they all began to clamor for this privilege, Hashem caused the stone beneath his head to swallow all of them so that Yaakov’s head indeed rested upon all of them. (*Maharsha*)

It may be suggested that following this swallowing of stones, the protective barrier disappeared because the protective presence of Hashem rendered such a security measure superfluous. Or it may be that the meaning of swallowing is merging. Thus the barrier remained intact and what changed was that all the stones were now a single stone sharing the privilege of serving as a pillow as well.

• *Chullin* 91b

continued from page one

PARSHA INSIGHTS

THE DAYS OF OUR LIVES

“So Yaakov worked seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him a few days because of his love for her.” (29:20)

A man enters a restaurant and asks the waiter “What’s good today?” When the waiter replies “The fish is excellent!” the man smiles and says “Great! I love fish!”

Really all this man is saying is that **he loves himself**, because if he really loved fish he would be walking up and down outside the restaurant with a

placard saying “THIS RESTAURANT MURDERS FISH!”

Every worldly love is not a pure love of the one who loves for the object of his affections, but rather the reverse — **the lover loves himself**. The object of his affections is merely the means to his own self-gratification.

When love consists of taking, of self-gratifying, then, necessarily, every hour without the love-object is endless craving.

However in a love which is giving, the fulfillment of the love starts when the giving starts. “Yaakov worked

seven years for Rachel.” **From the moment Yaakov started working he was giving to Rachel** — and thus “...they (the years) seemed to him a few days because of his love for her.”

The “True Life Romance” hero protests to his ‘beloved’ — “Darling, every minute since I saw you last has been an eternity! The minutes have been like years, the hours like centuries...” How different is soap-opera sentiment from the **timeless** love of Yaakov for Rachel!

A ‘love’ which takes, expands time, but a **giving** love compresses it.

• Adapted from Rabbi Eliya Lopian

ASK the RABBI

DRY BONES AND JELL-O™

DanPatents@aol.com wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
Wait a minute. Did you say [Ask the Rabbi, Ohrnet Lech Lecha Vol. 4 No. 3] "About oinkers, the Torah prohibits eating the flesh only. The hoofs, hair and bones (excluding the marrow), are permitted?????" Hummmh. Isn't unkosher gelatin made from pigs' hooves? Then why is it unkosher if it's kosher? I always thought nothing edible about the pig was kosher. Please expand on this question.

Dear DanPatents@aol.com,

Gelatin is made from collagen, an animal protein. Collagen is extracted from the skin/bones of cows or pigs. It's soaked and cooked, then filtered, refined and evaporated. The finished product is gelatin.

The Torah prohibits only the meat of unkosher animals, but not the bones, horns or hoofs.

The Sages, however, forbade any bones, horns or hoofs which contain moisture. According to this, food made from unkosher bones is forbidden, unless the bones were completely dry.

But during the manufacturing of gelatin, the animal extract becomes totally inedible, such that even a dog will no longer eat it. Now, food which even a dog won't eat loses its status as food. Halachically, it's no different than stones or dirt which you are

allowed to eat!

Based on this, some authorities permit gelatin from unkosher animals, since during the process the animal extract becomes unfit for even a dog. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, *zatzal*, rules otherwise. He writes that although the animal parts are inedible in the middle of the process, this inedible state is only temporary. Since at the end of the process the unkosher bones are 'resurrected' into an edible product, the original prohibition remains.

In the United States, almost all kashrut organizations accept the stricter opinion and do not endorse gelatin made from unkosher derivatives.

Speaking of animal skins:

Little girl: Daddy, what is leather made of?

Daddy: Hide.

Little girl: What did you say?

Daddy: Hide, hide! The cow's outside.

Little girl: But, Daddy, I'm not afraid of the cow!

Sources:

- *Leviticus 11:9*
- *Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Laws of Prohibited Food 4:21*
- *Tractate Temura 31*
- *Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinski, Responsa Achiezer vol. 3, 3:5*
- *Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, Responsa Igrot Moshe Yoreh De'ah 2:23*

Olorin <olorin@phish.nether.net> wrote:

What about the skin, can we eat the pig skin?

Dear Olorin:

Pig's skin which is dry and hard is permitted to be eaten. Therefore if you check your pig-skin wallet and find no cash for food ... you can eat the wallet!

Bobby Sichran

<bsich@interport.net> wrote:

Is gelatin from a kosher animal pareve?

Dear Bobby Sichran,

During the process of making gelatin, the animal parts become inedible and lose their status as meat. Also, they lose any taste of meat. In theory, such gelatin would be *pareve* — meaning you can eat it with milk. In practice, kosher gelatin is usually made of agar-agar — a plant (seaweed) derivative.

YIDDLE RIDDLE

Last week we asked:

Which weekly *Parsha* is never read (outside of Israel) on Shabbat afternoon?

Answer:

Parshat Bereshit. Outside Israel, *Simchat Torah* always falls on a weekday. So the only Shabbat when *Parshat Bereshit* is read is the following Shabbat in the morning. In Israel, however, when *Simchat Torah* falls on Shabbat, we read *Parshat Bereshit* that very same afternoon.

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PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 28:10 - The departure of a righteous person leaves a noticeable void in that place.
2. 28:11 - Sleep at night lying down.
3. 28:12 - The ascending angels accompanied Yaakov in *Eretz Canaan*. The descending angels accompanied Yaakov outside of the Land.
4. 28:15 - To reassure Yaakov, since he was afraid of Eisav and Lavan.
5. 28:17 - The place via which our prayers ascend to Heaven.
6. 29:7 - He thought they were loafing, stopping work early in the day.
7. 29:11 - He saw prophetically that they would not be buried together.
8. 29:11 - Eliphaz, Eisav's son, chased him and took all his possessions.
9. 29:13 - He thought Yaakov was carrying money.
10. 29:17 - She cried continually, because she thought she was destined to marry Eisav.
11. 29:21 - Eighty-four.
12. 30:1 - She envied her *mitzvos*, thinking they were the reason Leah merited having children.
13. 30:5 Dan.
14. 30:22 - That Rachel gave Leah the "signs of recognition" that Yaakov had taught her, so that she wouldn't be embarrassed.
15. 30:24 - 'Yosef' means 'He will add.' Rachel prayed to Hashem for another son, in addition to Yosef.
16. 30:29 - They weren't born yet.
17. 31:19 - To wean her father from idol worship.
18. 31:41 - *Yagar Sahadusa*, meaning 'wall of testimony.'
19. 31:50 - Lavan.
20. 32:1 - The angels of *Eretz Yisrael*.

BONUS ANSWER!

Noach's son Shem survived the Flood. Before the Flood, he had lived amongst the most wicked of peoples, yet he remained righteous. Now that Yaakov was leaving the righteous influence of his father, Yitzchak, and going to live with the wicked Lavan and his like-minded countrymen, Yaakov needed Shem's teachings to show him how to remain righteous in evil surroundings.

• Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky in *Emes L'Yaakov*

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

28:12	RAMBAN Yaakov's Dream	31:19	The <i>Terafim</i>	29:11	Why Yaakov Cried
29:2	Three Flocks	28:12-13	SFORNO Yaakov's Dream	31:32	Yaakov's Curse
30:2	Yaakov's Anger	29:6	A Proper Guest	32:1	A Father's Blessing

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