

לעילוי נשמת
מרת נקא עדנה
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בת משה מנחם הלוי ז"ל



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Weekly Torah Insights and inspiration on the Parsha from the Rosh Yeshiva Shlit"a of Gur

True View

וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב מִבְּעַר שֵׁוּעַ וַיֵּלֶךְ חָרָן

And Yaakov departed from Be'er Sheva and went toward Charan. (28:10)

Why does the pasuk detail Yaakov's "leaving" and "going," and not simply say, וַיֵּלֶךְ יַעֲקֹב חָרָן – *And Yaakov went toward Charan*? Furthermore, at the end of Parshas Toldos, the pasuk already states that Yaakov set out: וַיֵּלֶךְ פָּדָן אֲרָם – *and he went toward Padan Aram*. Why is this repeated?¹

The "house" we aspire to enter is yiras Shamayim, and the way to get there is through Torah

The Gemara (Avodah Zarah 25a) teaches that Sefer Bereishis is called ספר הישר – *Book of the Upright*,² because it discusses the Avos, who were *yesharim*, upright.³ When we learn Sefer Bereishis and study the ways of the Avos with the proper mindset, we can gain insight into how to better our own ways and become *yesharim*. With this frame of mind,

we may study Yaakov's life and learn lessons from it.

In the period between leaving Be'er Sheva and arriving at Charan, Yaakov spent fourteen years learning in the yeshivah of Ever.⁴ The Yaakov of וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב חָרָן, when he first set out, was not the same man as וַיֵּלֶךְ חָרָן, the Yaakov who had just spent fourteen years in the tent of Torah. This is the lesson of our pasuk.

There are three places where Rashi mentions that the heavenly and earthly *Batei Mikdash* are aligned with each other. The first is in our parshah, on the pasuk (28:17) אֵין זֶה כִּי אִם בַּיִת אֱלֹקִים וְזֶה שַׁעַר – *This is none other than the abode of G-d and this is the gate of the heavens*. Rashi explains that the heavenly Beis Hamikdash is aligned with the earthly Beis Hamikdash. The second is in the *Shiras HaYam*. On the pasuk (Shemos 15:17) מִכּוּן לְשִׁבְתֶּךָ פְּעֻלַּתְּהוּ ה' מִקְדָּשׁ ה' כּוֹנְנֵנוּ יְדִידְךָ – *the foundation of your dwelling place that You, Hashem, have made – the sanctuary, Hashem, that Your hands established*, Rashi comments that the earthly Beis Hamikdash is aligned with the heavenly throne that Hashem made. Finally, on

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In Transit

וּשְׁמֵרֵנִי בַדֶּרֶךְ הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי הוֹלֵךְ וְנָתַן לִי לֶחֶם לֶאֱכֹל וּבִגְד לְלַבֵּשׁ

[If Hashem] will guard me on this way that I am going and give me bread to eat and clothing to wear. (Bereishis 28:20)

The *mefarshim* point out that Yaakov's language seems superfluous. Why would he need bread if not to eat, and clothes, if not to wear?

The Sfas Emes explains⁹ that Yaakov wanted bread only to eat – and not to leave over. As the Gemara (Sotah 48b) states, a person who has bread for today yet worries what he will eat tomorrow is *מקטני אמנה*, one of small faith. Yaakov didn't want his food – or any of his physical needs – to occupy his mind aside from when he needed to engage them.

There is a notation at the above Gemara referencing a Midrash,¹⁰ which cites the same teaching, and adds, "as the pasuk says (regarding the *mann* – Shemos 16:4) לִמְעַן אֶנְסֶנּוּ הַיֵּלֶךְ בְּתוֹרָתִי, – *so that I can test them, whether they will follow My teaching*." What connection does this pasuk have to the idea of *מקטני אמנה*?

Additionally, this teaching of Chazal seems to contradict another. The Gemara (Yoma 76a) relates that the students of R. Shimon bar Yochai asked him, "Why didn't the *mann* descend for Bnei Yisrael just once a year?" What was the purpose of it falling every day? R. Shimon bar Yochai responded with a *mashal*:

A king had an only son. Once a year, the king would give his son a sum of money to sustain him through the coming

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1 See Rashi
2 Yehoshua 10:13
3 Bamidbar 23:10
4 Megillah 17a

9 Likutim
10 Yalkut Shimoni, Beshalach 258

True View

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the pasuk (Shemos 23:20) הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי שֹׁלַח מַלְאָךְ - Behold, I send an angel... and to bring you to the place that I have made ready. Rashi explains, "I have already prepared My place opposite it; this is one of the pesukim that teach that the heavenly Beis Hamikdash is aligned with the earthly Beis Hamikdash."

There is an important distinction among these pesukim. In the first and third instances, Rashi writes that the heavenly Beis Hamikdash is opposite the earthly one, as if the earthly one is the main Beis Hamikdash. But in the second instance, Rashi writes that the earthly abode is aligned to the heavenly one.

Based on the above, the answer is clear. The Gemara (Berachos 8a) states that Hakadosh Baruch Hu's only interest in His world is the four *amos* of halachah. After spending fourteen years immersed in the *arba amos shel halachah*, Yaakov had come to embody the very reason for the world's existence, giving the lower world unprecedented prominence. The heavenly Beis Hamikdash was aligned to the more prominent *Beis Hamikdash shel mattah*. The same is true where Rashi mentions this concept for the third time. That pasuk discusses the period after Klal Yisrael accepted the Torah, making this world preeminent once again. Thus, once again the earthly Beis Hamikdash is given prominence. But the middle pasuk speaks of before *Mattan Torah*. Although Bnei Yisrael attained high levels of *nevuah* at the Yam Suf,⁵ the upper worlds were still primary, since the Torah had not yet descended to this world. Thus, the lower abode was aligned to the upper one.

This is the lesson we must absorb to better ourselves: the focal point of the world and our lives must be the four *amos* of halachah, the study of Torah.

But learning Torah is not enough. The Baal Shem Tov⁶ notes an unusual phraseology in the pasuk הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי שֹׁלַח מַלְאָךְ - הִנֵּה, אֵין זֶה כִּי אִם בֵּית אֱלֹקִים וְזֶה שְׁעַר הַשָּׁמַיִם - *How awesome is this place! This is none other than the abode of G-d and this is the gate of the heavens* (28:17). The expression "אֵין זֶה כִּי" - this is none other than," is typically used when one's assertion is challenged. If Reuven identifies a fruit as an apple and Shimon insists it's an orange, Reuven might say, "This is nothing but an apple!" Why is this language used here? Was the character of *Har Hamoriyah* challenged?

The Gemara⁷ compares a person who possesses Torah but not *yiras Shamayim* to somebody who creates a gateway for a courtyard he doesn't have. Rashi explains, "Torah is only a gateway to access *yiras Shamayim*, so one must give precedence to *yiras Shamayim*." The "house" we aspire to enter is *yiras Shamayim*, and the way to get there is through Torah.

The Baal Shem Tov explains: Yaakov spent fourteen years learning in *Beis Ever*, during which time he achieved great levels. As he approached *Har Hamoriyah*, however, he experienced levels of *yiras Shamayim* as he had never before. He then realized that הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי שֹׁלַח מַלְאָךְ: this "place" - *yiras Shamayim*, which is the "house" - is truly awesome; אֵין זֶה כִּי אִם בֵּית אֱלֹקִים, this is our main purpose of life. - וְזֶה the Torah study in which Yaakov had been immersed for fourteen years - שְׁעַר הַשָּׁמַיִם, is only the gateway to *yiras Shamayim*.

But the Baal Shem Tov's question does not seem adequately answered. The pasuk could have said רַק זֶה בֵּית אֱלֹקִים - *this alone is the abode of G-d*. אֵין זֶה כִּי אִם בֵּית אֱלֹקִים sounds as if to answer somebody who felt that *Har Hamoriyah* was something other than the house of Hashem.

Let us suggest a different approach. The Sfas Emes notes⁸ that the words *יראה*, fear, and *ראיה*, sight, share the same letters. This is because one who possesses *yiras Shamayim* is granted a special clarity of vision. מָה רַב טוֹבָךְ אֲשֶׁר - *How abundant is Your goodness that You have stored away for those who fear You, that You have performed for those who seek refuge in You in the presence of men* (Tehillim 31:20). Hashem stores away His goodness, i.e., a clear perception of Him, in every place. This clarity is revealed to *those who fear Him*; they discern the truth of *ein od milvado* in everything they see. This is אֵין זֶה כִּי אִם בֵּית אֱלֹקִים, in contrast to the average person, who views the world with eyes of *gashmiyus*, and sees things at their surface only.

This is what Yaakov meant: מָה נִוְרָא הִנֵּה הַמִּקְדָּשׁ - with Yaakov's *middah* of *יראה*, he attained perfect clarity of vision and realized that אֵין זֶה כִּי אִם בֵּית אֱלֹקִים - all matters of this world are merely an external casing, inside which is the Presence of Hashem. This is true vision.

All Yaakov's travels and travails were a portent for his descendants, who would follow in his footsteps as they navigate the dark *galus*. The only way we can find our way is by learning Torah and making every effort toward *yiras Shamayim*.

(ויצא תשפ"ג - ס"ג מאמר ב)

5 Mechilta, Beshalach 3
6 Kesser Shem Tov, 316; cited in Baal Shem Tov al HaTorah
7 Shabbos 31b, Yoma 72b
8 ד"ה ויירא, Likutim

In Transit

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year. Seeing no need for his father, the son would wander off throughout the year, showing his face only once each year to pick up his allowance. The king wanted to see his son more often, so he began giving him only enough money for one day at a time. From then on, his son began to visit every day.

Concluded R. Shimon bar Yochai: Similarly, a person who had dependent children in the *midbar* would worry, *What if the manna doesn't fall tomorrow? All my children will starve to death!* Thus, Bnei Yisrael would keep their hearts turned to their Heavenly Father.

All the goods of this world are meant only to enable a person to pass through it, and do not contain objective value

According to this, the *mann* descended every day in order that Bnei Yisrael should worry for the morrow. Apparently this did not deem them *אמנה*. Why?

The answer is that there is a fine line between appropriate concern and lack of faith. Although Bnei Yisrael were to be concerned the *mann* wouldn't fall tomorrow, they weren't to fear they wouldn't have food. That would be an indication of poor faith. After all, Hashem Who supports all mankind would support them, too. The concern was meant to inspire them to remember that everything

is dependent only on Hashem, so that they would turn their hearts to Him.

The pasuk cited by the Midrash, לַמַּעַן אֲנִי וְהַיְלֵךְ בְּתוֹרָתִי, is explained in various manners by the *mefarshim*. Rashi explains that the 'teaching' Hashem wanted Bnei Yisrael to follow referred to the mitzvos connected to the *mann*. The Ramban contends that it refers to Torah and mitzvos in general.

The Midrash, which cites this pasuk in connection with the concept of *אמנה*, קטני אמנה, understands the pasuk differently. הַיְלֵךְ בְּתוֹרָתִי means, *Will Bnei Yisrael follow My teaching and channel their concern for tomorrow into an awareness that everything is in My hands; or will their concern lead them to worry for bread, to become קטני אמנה?*¹¹

The Gemara (Taanis 9a) teaches, "Bnei Yisrael had three virtuous benefactors (*parnasim*), Moshe, Aharon, and Miriam, in whose merit they received the following three gifts: the *be'er*, in Miriam's merit, the *ananei hakavod*, in Aharon's merit, and the *mann*, in Moshe's merit." The Maharsha¹² expands on this, saying that in truth, all three¹³ gifts came in the merit of Yaakov Avinu. Yaakov davened, וּשְׁמַרְנִי בְּדֶרֶךְ הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי הוֹלֵךְ וְנָתַן לִי לֶחֶם לֶאֱכֹל וְיִגְדַּל לְלִבִּי – [If Hashem] will guard me on this way that I am going and give me bread to eat and clothes to wear. The *ananei hakavod* were given to guard Bnei Yisrael on their way; the *mann* was given as bread to eat; and the *be'er* provided water to drink and to launder their clothes to wear.¹⁴

The Maharsha concludes: "For tzaddikim make do with little." Yaakov asked only for a minimum, and Bnei Yisrael who received *mann* in his merit made do with a day's ration at a time, in order that their focus would remain on Hashem.

Chazal teach¹⁵ that a *talmid chacham* who is humble and G-d fearing says, "I have no interest in anything of this world, because this world is not mine." One attains this mindset by recognizing that all the goods of this world are meant only to enable a person to pass through it, and do not contain objective value. A person must engage them while keeping in mind their higher purpose.

וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב מִבְּאֵר שֶׁבַע וַיֵּלֶךְ חָרָן – *Yaakov departed from Be'er Sheva and went toward Charan* (28:10). The Midrash¹⁶ notes that although the normal way of writing "toward Charan" is לְחָרָן, the pasuk writes חָרָן, because a *lamed* at the beginning of a word can be replaced with a *hei* at the end. There is a well-known question on this: What gain is there in swapping a letter at the beginning of a word for a different letter at the end? The word does not become shorter.¹⁷

We may suggest that if the Torah would prefix a destination point with a *lamed*, it would seem that this is indeed a worthy destination. A person might begin pursuing this goal in earnest, losing focus of the fact that this destination is only a means to reach his true, *ruchniyus'dige* goals. Instead, the pasuk suffixes the destination with a *hei*, which alludes to *Olam Hazeih*, the transient world.¹⁸ The person is thus reminded that although he must journey toward his destinations, to earn a living and tend to his other this-worldly needs, these are only temporary. After all, *Olam Hazeih* itself won't last forever.

Indeed, it is proper to be concerned for one's future – but only as a tool for gaining awareness of our reliance on Hashem. This was Yaakov's way, and this is the way we, his descendants, must follow.

(וַיֵּצֵא תשפ"ג – ס"ג מאמור א)

11 See Ibn Ezra, Rashbam, *Kli Yakar*, ad loc.

12 *Chiddushei Aggados*, s.v. *Chazrah*

13 See *Ibra D'Dasha*, vol. 1 p. 110, in footnote

14 According to this explanation, Yaakov's *tefillah* didn't reference water to drink but rather with which to launder the "clothes to wear," because the Gemara (Nedarim 80b) teaches that water is used first for drinking and second for laundry. Thus, if Bnei Yisrael would have water to clean their clothes, they certainly would have enough to drink. However, this Maharsha seems to be contradicted by the Midrash which states that the *ananei hakavod* laundered Bnei Yisrael's clothes; if so, they didn't need the *be'er* for this purpose.

15 *Derech Eretz Zuta*, 1:1

16 Bereishis Rabbah 68:8

17 See *Ibra D'Dasha*, Shavuos p. 116, citing R. Menachem Mendel of Vorka

18 Menachos 29b

Parshah Potpourri

ואחר ילדה בת ותקרא את שמה דינה

Afterwards, she bore a daughter, and she called her name Dinah. (Bereishis 30:21)

Why does the Torah stress that Dinah was born *afterwards*, i.e., after her six brothers?¹⁹

The Gemara (Bava Basra 141a) teaches that when one's first child is a girl, it is a good sign for the future sons. Two explanations are given for this. First, the older sister will help raise her younger brothers. Second, there will be no *ayin hara*.

The Maharsha explains why having a daughter first negates *ayin hara*. When the first child is a boy, he is a *bechor*, and will inherit more than his brothers, leaving less for them. This can lead to jealousy and *ayin hara*. But when a girl is born first, she does not have the status of *bechor*, so her brothers will inherit evenly, and will not bear jealousy or *ayin hara* toward each other.

This applies only to ordinary people; not to people such as the *shivtei Kah*. The Gemara (Berachos 7b) states that Leah called her first son Reuven as a statement: ראו מה ראו בני לבן חמי – See the difference between my son and my father-in-law's son (Esav). Esav hated Yaakov for taking the *bechorah*, although he himself sold it to him; Reuven would involuntarily lose his *bechorah* in favor of Yosef, and yet would not be jealous of him. The same was true of all the *shevatim* – they were above such things as jealousy.

This is why the Torah mentions that Dinah was born after her brothers: to underscore that there was no need for her to be born first in order to avoid *ayin hara*, since jealousy did not exist in Yaakov's house.

ויפרץ האיש מאד מאד, ויהי לו צאן רבות ושפחות
ועבדים וגמלים וחסמרים

The man (Yaakov) became exceedingly prosperous, and he attained flocks of sheep, maidservants and servants, camels and donkeys. (30:43)

Agra D'Kallah points out that the pasuk does not mention that Yaakov attained cattle. But it is clear from later pesukim²⁰ that Yaakov did, in fact, own cattle. One might suggest that Yaakov only acquired cattle after he left Lavan's house. But why would this be?

The Gemara (Avodah Zarah 15a) states that it is forbidden to sell a large animal (such as cattle) to a non-Jew, because it might lead to *chillul Shabbos*: such a sale could take place shortly before Shabbos, and, wanting to demonstrate the animal's abilities, the (Jewish) owner might call out to his animal to make it move. This demonstration might occur after Shabbos had already begun, and it is forbidden to cause one's cattle to walk on Shabbos.²¹

While Yaakov worked for Lavan, Lavan repeatedly mixed up the animals belonging to him and those belonging to Yaakov, claiming that their ownership was reversed. Had Yaakov owned his own cattle at that time, his cattle might have become confused with Lavan's. This could have led to *chillul Shabbos*, as he might have caused his own cattle to move on Shabbos, thinking they were Lavan's. For this reason, Yaakov avoided acquiring cattle at that time, and only did so once he left Lavan's house. Regarding small animals such as sheep, one is permitted to induce their movement on Shabbos; so Yaakov could safely own them even while working for Lavan.

ויבא לבן באהל יעקב וגו' ולא מצא וגו' ורחל לקחה
את התרפים וגו' וימשש לבן את כל האהל ולא מצא
וגו' ויחפש ולא מצא את התרפים

Lavan came into Yaakov's tent... but he found nothing... Rachel had taken the Terafim... Lavan rummaged through the whole tent but found nothing... he searched but did not find the terafim. (31:33-35)

The Ramban notes that describing Lavan's search for the *terafim*, the Torah writes twice, וְלֹא מָצָא – he did not find, only specifying אֶת הַתְּרָפִים – he did not find the *terafim*, the third time. The Ramban explains that in the first two instances, Lavan was searching far from where the *terafim* were, so he simply found nothing. But in the third instance, he was searching right near them, beside the camel on which Rachel had concealed them. The Torah thus highlights that nevertheless, וְלֹא מָצָא אֶת הַתְּרָפִים – he did not find the *terafim*.

Let us suggest another approach. After Lavan failed to locate the *terafim*, Yaakov berated him, כִּי מִשְׁשָׁתָּךְ אֶת כָּל כְּלֵי מֵה מְצָאָתָךְ – When you rummaged through all my things, what did you find of all your household objects? (31:37). The Midrash²² comments that it is normal for one living in his father-in-law's house to use the household utensils, yet Lavan searched through all Yaakov's possessions and did not find even a needle that belonged to him. Clearly, besides searching for the *terafim*, Lavan was looking for anything else Yaakov might have taken from him.

We may now understand the wording of the pesukim. The pasuk first relates that Lavan found nothing in Yaakov's possession – not so much as a needle. And again – he found nothing of his at all. He could not accuse Yaakov of stealing his things. The pasuk then tells that even the *terafim* – which had truly been taken from him – Lavan failed to locate.

(ויצא תשפ"ג – קידושא רבא)

19 See *Ba'alei HaTosafos*; Rabbeinu Bechaye; Maharsha, Berachos 60a s.v. *L'achar*

20 *I have acquired oxen* (Bereishis 32:6); וַיַּחַץ וְגו' וְאֵת הַבָּקָר - *He divided... the cattle* (Ibid 8); פְּרוֹת אַרְבָּעִים וְעֶשְׂרֵה - *forty cows and ten bulls* (Ibid 16).

21 See Rashi and *Tosafos*

22 Bereishis Rabbah, cited by Rashi, Avodah Zarah 3a