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## Parshas Vayeitzei in a Nutshell (Genesis 28:10–32:3)

Jacob leaves his hometown of Beersheba and journeys to Charan. On the way, he encounters “the place” and sleeps there, dreaming of a ladder connecting heaven and earth, with angels climbing and descending on it; G-d appears and promises that the land upon which he lies will be given to his descendants. In the morning, Jacob raises the stone on which he laid his head as an altar and monument, pledging that it will be made the house of G-d.

In Charan, Jacob stays with and works for his uncle Laban, tending Laban's sheep. Laban agrees to give him his younger daughter, Rachel—whom Jacob loves—in marriage, in return for seven years' labor. But on the wedding night, Laban gives him his elder daughter, Leah, instead—a deception Jacob discovers only in the morning. Jacob marries Rachel, too, a week later, after agreeing to work another seven years for Laban.

Leah gives birth to six sons—Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun—and a daughter, Dinah, while Rachel remains barren.

*(continued next column)*

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The Baal Shem Tov taught us that even a leaf turning in the wind is directed by G-d's will. Certainly it is true when speaking of what happens to man. In every phase of our lives, there is an Eye watching over us and a Hand directing our future. Therefore, particularly when we set out on a new road, we ask G-d's assistance through prayer.

-- The Rebbe

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Rachel gives Jacob her handmaid, Bilhah, as a wife to bear children in her stead, and two more sons, Dan and Naphtali, are born. Leah does the same with her handmaid, Zilpah, who gives birth to Gad and Asher. Finally, Rachel's prayers are answered and she gives birth to Joseph.

Jacob has now been in Charan for 14 years, and wishes to return home. But Laban persuades him to remain, now offering him sheep in return for his labor. Jacob prospers, despite Laban's repeated attempts to swindle him. After six years, Jacob leaves Charan in stealth, fearing that Laban would prevent him from leaving with the family and property for which he labored. Laban pursues Jacob, but is warned by G-d in a dream not to harm him. Laban and Jacob make a pact on Mount Gal-Ed, attested to by a pile of stones, and Jacob proceeds to the Holy Land, where he is met by angels. ❖



### Halachic Zmanim

Shabbos, Dec 3, 2022  
Eastern Standard Time

Earliest Tallis ..... 6:02 AM  
Latest Morning Shema..... 9:22 AM  
Earliest Mincha (Gedola) 12:11 PM  
Plag Hamincha..... 3:34 PM  
Earliest Evening Shema.... 5:00 PM

## Anshei Lubavitch Congregation

Rabbi Levi and Leah Neubort

### Adult education:

Rabbi Avrohom and Rivky Bergstein

### Youth Outreach:

Rabbi Eli and Ruty Steinhauser

## Shabbos Schedule

### Erev Shabbos – Dec 2 / Kislev 8

Candle Lighting ..... 4:11 pm  
Mincha ..... 4:15 pm

### Shabbos Day – Dec 3 / Kislev 9

Chassidus ..... 8:45 am  
Shacharis ..... 9:30 am\*  
Torah Reading..... 10:30 am  
Kiddush..... 12:00 pm  
Mincha ..... 4:15 pm  
Rabbi's Drasha ..... 4:35 pm  
Shabbos Ends..... 5:14 pm

\*Latest morning Shema is now **9:22 AM**. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).

### Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday): Minyan

Shacharis (Mon-Fri) ..... 6:15 am  
Shacharis (Sunday) ..... 9:00 am  
Mincha (Sun-Thurs)..... 1:45 pm  
Maariv (Sun-Thurs) ..... 9:15 pm

## Bulletin

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## Chassidic Masters

### The Chase

*Based on the teachings  
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe  
Courtesy of MeaningfulLife.com*

*And it was reported to Laban on the third day that Jacob had fled. And he took his kinsmen with him, and he chased after him a seven days' journey; and they overtook him at Mount Gilad....*

*And Jacob was angry and strove with Laban... And he said: "What is my crime and what is my sin, that you have so hotly pursued me? ...Twenty years I have been in your employ... In the day drought consumed me, and the frost at night; and my sleep departed from my eyes..."*

*And Laban said: "...Come, let us make a covenant, I and you." ... And they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there upon the heap... And Laban said to Jacob: "...This heap be witness, and this monument be witness, that I will not cross this heap to you, and you will not cross this heap and monument to me, for harm..." And they spent the night on the hill.*

*And Laban rose in the morning... and he returned to his place. And Jacob went on his way.*

*(Genesis 31:4-32:2)*

Why does a man who has spent his entire life in the "tents of study" in pursuit of wisdom and closeness to G-d, leave the spiritual oasis of Be'er Sheva, home of Abraham and Isaac, and go to Charan in Paddan-Aram, the world's capital of idolatry and deceit, to spend twenty years as a shepherd in the employ of Laban the Deceiver?

He is hunting sparks.

Each and every creation, no matter how material and mundane, has at its heart a "spark of holiness." A spark that embodies G-d's desire that it exist and its function within G-d's overall purpose for creation. A spark that is the original instrument of its creation and which remains nestled within it to continually supply it with being and vitality. A spark of holiness that constitutes its "soul"—its spiritual content and design.

Entrenched in the physical reality, these holy sparks are virtual prisoners within their material encasements. The physical world, with its illusions of self-sufficiency and arbitrariness, suppresses all but the faintest glimmer of G-dliness and purposefulness.

The soul of man descends into the trappings and trials of physical life in order to reclaim these sparks. By assuming a physical body that will eat, wear clothes, inhabit a home, and otherwise make use of the objects and forces of the physical existence, the soul can redeem the sparks of holiness they incorporate. For when a person utilizes something, directly or indirectly, to serve the Creator, he penetrates its shell of mundanity, revealing and realizing its divine essence and purpose.

"The deeds of the fathers are signposts for the children." The story of Jacob's journey to Charan, where he spent twenty years in the home and employ of the evil Laban, is the story of our own lives. The soul, too, leaves behind a spiritual and G-dly existence to preoccupy itself with material needs, to become a shepherd and entrepreneur in the Charans of the world.

The soul, too, must condescend to deal with the crassness, hostility and deceptions of an alien employer. It must struggle to extract the sparks of holiness from their mundane husks, to deliver the flocks of Laban into the domain of Jacob.

### Unfinished Business

Among the "signposts" in Jacob's journey is the rather strange closing chapter in his dealings with Laban.

Jacob's mission in Charan seemed complete. As he tells Rachel and Leah, Laban's wealth has been "delivered" to him—the material resources of this alien land have been sublimated, their sparks of holiness redeemed through Jacob's exploitation of them for good and G-dly ends. Indeed, the Almighty has communicated to him it is time he came home. Rachel and Leah, too, sense that all opportunities in Charan have been utilized, that there no longer remains "a portion or inheritance for us in our father's house." So Jacob "rose up and set his sons and his wives on the camels. And he led away all his cattle, and all his goods which he had acquired, the possessions of his purchase, which he had acquired in Paddan-Aram, to go to... the land of Canaan."

But Laban pursues Jacob, and they have a final confrontation on Mount Gilad. Reconciled, they break bread together and camp for the night. Then, each goes his own way, having sealed a mutual non-aggression pact, to be attested to by a pile of stones which marks their respective domains.

*(Continued next page)*

Obviously, there was still some unfinished business between them, some lingering sparks still languishing in Laban's camp. In the words of Rabbi DovBer of Mezeritch: "Jacob had left behind Torah letters (a kabbalistic term for the "sparks of holiness" imbedded in creation) which he had not yet extracted from Laban. This is why Laban pursued him—to give him the letters which remained with him. An entire chapter was added to the Torah by these letters."

### **To Pursue and to be Pursued**

In other words, there are two types of "sparks" that we redeem in the course of our lives. The first type are those which we consciously pursue, having recognized the potential for sanctity and goodness in an object or event within our life's trajectory. Indeed, we human beings pride ourselves on the measure of control we have learned to exercise over our lives: we plan our education, decide whom to marry, choose a community, chart a career and save for retirement. We're constantly manipulating our environment, cultivating opportunities and maneuvering ourselves into the right place and time to properly take advantage of them.

But every so often, we are confronted with something that is neither of our making nor in our control. Something that seemed so readily in our grasp remains incomprehensibly elusive; something we've done everything in our power to avoid invades our lives.

These are "sparks" of the second sort: opportunities which we would never have realized on our own, since they represent potentials so lofty that they cannot be identified and consciously developed by our humanly finite perception and faculties. So our redemption of these sparks can only come about unwittingly, when, by divine providence, our involvement with them is forced upon our by circumstances beyond his control.

Thus our lives are divided into "Charan" periods and "Mount Gilad" events. The bulk of our efforts are conscious and focused: goals are defined, opportunities recognized, endeavors planned and achieved. But then there are the situations we never desired, the encounters which pursue us even as we flee from them. These may aggravate and exasperate us; like Jacob on Mount Gilead we cry, "What more do you want of me? Are my decades scorching days and freezing nights not enough?" But we must never dismiss these encounters and fail to extract the kernel of good that certainly lies buried within them. Indeed, they contain the most elusive, and most rewarding, achievements of our lives. ❖

### **Powerful Insight From the Rebbe**

In the 28th chapter of Genesis, the Torah recounts Jacob's departure from the Holy Land, where he had spent the first half of his life immersed in the "tents of learning," and his journey to Haran. In Haran, Jacob worked for twenty years in

the employ of his conniving uncle, Laban, in the midst of a corrupt and debased society. Throughout it all, Jacob remained true to G-d and man, serving Laban honestly, he prospered materially, amassing considerable wealth. In Haran, Jacob also married and fathered eleven of the twelve sons who were to yield the twelve tribes of Israel.

Jacob's journey to Haran is the story of every soul's descent to earth. The soul, too, leaves a spiritual idyll behind—an existence steeped in divine awareness and knowledge—to struggle in the employ of a "Laban" in a Haran environment. For the material state is a nefarious deceiver, accentuating the corporeal and obscuring the G-dly, confusing the soul's priorities and perpetually threatening its virtue. But every soul is empowered, as a child of Jacob, to make this a "descent for the purpose of ascent," to emerge from the Haran of material earth with its integrity intact and its memory true.

Indeed, not only does it return with its spiritual powers galvanized by the challenge, it is also a "wealthier" soul, having learned to exploit the forces and resources of the physical world to further its spiritual ends. Most significantly, in its spiritual state the soul is perfect but childless; only as a physical being on physical earth can it fulfill the divine mitzvot, which are the soul's progeny and its link to the infinite and the eternal. ❖

## From Our Sages – Vayeitzei

### **He encountered the place (Genesis 28:11)**

*“The place” is Mount Moriah (the “Temple Mount” in Jerusalem, where Abraham had bound Isaac upon the altar, and where King Solomon would erect the Holy Temple).*

*(Rashi)*

*Rabbi Joshua ben Levi said: Our patriarchs instituted the three daily prayers. Abraham instituted the morning prayer, for it says (Genesis 19:27): “Abraham got up early in the morning to the place where he had stood before G-d.” Isaac instituted the afternoon prayer, as it says (Gen. 24:63), “Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening.” Jacob instituted the evening prayer, as it says, “He encountered The Place . . . because the sun had set.”*

*(Midrash Rabbah)*

### **He slept over the night there, because the sun had set (Genesis 28:11)**

*G-d caused the sun to set prematurely, so that Jacob should sleep over. . . . For G-d said: “Should this righteous man enter My home, and depart without staying the night?”*

*(Talmud; Rashi)*

### **Jacob . . . took the stone . . . and set it as a monument; and he poured oil on its head (Genesis 28:18)**

*Monuments are built of stone. For a more monumental monument, one takes bigger and more substantial stones. What is the oil all about?*

*But in order for the monument to be a house of G-d (as Jacob proclaimed, “This stone which I have set as a monument shall be the house of G-d”), one requires oil.*

*Oil is extracted from the olive only when it is trodden upon and crushed. Oil thus represents a person’s self-abnegation and submission to G-d.*

*To walk away from Eber’s house—to walk away from fourteen years of in-depth Torah study to begin dealing with the material world, as Jacob did with his move to Charan—requires a great deal of oil. Only one who has totally abnegated his own will to that of G-d’s is capable of such sacrifice.*

*(The Lubavitcher Rebbe)*

### **This . . . shall be the house of G-d (Genesis 28:22)**

*Not like Abraham, with whom it is called a “mountain” (Genesis 22:14); not like Isaac, with whom it is called a “field” (Genesis 24:63); but like Jacob, who called it a “house.”*

*(Talmud, Pesachim 88a)*

*And afterwards she bore a daughter, and called her name Dinah (30:21)*

*What is meant by “afterwards”? Rav said: After Leah had passed judgment on herself, saying, “Twelve tribes are destined to issue from Jacob. Six have issued from me, and four from the handmaids, making ten. If this child will be a male, my sister Rachel will not be equal even to one of the handmaids.” So she prayed that the child should turn into a girl.*

*(Midrash Rabbah; Rashi) ❖*

## Haftorah for Parshas Vayeitzei in a nutshell

*Hosea 11:7-12:14*

This week's haftorah mentions Jacob's flight from home to the "field of Aram," an episode that is recounted in this week's Torah reading.

The haftorah begins with the prophet Hosea's rebuke of the Jewish people for forsaking G-d. Nevertheless, Hosea assures the people that G-d will not abandon them: "How can I give you, Ephraim, and deliver you [to the hands of the nations]? . . . I will not act with My fierce anger; I will not return to destroy Ephraim."

The prophet discusses the misdeeds of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and the future degeneration of the Kingdom of Judea. He contrasts their behavior to that of their forefather Jacob who was faithful to G-d and prevailed against enemies, both human and angelic.

The haftorah also makes mention of the ingathering of the exiles which will occur during the Final Redemption: "They shall hasten like a bird from Egypt and like a dove from the land of Assyria; and I will place them in their houses, says the Lord." ❖

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**5:55 am, followed**  
**immediately by Shacharis.**



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**Good Shabbos to all!**