



BEIT MIDRASH ZICHRON DOV

TORONTO TORAH

PARASHAT VAYISHLACH

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This issue of Toronto Torah is dedicated by Ruth and Gerald Warner in memory of Ruth's dear father, Mike Smaye יחיאל מיכל בן יהושע, to commemorate his 39th Yahrzeit on 17 Kislev.



DVAR TORAH VAYISHLACH RABBI YEHUDA MANN, ROSH BEIT MIDRASH

Spiritual Growth: Not on The Expense of Others

In this week's parasha, Yaakov sends messengers to his brother Esav, and part of the message he asks them to convey to his brother is that "I have lived (גרתי) with Lavan" (Bereishit 32:5). Rashi adds depth to his words, saying, "I have lived with Lavan, and I have kept the 613 commandments." This is because the letters of "I have lived" (גרתי) have the same *gematria* (numerical value) as the number 613.

One of the well-known questions raised is: While living with Lavan, Yaakov married two sisters, Rachel and Leah. According to Jewish law, a person is not allowed to marry two sisters, so how could Yaakov claim to have observed the 613 commandments? This question is also raised by Ramban in his commentary on the Torah on Parashat Toldot (Bereishit 26:5), where he brings numerous sources that imply that our forefathers observed the Torah before it was given. But if that is so, how is it possible Yaakov married two sisters?

Ramban answers that the forefathers observed the Torah only in the land of Israel, and outside of the land of Israel, they did not observe the Torah. However, this answer is challenging because while it reconciles the words of *chazal* that say the forefathers kept Torah law before they were commanded, it does not reconcile with Rashi's words that

Yaakov observed all 613 commandments while living with Lavan which was outside the land of Israel.

Another answer suggests that Yaakov indeed observed the entire Torah before it was given, and consequently he requested that Rachel and Leah convert before marrying them so that he could fulfill the commandment of marrying Jewish women. After a person converts, we consider them as if they are a newborn child; thus, the familial relationship between Rachel and Leah would be nullified, and they would not be considered sisters. Therefore, Yaakov could marry both of them.

My personal favorite answer is from Rabbi Yaakov Kaminitzky, as presented in his book *Emet L'Yaakov*. Rabbi Kaminitzky suggests that there is no question at all about why Yaakov married two sisters. The practice of observing the entire Torah before it was given was merely a stringency, not an obligatory commandment. In contrast, Yaakov was obligated to marry Rachel because he committed to marrying her and declared that he would work for Lavan seven years "for Rachel your younger daughter." Rabbi Kaminitzky asserts that it is inconceivable that our patriarch Yaakov would violate his word and commitment to Rachel merely to demonstrate an extra level of stringency in

observing the Torah before it was formally given. Therefore, it was clear to Yaakov that he had to forgo this stringency at that point.

I heard a similar idea in the name of Rabbi Natan Tzvi Finkel. When Avraham hosts the angels in Parashat Vayeira, Avraham serves them generous portions of bread and meat, but tells the angels he will bring them "a little water." The question is: Why is Avraham willing to bring meat and bread but only willing to bring "a little water"? Rav Finkel answers: With regard to the meat and bread, it is told it has been brought by Avraham, ("And to the cattle ran Avraham"; "And I will take a morsel of bread"); but in the case of the water, Avraham sends someone else ("Water will be brought"). Says Rav Finkel: When a person does kindness to others by himself, he can bring with generosity, but when he expects and asks others to do kindness—he must make sure that his kindness will not be at the expense of others.

We learn from the words of Rabbi Yaakov Kaminitzky and Rav Finkel an important idea. While it is crucial to progress spiritually, repay kindness, and strive for excellence in the service of G-d, at the same time, we must ensure that our spiritual progress and acts of kindness do not come at the expense of others.



Yirmiyahu 1

Yirmiyahu was the last major prophet of the first Beit haMikdash, and his experience may well have been the most bitter of any prophet in Tanach. His role was to warn the Jews that destruction was coming. Rather than listen and repent, people beat him, imprisoned him, and threatened to kill him. But Hashem promised him, "I am with you, to save you" (1:8).

Chapter 1 begins by orienting us: Yirmiyahu is a kohen; his father, Chilkiyahu, may have been Kohen Gadol (See Radak to 1:1). He was from the town of Anatot, which will become important later in the book. Hashem began to speak to Yirmiyahu in the 13th year of the righteous King Yoshiyahu, and continued until the destruction of Jerusalem (1:1-3). Hashem tells Yirmiyahu that He

selected him before he was even born, to be a prophet to the nations. Rambam explains that this means Hashem embedded in Yirmiyahu the talents he would need to succeed as a prophet (Moreh haNevuchim 2:32). Yirmiyahu objects that he is young and unprepared, but

His role was to warn the Jews that destruction was coming.

Hashem promises to be with him, and that he will be able to do the job (1:4-8). Hashem then gives Yirmiyahu his first message for the nations, a message of demolition as well as construction. Hashem shows Yirmiyahu a staff of almond wood. "Almond" is *shakeid* in

Hebrew, and Hashem says He will be *shokeid*—diligent—in fulfilling His message. This is a trust-building message for both the Jews and Yirmiyahu [see Radak and Abarbanel] (1:9-12).

Hashem then gives Yirmiyahu another image: a bubbling pot, facing north. This represents an enemy who will attack from the north, bringing punishment for the Jews for their idolatry. Hashem sees Yirmiyahu's fear, and pledges to make him like a fortress, a pillar of iron and a wall of copper before his hostile audience. "They will fight against you and they will not be able to defeat you, for I am with you—this is the word of Hashem—to save you" (1:13-19).



Week 2: Two Aspects of Government

Ran (Derasha 11) argues that there are two central purposes of government in the Torah. The first is common to all societies and governments, namely maintaining law and order so that society can function.

It is accepted that men need judges to judge between them, for in their absence (Avoth 3:2) "One man would swallow the other alive" and the world would become corrupt. And every people requires some form of government, the sage going so far as to say: "Even thieves recognize the necessity of justice within their society." And Israel needs this just as the other nations do. (Silverstein translation)

However, the Torah has a second goal. There is an intrinsic need to enforce the laws of the Torah as this expresses true justice.

These two considerations entail two functions, respectively: one, punishing a man in accordance with true justice; the other (though he not be liable to punishment in terms of true justice), punishing him for the benefit of society and the exigencies of the hour.

The second goal, he contends, is what causes God's presence to be expressed in the world and connects the Jewish people to God.

He argues, however, that keeping only the letter of Torah law does not suffice to maintain law and order. The standard of punishment, for example, is so demanding that often guilty parties will be acquitted even when social order requires them to be punished. Thus, the Torah provides a mechanism to enforce laws beyond those dictated in the Torah for the sake of maintaining order.

Ran argues that these two functions are taken by two different governmental bodies. The goal of actualizing the Torah's ideals strictly is taken by the Sanhedrin, the judicial system. To reflect their role in bringing down God's presence, they sit in the "chamber of hewn stone" by the Beit HaMikdash. Maintaining order by implementing laws as needed is the task of the king. As we will see, however, even if his general model is accepted, the sharp distinction between these two bodies of government has its difficulties.



Lighting Chanukah Candles Late

Question from Chanukah 5783: Help me Rabbi! My flight back from Orlando has been delayed and I am going to arrive very late with my whole family at my home on Chanukah. Can I light the candles so late?

Answer: Initially, a person should strive to light the candles "on time." There are two main customs regarding the correct time—some have the custom to light the candles around sunset, while others light them at nightfall (*Tzeit Hakochavim*).

If a person does not light on time, there are several different levels of after the fact (*Bediavad*):

1. Firstly, a person should strive to light within the "halachic half-hour" after the original time of lighting according to their custom (mentioned above).
2. Some opinions state that the halachic half-hour is actually later than half an hour from the time of lighting: in the

time of our sages, the halachic half hour indicated the time people were strolling in the streets and they weren't outside beyond that time. However, nowadays people tend to stroll in the streets during later hours as well. Therefore, one can light with a blessing until a later hour, each place according to the nature of the city—some places at 6:00 PM, others at 9:00 PM, and some even later.

3. If one does not light when people are outside, they are allowed to light in their home throughout the night until dawn (*Alot Hashachar*) as long as there is someone else awake in their household who can see the lighting.

Therefore in our case, if a person returns home very late with their family, they are allowed to light with a blessing as long as they ensure that someone else is awake and will see the lighting.

What happens when a person arrives very close to dawn? Halacha requires the candles to be lit for half an hour from the moment they are lit. Does this mean that a person has to light their candles half an hour before dawn to ensure they are lit during the obligatory time?

In the *Mishnah Berura* (Dirshu Edition 672, footnote 36), it mentions that numerous Rabbis believe that precise wording from the Mishnah makes it clear that "it is possible to light until dawn with a blessing." This implies that it is permissible to perform the lighting until dawn with a blessing even if there is not half an hour before dawn.

(Sources: Shulchan Aruch and Mishna Berura, *Orach Chayim* 672:2)

Have a halachic question? Share it with Rabbi Mann at ymanntorah.com.



Our Next Book: Adjusting Sights



Adjusting Sights
By Haim Sabato
The Toby Press, 2003

When the Yom Kippur War broke out in 1973, Haim Sabato was called up to serve in a tank battalion. Following the war, Sabato went on to become a rabbi and rosh yeshiva in Maaleh Adumim. In 1999, Rav Haim Sabato published *Teum Kavanot*, a moving account of his war story, weaving in rabbinic and spiritual insights as he described the challenges, pains, and growth he experienced during the

war. The Hebrew book was translated and published in English as *Adjusting Sights*.

As we continue to pray on behalf of the soldiers and hostages in Gaza, I invite you to join me in reading *Adjusting Sights*. I hope that this experience will draw us even closer to our chayalim as they fight to keep us safe.

Though I will be bringing summaries and discussions over the next few weeks from the English version, you are welcome and encouraged to read the original hebrew. Both versions can be purchased from Koren's website using the link provided below.

Adjusting Sights can be purchased from Koren Publishers at tinyurl.com/KorenBMZD. Use the code TorontoTorah for a 10% discount on this or any other book on their website.



TABLE TALK RABBI NOAH SONENBERG, DEAN

Source: Bereishit 33:11

"...for Hashem has favored me and I have all..."

Rashi:

All that will supply my needs. But Esau spoke proudly: I have abundance – far more than my needs.

Mishna Avot 4:1

Who is rich? He who is satisfied with his lot.

Questions to Discuss

- What is the purpose of wealth?
- Can a person balance a pursuit of wealth with the ideal of being satisfied with what they have?

After Shabbat, please share your family's answers with us at nsonenberg@torontotorah.com to enter our raffle for a challah and six bilkas from Richmond Bakery to enjoy at your Shabbat table next week!

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Shabbat	Halacha from the Parasha	Clanton Park	After Hashkama Minyan	Rabbi Mann
	Gemara	BAYT	Between Mincha & Maariv	Rabbi Gutentberg
Sunday	Tzurba M'Rabanan – Halacha	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:30 AM	Rabbi Shor
	Men's Semichat Chaver: Hilchot Smachot	Clanton Park	9:00 AM	Rabbi Spitz and Rabbi Mann
	Shiur b'Ivrit	BAYT (Milevsky/Mizrachi)	9:00 AM	Rabbi Mann and Rabbi Lax
Monday	The Torah: A Psychic Turn. Psychological Theories in the Eyes of Tanach	Zoom: tiny.cc/idanrak	2:00 PM	R' Rakovsky
	Men's Halacha	Shomrai Shabbos	Cancelled this week; resumes after Chanukah	Rabbi Mann
	University Women's Beit Midrash	Yeshivat Or Chaim	7:45 PM	Rabbi Anstandig
	Introduction to Gemara: Learn how to learn	Yeshivat Or Chaim	Cancelled this week; resumes after Chanukah	Rabbi Sonenberg
Tuesday	Then and Now: Returning to the Land of Israel – a Study in Tanach	Zoom	1:30 PM	Rabbi Horovitz
	Women's Gemara Shiur	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:30 PM	Rabbi Anstandig
	Women's Contemporary Halacha Shiur	Clanton Park	8:15 PM	Rabbi Mann
Wednesday	Men's Contemporary Halacha	Clanton Park	Cancelled this week; resumes after Chanukah	Rabbi Mann
	Men's Gemara Bekiut	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:30 PM	Rabbi Sonenberg
	Eliyahu HaNavi: A Prophet of Fire & Water	Shaarei Tefillah	8:00 PM	R' Rakovsky
Thursday	Tanach: Sefer Shmuel	Zoom: tiny.cc/BMZDTanach	1:30 PM	Rabbi Horovitz
	Men's Tzurba M'Rabanan	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:30 PM	Rabbi Turtel
	Men's Gemara Iyuan	BAYT (Milevsky/Mizrachi)	8:00 PM	R' Diena
Sun-Thu	Men's Community Night Seder	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:30–9:30 PM	
	Pre-Maariv Shiur	Yeshivat Or Chaim	9:15–9:30 PM	

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Rabbi Toczyner Scholar in Residence	BAYT	December 15-16, 2023	
Rabbi Toczyner: 'I Don't Understand! A Jew Responds to Tragedy'	Shaarei Shomayim	December 16	Motzei Shabbat

YOUR BEIT MIDRASH

Rosh Beit Midrash

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