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Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Vayyishlach

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To be a Man of the Field

R' Ezra Goldschmiedt

Yaakov Avinu's preparation for meeting Eisav seems fairly straightforward. Particularly when read through the lens of the Sages' commentary, Yaakov's message is one of peace, of trying to make amends with a brother who may still be bent on exacting revenge.

Yaakov sends lavish gifts to Eisav, giving them in a manner in which they are sure to impress (see Rashi to 32:17). In his message, Yaakov points out that the blessings he had "stolen" were of no use, making revenge unnecessary - since that eventful day, Yaakov had lived life as a stranger, without significant wealth or property (see Rashi to 32:6). Yaakov tells his brother that he hopes to find favour in his eyes (32:6).

In some ways, this approach comes from fear. His brother, who has previously pledged to kill him (see 27:41), is fast approaching with an army of four hundred men. To minimize the potential disaster, Yaakov splits his camp in two, prays to G-d for salvation, and sends a gift. Yaakov certainly has no desire to fight or confront his brother.

It appears somewhat strange, then, to read Rashi's explanation of Yaakov's statement that he "lived as a stranger with Lavan" (32:5). Paraphrasing Midrash Bereishit Rabbati (32:5), Rashi notes that the Hebrew word for "lived

as a stranger", **גֵרִי**, has the numerical value (*gematria*) of 613, indicating that Yaakov communicated to his brother that he had remained true to the 613 mitzvot even while living with the wicked Lavan.

Siftei Chachamim explains Rashi to mean that this statement was a warning to Eisav. Yaakov was telling his brother that he may as well give up on any aggressive plans, for their father Yitzchak's assurance that Eisav would have the upper-hand applied only when Yaakov wasn't living up to the standards of the Torah (see 27:40 and Rashi there).

One must ask: Does such a statement really fit with Yaakov's consistent message? As we've demonstrated, Yaakov approached Eisav in fear, trying to keep the peace and assuage Eisav's anger as much as possible. Why then, would he send a message that smacks of arrogance and indicates he is looking for a fight?

Perhaps we need to understand Rashi's point another way. Looking back at the original text in Bereishit Rabbati, we might perceive a very different picture:

"[Yaakov] said: I will send messengers – **perhaps he will do teshuvah**. ... [Eisav] should not say that when I was in my father's house I learned Torah, but in Lavan's house, because of the difficulties of work, I did not. Rather,

during the entire time I was in the house of Lavan, I learned Torah. The numerical value of **גֵרִי** is 613."

Far from looking for a fight, Yaakov was looking to bring Eisav closer to himself, and to G-d as well. In addition to gifts and a message of peace, Yaakov wanted to use this meeting as an opportunity to communicate a message that he could not have told Eisav before.

Living a life of closeness to the Creator and following in His ways is not a lifestyle limited to the "wholesome man of tents" (Bereishit 25:27), but Yaakov could not prove that to his brother while he was at that stage in his life. Only after Yaakov continued living an honest and good life while working as a "man of the field" could he truly communicate the message that Eisav needed to hear: No matter who you are, no matter what world you're living in, you can be a faithful servant of G-d.

Far too often, we leave the work of Jewish outreach to the "professionals" who, in their training for such work, may need to be "wholesome dwellers of tents." Such a background is needed in some respects, but we need to remember that those of us who live the working lifestyle, among the Lavans of the world, can accomplish something that the professionals cannot. It is specifically the "men of the field" who can best show their coworkers, neighbors and acquaintances the beauty of Judaism. Only with their example can our own brothers and sisters see the relevance and possibility of their own intimate relationship with HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

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Parshah Questions

R' Meir Lipschitz

(Answers for some of the questions are on the back page)

- What can be learned from "v'Timna haytah pilegesh"? (Rashi Bereishit 36:12, Sanhedrin 99b)
- Why do we still refer to Yaakov as Yaakov, not Yisrael? (Ibn Ezra, Ramban, and Ohr HaChaim to Bereishit 35:9-10, Berachot 13a)
- What gave Shimon and Levi the right to eradicate the city of Shechem? (Ramban Bereishit 34:13, Ohr HaChaim Bereishit 34:25, Rambam Hilchot Melachim 9:14)
- For children: Who was the *ish* who fought with Yaakov? (Rashi Bereishit 32:25)

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Maariv: “Optional” or Obligatory? Yair Manas

The Talmud (Berachot 26b) records a dispute between Rabbi Yosi ben Chanina and Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi regarding the source for praying three times a day. Rabbi Yosi says that this practice is based on the deeds of our forefathers: Avraham established shacharit, Yitzchak established minchah, and Yaakov established maariv. Rabbi Yehoshua says that praying three times a day is based on the korbanot that are sacrificed in the Beit haMikdash: Shacharit is based on the daily morning offering, minchah is based on the daily afternoon offering, and maariv is based on the burning of the limbs and fats of the offerings, which occurs throughout the night.

The Talmud (Berachot 27b) also records an argument between Rabbi Yehoshua and Rabban Gamliel regarding whether davening the maariv prayer is “optional” or obligatory: Abbaye rules that maariv is obligatory, and Rava rules that maariv is optional. What does optional mean here?

The Baalei haTosafot (Berachot 27b) explain that “optional” means that if there is another mitzvah to perform at the same time, the other mitzvah takes precedence over davening maariv. Maariv really is *obligatory*, and it is “optional” only when there is another mitzvah to perform.

Why should maariv be less obligatory than shacharit and minchah? Rashi (Shabbat 9b) tells us that this view is based on the connection between the

prayers and the sacrifices. Shacharit and minchah are based on the daily morning and afternoon sacrifices, which are obligatory. Maariv is based on the burning of the limbs and fats, which is not obligatory; one who does not burn the limbs and fats still fulfills his sacrificial obligation. Thus, maariv is optional because the source for maariv is derived from optional Temple sacrificial rites.

We may ask, though: Would maariv be optional if davening were based on our forefathers, rather than the sacrifices? Is there any reason that Yaakov's prayer would be different from Avraham and Yitzchak's prayer?

The Netziv (Haemek She'elah 8:1) and Rabbi Yaakov Yehoshua Falk (P'nei Yeshoshua on Berachot 26b) suggest that davening Maariv may be optional even if it is derived from Yaakov. When Yaakov was travelling to Padan Aram, he decided to pray only when he realized that he passed the place that his forefathers had prayed in; his prayer was optional, rather than fulfillment of a fixed obligation. Therefore, even if davening maariv is based on Yaakov, it may still be optional.

It is appropriate to conclude with the words of the Tur (Orach Chaim 235): Even though Maariv is “optional,” davening Maariv is nonetheless a mitzvah, and should not be disregarded.

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Hitoriri: Jewish Spirituality Dress-Up Judaism R' Mordechai Torczyner

Why dress up for davening?

A young man proposed to his inamorata while unshaven and wearing dirty jeans and a T-shirt, and he was stunned when she rejected his offer. He asked her, “Didn't you say you would take me as I am?”

She replied sadly, “Yes, but I didn't think that *you* would.”

We intuit that G-d will “take us as we are”, that prayer should require a proper heart rather than proper garb. The Creator who formed us knows our most intimate thoughts, and from a timeless perch outside of our reality He has already witnessed our weakest moments as well as the fulfillment of our greatest potential, so what would be the purpose of artifice? How could dressing up disguise our failings?

The case of the rejected suitor demonstrates the value of dressing up: Donning special clothing, like the uniform the kohen wore in the Beit haMikdash, is an act of respect. Dressing up shows that we value our meeting with G-d.

Bereishit 33:18 mentions that Yaakov arrived in Shechem *shalem* (intact, complete). Per Rav Meir Simchah of Dvinsk, the Torah emphasizes Yaakov's complete state in order to explain a nuance in his conduct.

During Yaakov's travels, he brought a korban nearly every time he arrived in a new location (Bereishit 28:18, 31:54, 35:1, 35:14, 35:19 and 46:1). However, Yaakov did not bring a korban when he arrived in Succot, despite having just survived his midnight battle with a *malach* and his meeting with Esav. Why was this trip different?

Rav Meir Simchah explains that Yaakov had not healed fully from his fight when he arrived in Succot. Our patriarch considered himself blemished due to his wounds, and unworthy to approach his Creator. Only when he arrived at the following stop, Shechem, did he feel himself *shalem* and ready to bring a korban.

We should never feel that G-d is unapproachable; we are taught that HaShem's mercy is universal, regardless of our material or spiritual wounds and deficiencies. Nonetheless, our goal should be to emulate Yaakov and approach G-d in a state of *shleimut*, wholeness. G-d may take us as we are, but we should aim to become greater.

613 Mitzvot: #117

Leaven and Honey in a Flour Korban

R' Mordechai Torczyner

Mitzvah 117 instructs us not to add honey or *se'or* (leavened material) to our flour-based korbanot. Rambam (Moreh haNevuchim 3:46) explains that idolaters of biblical times used these elements in their offerings, and we were required to distinguish ourselves. However, the Sefer haChinuch offers several additional lessons to be learned from this prohibition, including:

- Flour becomes leavened only if left to stagnate; avoiding use of leaven teaches us to avoid laziness and stagnation. [Similarly, Rav Moshe Isserles (Torat haOlah 3:39) suggested that the reason to

exclude *se'or* is that it represents the *yetzer hara*, as seen in Berachot 17a.]

- Honey is cloying; avoiding use of honey teaches us to pursue that which is valuable in life, even if it is not sweet.

Chatam Sofer offers another approach: Leavened dough, which inflates itself, represents arrogance. Honey, with its sweetness, represents indulgence. We eschew both of these when standing before G-d with our korban.

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**Torah in Translation
Sorcery, Astrology & Magic****Rabbi Shlomo Ganzfried
Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 166:2-5
Translated by R' Dovid Zirkind**

#2: We are taught (Chullin 95b), "Regarding a house, a child or a wife, sorcery involving them is forbidden, but they may be [seen as] a sign." This means that one who built a house or whose child was born or who married a wife, and who then had three successes or failures, may take it as a sign for the future and say, "This house is good for me etc." One may also ask a child which verse he studied and then rely on it to perform an action, for this is considered somewhat like prophecy. Some say that one may make a sign regarding something which will happen in the future, like Eliezer the servant of Avraham [Bereishit 24] or Yehonatan the son of Saul [Shemuel I 20], while others forbid. One who follows the way of the pure and trusts in G-d will be surrounded by kindness.

#3: [Devarim 18:10 prohibits various types of magic, including *mi'onen*.] What is *mi'onen*? One who suggests times [related to the root *onah*, a designated time], saying via astrology that a certain day is good or a certain day is bad, a certain day is fit for a specific venture or a certain year or month is bad for something else.

Our custom to marry only under a waxing moon is not included in "sorcery and *mi'onen*" because we only do this as a positive sign, along the line of anointing a king at a spring as a sign that his kingship should be prolonged. So, too, we do this as a positive sign, like the moon which develops and becomes full. Nonetheless, one should not postpone a marriage for this, and certainly should not perform a *chupat niddah* for this.

Similarly, there is a custom to begin studying [Torah] on Rosh Chodesh. Some also permit the practice of beginning (the school year) on a Monday or Wednesday as well.

#4: Our sages said: "What is included in *mi'onen*? Someone who 'grabs the eyes' [related to the root *ayin*, an eye], as though he was grabbing people's eyes and closing them, for he tricks them. It appears to them that he is performing amazing, supernatural deeds, but in truth he does nothing other than via the speed of his hands. With trickery he deceives them. The jesters who do this at weddings transgress a prohibition, and one who requests this from them transgresses, "Do not place a stumbling block before the blind." Therefore, one who has the ability to object

Rav Shlomo Ganzfried, one of Hungary's outstanding scholars of the 19th century, was born in Ungvar in 1804. His father died when Shlomo was just eight years old, and his guardianship was assumed by Ungvar's Chief Rabbi, Rav Zvi Hirsh Heller. The young Ganzfried was already known as a child prodigy, and he remained in the home of the Chief Rabbi for almost a decade until his ordination and marriage.

At first, Rav Ganzfried worked as a wine merchant, and then as a community Rav in Brezovica, but he would ultimately return to Ungvar in 1849, where he served as a dayan (religious judge) until his death. He served under Rav Meir Ash, a student of the Chatam Sofer. Through correspondence it is clear that the Chatam Sofer held Rav Ganzfried in great respect (Responsa of Chatam Sofer Yoreh Deah 137). He passed away in 1886.

Unquestionably, the greatest of Rav Ganzfried's published works was his *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, a comprehensive guide to Jewish law, written for laymen who lacked the time or education to appreciate the nuances of the *Shulchan Aruch* and its commentaries. In his introduction Rav Ganzfried writes, "The book is written for G-d-fearing Jews who are not in a position to study and comprehend the *Shulchan Aruch* and its commentaries, and is composed in a Hebrew that can be easily understood." The *Kitzur* has become respected among laymen and scholars alike. It is estimated that over 2 million copies of this work have been sold since its publication, making it one of the highest-selling books in Jewish history.

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is obligated to object, and certainly one may not gaze and watch them. However, one may watch a non-Jew do this.

#5: One may not seek [the advice] of magicians other than for life-threatening situations. Alternatively, one who contracts a disease by way of magic or happenstance or bad spirits may be treated by a non-Jewish magician.

**Ha'Aretz
Ariel אריאל****R' Ezra Goldschmiedt**

Ariel, located in the central highland region known as Harei Shomron (the Samaritan Hills), is the capital of the Shomron (Samaria).

After the 1967 Six Day War, Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan said the country needed young Israelis to be more involved in settlement, which he viewed as the true expression of Zionism. This call was answered by a number of employees of Israel Military Industries, who developed a core group of people to found the new community.

Ariel was planned to be a city rather than a small settlement, and so selection of the right land was a key issue. Eventually, the location chosen was a barren hilltop named in Arabic "mountain of death", as it could not be used for agricultural purposes and so it had never been populated.

After more than ten years of planning, on August 17th, 1978, the first 40 pioneering families arrived at "the mountain of Death" and became the first settlement on the site for hundreds of years.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the state of Israel received a large influx of new immigrants. More than six thousand new immigrants chose Ariel as their new home, doubling its number of residents. As a direct result, Ariel's population reached 10,000, and the community was declared a city in October 1998.

Today, Ariel is home to 18,000 residents and another 10,000 students. The city has a diverse population, including native Israelis alongside new immigrants, and a blend of religious and secular Jews.

During the disengagement from Gaza a group of 40 families from the community of Nezarim were welcomed to the city of Ariel. Their arrival in the city, together with the arrival of many English-speaking families, has strengthened the religious community of the town.

Adapted from www.ariel.muni.il

Why do we still refer to Yaakov as Yaakov, not Yisrael?

Ibn Ezra reads the statement of HaShem not as a name switch, but rather as an addition: "Your name shall no longer be called Yaakov [alone], but [also] Yisrael."

Ramban explains that when HaShem said, "Your name is Yaakov," He meant that despite the fact that the angel had granted the name Yisrael, he remained Yaakov, since the angel had not been sent by HaShem to do that. Ramban also provides an alternative suggestion, like that of Ibn Ezra above.

Ohr HaChaim suggests that a person's name refers to his spiritual nature, and through this he explains the prohibition against using Avraham's original name, but not Yaakov's. Yaakov is his "soul name" and as such it can't be removed, despite his new name which reflects his elevated level, and so both names may be used. On the other hand, the name "Avram" is included in Avraham, and because his original name remains in his new one, the old one alone may not be used.

The gemara in **Berachot 13a** tells us that we may use the name Yaakov, despite the change to Yisrael, because HaShem Himself calls him Yaakov after the name change, "VaYomer Elokim l'Yisrael" (Bereishit 46:2)

What gave Shimon and Levi the right to wipe out the city of Shechem?

Rambam rules that if a Noahide fails in his fulfillment of any of the Noahide mitzvot (for a discussion on what they are see Toronto Torah Noach 5771) he should be put to death. One of those mitzvot is the establishment of a judicial system to enforce the local laws. The people of Shechem who did not prosecute Shechem for his crime of theft (kidnapping Dinah) were in violation of one of the Noahide commandments, and as such were punishable with death.

Ramban rejects Rambam's explanation because the command to establish a judicial system is a positive command, and Noahides are only put to death for violating a prohibition. [He also extends the definition of their responsibility to for a judicial system to include the Torah laws of theft, damages, sales, loans, and other related areas of civil and tort law, the violation of any of which would be punishable by death.] He further questions the need to justify Shimon and Levi's actions, since their conduct with Dinah indicates the people of the city were idolaters, adulterers, and sinners of all variety, and certainly fit for capital punishment even without the Rambam's explanation. Perhaps, he concludes, the need is not to justify their punishment, but why Shimon and Levi had the right to carry it out.

Ohr HaChaim cites the disagreement between Rambam and Ramban and offers two suggestions of his own to answer why they killed everyone in the city, rather than just Shechem. 1) They originally intended only to put Shechem to death, but the people of the city rose up to defend him. Shimon and Levi were justified in killing them at that point, since they could be put into the category of *rodef*, which allows for killing one's attacker as an act of self-defense. 2) The people of the city aided Shechem in his kidnapping of Dinah, and as such they all violated the command prohibiting theft and deserved capital punishment.

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MEDICAL HALACHAH

(WITH CME CREDIT)

@BAYT

8:45 AM Sun. December 11

INJECTIONS & ACUPUNCTURE ON SHABBAT

WITH R' MORDECHAI TORCZYNER

No charge / \$5 for CME credit

Men & Women Welcome

Non-Medical Personnel Welcome

Schedule for December 10-16 / 14-20 Kislev

Shabbat December 10

SHABBATON AT SHAAREI SHOMAYIM—SEE INSERTED FLYER

6:25 PM R' Dovid Zirkind, Parent-Child Learning V: Movie Night, Shaarei Shomayim

Sunday, December 11

8:45 AM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Medical Halachah: Injections and Acupuncture on Shabbat, with CME credit, BAYT

9:15 AM Hillel Horovitz, Parshah, **Hebrew**, Zichron Yisroel

9:15 AM PRE-CHANUKAH PROGRAM AT TCS—SEE INSERTED FLYER

11:50 AM R' Baruch Weintraub, Rambam: Hilchot Melachim, Or Chaim, *collegiates*

After maariv R' Dovid Zirkind, Bava Kama: Introduction to Avot Nezikin, Shaarei Shomayim **not this week**

After maariv R' Baruch Weintraub, Halachic issues in Israel: The Doctors' Strike, **Hebrew**, Clanton Park, *men*

Monday, December 12

8:30 PM Hillel Horovitz, Siddur: Are we obligated to pray?, Clanton Park, *men*

Tuesday, December 13

1:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Zecharyah: Zecharyah's Menorah, *Mekorot*, Shaarei Shomayim

7:15 PM R' Ezra Goldschmiedt, Yaakov's Relationship with Rachel and Leah: Ramban on the Parshah, BAYT

8:00 PM Mrs. Elyssa Goldschmiedt, Malbim on Chumash, TCS, *women*

8:00 PM Yair Manas: Minchat Chinuch, Clanton Park

Wednesday, December 14

10:00 AM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Dramas of Jewish History: Jews and Romans, BEBY, with Melton

8:00 PM R' Yehoshua Weber, Women's Beit Midrash at Bnai Torah, Tefillah

8:00 PM R' Dovid Zirkind, Gemara Beitzah Chabura: Discussing Eruv Tavshilin, Shaarei Shomayim

8:30 PM R' Baruch Weintraub, Rambam: Hilchot Melachim: Kings of Beit Dovid, Israel and Beit Shaul, Shomrai Shabbos, *men*

9:00 PM R' Ezra Goldschmiedt, Ethical Questions for Superheroes, Week 6 of 6, BAYT

Thursday, December 15

9:15 AM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Supernatural vs. Superstition: Extraterrestrial Life, 36 Theodore in Thornhill, *women, free babysitting*

Friday, December 16

8:00 AM R' Dovid Zirkind, Friday Parsha Preview, Village Shul