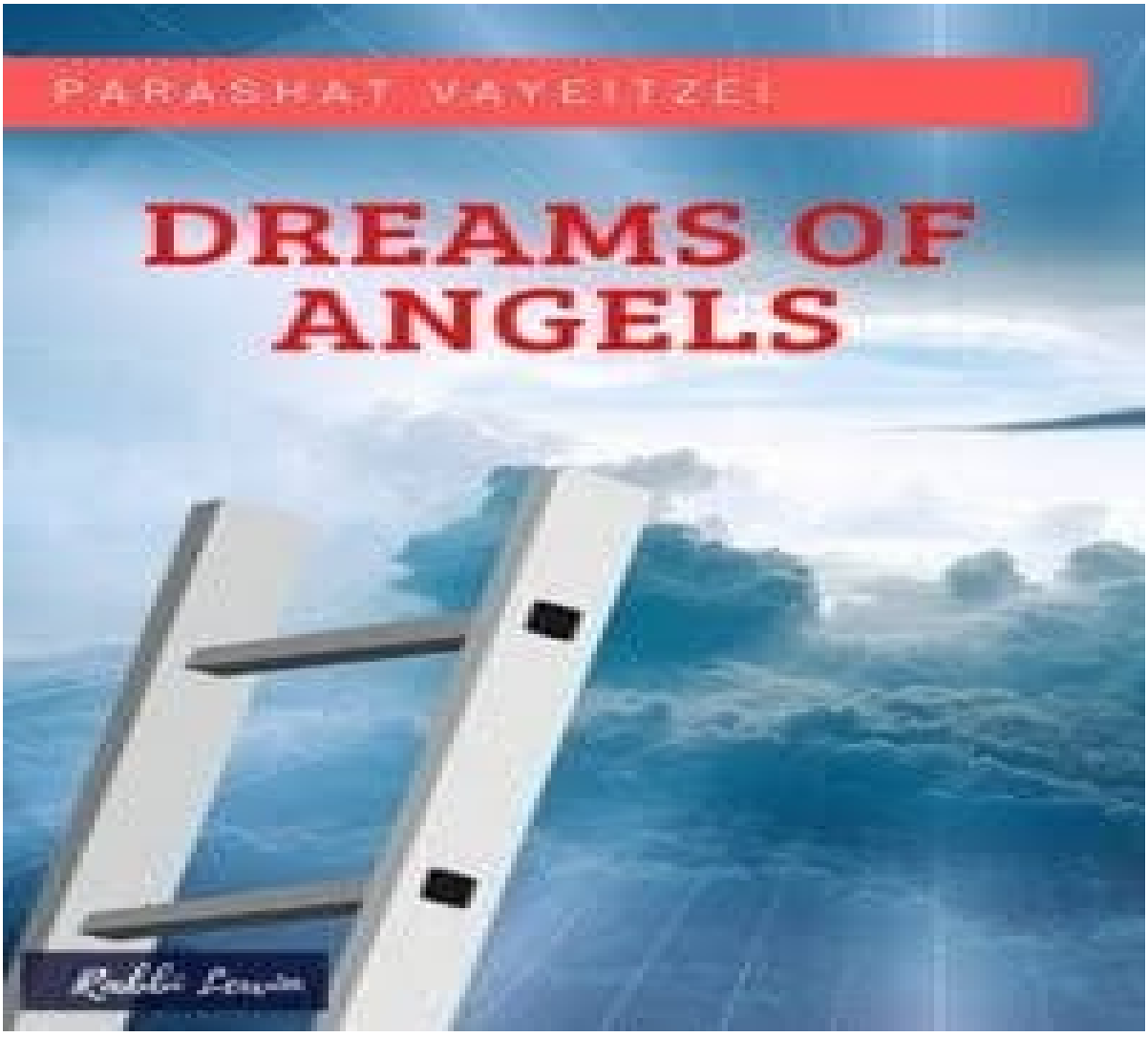
בס"ד



Parshas Vayeitzei

מתוך "ליקוטי שמואל"

Editor: Sam. Eisikovits

eisikovits1@gmail.com

Just Released: Likutei Shmuel – Sefer Bereishis
A treasury of insights, parables, and stories for the Shabbos table

Looking to enrich your Shabbos table with meaningful content? "Likutei Shmuel" is a carefully curated collection of the very best from recent Torah leaflets and weekly publications. It brings together inspiring divrei Torah, thought-provoking parables, captivating stories, and uplifting messages — all selected and edited with precision by Rabbi Shmuel Eisikovits.

Whether for personal learning or for sharing at the table, in shul, or with friends, this sefer offers a wealth of material that's engaging, accessible, and spiritually nourishing.

- Volume One: Bereishis
- Rich, varied content for every parsha
- Ideal for family use, educators, and public speakers
  Currently only in Hebrew
- Affordable price 60 IS available now

🔷 Order here:

https://dash.bookpod.co.il/product/2231

Lavan's Super-fast Travel Was Part of the Divine Plan

Parshas Vayeitzei

Rabbi Yissocher Frand

Yaakov suspects that he will have trouble if he lets his father-in-law know that he is about to leave. Therefore, Yaakov picks up his entire family and leaves without telling Lavan (Bereshis 31:21). On the third day, Lavan finds out that Yaakov has run away and chases after him, finally catching up with him on Har Hagilad. Rashi comments that although Yaakov was a six-day journey away from Lavan, Lavan caught up with him in a single day. In other words, in one day, Lavan travelled the distance that it took Yaakov and his family a week to travel. Rashi explains that Lavan accomplished this through the concept of "*kefitzas haderech*" (a Divine shortening of the way).

The Ohr Hachaim asks why Yaakov was not granted this miraculous attribute of "*kefitzas haderech*" to allow him to elude his pursuing father-in-law? According to *Chazal*, Eliezer had *kefitzas haderech* on the way to find a wife for Yitzchak. Likewise, Yaakov had *kefitzas haderech* on his way to Charan twenty years earlier. Why, now, when Yaakov could have really been helped by *kefitzas haderech*, was he not granted that

mode of Divine transportation? On top of that, why is Lavan the Arami granted *kefitzas haderech*?

The Ohr Hachaim answers with a fundamental insight into how we understand *hashgacha pratis* (Divine providence) and how we understand history. Of course, the *Ribono shel Olam* knew exactly what He was doing, as He always does. The *Ribono shel Olam,* in fact, **wanted** Lavan to catch up with Yaakov. He wanted the interaction between Yaakov and Lavan to occur because this meeting laid the groundwork for the eventual salvation of *Klal Yisrael*.

Lavan catches up with Yaakov and protests to him: "Why did you steal my gods?" (Bereshis 31:30). Yaakov, not knowing that Rochel had taken these '*terafim*, 'assured Lavan that his claim was a false one, and to buttress his denial he said that anyone who stole those '*terafim*' will die! Because of that, the Medrash says, Rochel died prematurely. The Ohr Hachaim says that the Divine plan was for this meeting and for this dialog between Yaakov and Lavan to occur. Why?

Yaakov's statement during this dialogue caused Rochel to die soon afterwards, causing her to be buried there "on the road to Efras, which is Beis Lechem." (Bereshis 35:19). Why? All of this happened so that when *Klal Yisrael* would be going into Galus Bavel (the Babylonian exile), they would pass Rochel's gravesite in Beis Lechem and she would cry for her children and persuade the *Ribono shel Olam* to bring *Klal Yisrael* back from *galus*. (exile). As the moving Medrash at the beginning of Eicha says, all the giants of Jewish history came to the *Ribono shel Olam* and begged for the welfare of their exiled nation – Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Moshe – but none of them were

answered. Only in Rochel's *zechus* (merit) – the *zechus* of saving her sister from embarrassment by sharing with her the secret identification code she arranged with Yaakov — did the *Ribono shel Olam* grant that the "Children will return to their borders" (Yirmiyahu 31:16). In the *zechus* of that self-sacrifice, the mercy of the *Ribono shel Olam* was aroused and He promised to eventually redeem his children from *galus*.

Rochel's burial at the very spot where *Klal Yisrael* was destined to pass on their way to Galus Bavel happened through Yaakov unwittingly cursing her when Lavan charged him with having stolen his gods. And the entire dialogue only happened because Lavan was granted *kefitzas haderech* to catch up with Yaakov, who did not have *kefitzas haderech* at that time. Therefore, something that at the time appeared as a tragedy and an inexplicable application of Divine Logic turned out to be an essential component of the future salvation of the Jewish nation.

There is an incredible teaching of the Rokeach (Elazar ben Shmuel Rokeach (1685-1742); Chief Rabbi of Amsterdam) in a sefer called Galyei Razah: Yaakov Avinu was supposed to live to be 180 years old, just like his father Yitzchak, however, he only lived to age 147. Thirty-three years were somehow chopped off of Yaakov's intended lifespan.

The Rokeach says that Yaakov lost those 33 years because when he and Lavan made this "peace treaty," erecting a pile of stones, the two protagonists named the pile of stones differently. Yaakov called it "*gal*" and Lavan called it "*yegar sahadusa*" (Bereshis 31:47). Then when the next *pasuk* starts with "*vihamitzpa*," the Rokeach uniquely interprets that as

Yaakov also naming it "*mitzpa*," which according to the Rokeach, is an Aramaic word. (Other *meforshim* disagree with both points.) The Rokeach says that this is the only Aramaic expression in all of Chumash. According to the Rokeach, there was some form of Divine irritation with Yaakov Avinu for causing Aramaic to sully the pure *lashon hakodesh* (holy tongue, i.e. – Hebrew) that appears throughout the Torah. The *gematria of* the proper Hebrew name "*gal*" that Yaakov originally used is 33. Therefore, Yaakov lost 33 years of his life because of this incident with Lavan.

Consider what happened: Rochel died because of this incident with Lavan. Yaakov himself lost 33 years of his life because of this incident with Lavan. What a tragedy! The righteous suffer! The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh is explaining that this is the way the *Ribono shel Olam* set the stage for Rochel to cry for her children and guarantee their return from *galus*.

That which at the time appeared to be a tragedy was the *Ribono shel Olam* manipulating the strings of history. This is the story of history. So many times, incidents occur throughout history that seem to be incredible tragedies. This does not only happen in history but also in individual people's lives.

I once heard from Rav Simcha Zissel Brodie, the Chevron Rosh HaYeshiva, who heard from Rav Mordechai Epstein that it is well known that the day of the Spanish Exile (when the Jews had to leave Spain in 1492) was the very day Columbus set sail for the "New World." At that time, Spain was at the height of their power. Imagine how the Jews felt that day:

Ferdinand and Izabella were the worst of the worst. They gave Spanish Jewry the choice of converting to Christianity or banishment from the country. As we know, as a result of the fact that Columbus set sail for America and opened up a "New World," eventually the United States of America emerged, which has been the refuge of Jews from throughout the world since the end of the 19th century. There are many in our audience for whom, were there not America, their parents would have had no place to go. We are here because there was an America.

At the time, it seemed so unjust and so wrong, and yet, it was also the *Ribono shel Olam* manipulating historical events to prepare for something that would happen three or four hundred years later. That is the story of Yaakov and Lavan. That is why Lavan had *kefitzas haderech* and Yaakov did not have *kefitzas haderech*. The *Ribono shel Olam* wanted this encounter to happen. As a result, Rochel died early. As a result, she had to be buried by Beis Lechem, and as a result when *Klal Yisrael* were marching into *galus*, Rochel cried for her children, and as a result, her children returned to their borders.

The ways of Hashem are far beyond our comprehension. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not My ways." (Yeshaya 55:8). At the end of all days – "Hashem will be the King over all the land; on that day Hashem will be One and His Name will be One." (Zecharia 14:9) Then we will all understand it. Until then, we must just have faith that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* is always acting in our best interests and in the best interests of *Klal Yisrael*.

The Simile of the Dust of the Earth

Parshas Vayeitzei

Rabbi Yissocher Frand

At the beginning of the Parsha, Hashem blesses Yaakov with the words "I am Hashem, G-d of Avraham your father and G-d of Yitzchak; the ground upon which you are lying, to you will I give it and to your descendants. Your offspring shall be as the dust of the earth, and you shall spread out powerfully westward, eastward, northward, and southward..." [Bereishis 28:13-14].

The simple understanding of the blessing "Your offspring shall be as the dust of the earth" is that Yaakov's descendants should be so plentiful that their numbers will be comparable to the dust of the earth. The Medrash, however, sees in these words more than just a blessing of being plentiful and bountiful. Out of all the similes that one might pick, the terminology "like the dust of the earth" is somewhat peculiar. This is different than the blessing elsewhere that we should be "like the sand of the sea" (k'chol haYam) [Breishis 32:13]. The phrase "k'afar ha'Aretz" literally means like the dust of the ground. The dust of the ground is that which we walk on. Is it not peculiar that Jews are blessed by being told that they will be like the dust that people trample?

There are so many more picturesque similes to use (as we find elsewhere). "Like the stars in Heaven" [Bereishis 22:17] is a majestic comparison. Stars are unreachable. They are beautiful. They sparkle. "As many as the stars in Heaven" is a

very inspiring and poetic blessing. But “k’afar ha’Aretz” is almost like saying “you should be like dirt.” Is this a blessing? Even the expression “k’chol haYam” — like sand of the sea — seems more appropriate. In our minds, we do not think of the sand on the seashore as something we trample upon. We associate sand of the sea with beautiful white sandy beaches. Even sand has quite a different connotation than “you should be like dust.”

The Medrash explains the very powerful significance of this choice of words. This is more than just a blessing of multitudes. The blessing of “k’afar ha’Aretz” represents the history of the Jews. Everybody tramples over the dust of the earth, but in the end the dust of the earth always remains on top. That same dust ultimately covers those who trample it. “From dust you are taken and to dust you will return” [Bereishis 3:19]. In the final analysis, the dust of the earth is always on top. This is the analogy, and the blessing of “Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth.” Yaakov is told that his children will be trampled upon and spat upon, like the dust. But in the end, like the dust, they will remain on top.

Tosfos [Brochos 17a] comments on the prayer recited at the end of the Shmona Esrei: “My G-d, guard my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking deceitfully. To those who curse me, let my soul be silent; and let my soul be like dust to everyone.” What is the meaning of the term “let my soul be like dust to everyone?” Tosfos suggests the very idea introduced by the Medrash above: Just like dust (afar) is never destroyed and always remains, we pray that our descendants should always remain and not be destroyed.

This prayer is speaking about people who are not our friends, people who curse us and abuse us. We pray that to those who curse us, we remain silent, and we pray that our soul will remain like dust vis-à-vis our enemies. What is the intention when we pray that we should be like dust? It expresses a desire to be among those "who are insulted by others but do not respond in kind, who hear themselves being shamed, but do not respond" [Shabbos 88b]. Such people are the ones who eventually come out on top. We express this aspiration with the words "may my soul be like dust to everyone." That which Hashem promised Yaakov collectively for his descendants, we request on an individual basis as well. Concerning such people it is written: "And let those who love Him be like the powerfully rising sun" [Shoftim 5:31].

Why Didn't Yaakov Stand Up for His Rights?

Yaakov's labored for Rochel for seven years, only to have his father-in-law switch daughters and give him Leah. When Yaakov complained about this outrageous deceit, Lavan proposed that Yaakov agree to work for him for an additional seven years and then he would give him Rochel.

Yaakov should have told Lavan, "I already worked for Rochel for seven years. I will agree to stay married to Leah, whom I never asked for, but it is only decent that you fulfill your end of the previously agreed upon bargain and give me Rochel, with no further stipulations." Why did he so meekly agree to work seven more years for Rochel?

I saw an insight on this point by Rav Dovid Feinstein. The reason Yaakov agreed to this "new deal" was to preserve

Leah's sense of self-respect. How would Leah have felt if Yaakov expressed willingness to work for seven years for Rochel, but would only take Leah "gratis" — as if she were "good for nothing"?

Yaakov's willingness to accept Lavan's terms was not because he did not know how to cut a good business deal. He knew how to negotiate, and he knew that if he pressed his case, he could have gotten his way. The reason why he worked seven more years was in order to not devastate Leah. Had he stood up for his rights, he would have received "two wives for the price of one" and one of the wives would have felt that "he got her for nothing."

Concerning potato chip bags, there is no concern over hurt feelings when they are "buy one get one free." Neither potato chip bag thinks: "Am I the one he paid for, or am I the one he got for free?" However, it would have been cruel to put Leah in the position of being the "get one free" wife. Yaakov refused to do that.

Rav Dovid Feinstein emphasized that we see from here that it is worth giving up seven years of one's life so that another person not feel humiliated. It is for this reason Yaakov willingly agreed to work for seven more years.

A short Vort based on a vort by R' Pini Cohen Shlit"a

Written by Benjamin Rose

A question was once asked regarding a Tallis: why is there a crown on the bit where our head goes??
So, people answer, so that we know which is the top and which is the bottom. So, then we can ask the question: “why do we need to know which is the top and which is the bottom?”
There is a machlokes (i can’t remember between whom), but one Rabbi says we need to know the top from the bottom so that the top tzitzis will always be the top tzitzis and the bottom will always be the bottom. The reason for this, he says, is that those at the top are nearer the head and are in a ‘better’ position and should not be swapped or changed. This is why we have this crown, so that everyone will know which are the top two tzitzis.
The other Rabbi says that it doesn’t matter which way we wear our tallis because it is all one garment and all the tzitzis are of the same importance! This Rabbi brings a proof from this week's parsha regarding the time when Yaakov stops to rest at Mount Moriah: Yaakov sets out stones around himself which, according to Rashi are to protect him from wild animals and one to rest his head upon. The stones start quarrelling, and eventually Hashem performs a miracle, merging them into one large stone! Why were the stones quarrelling? They were quarrelling about which stone would Yaakov rest his head on; “i want Yaakov’s head on me…” “No, I want his head on me…” etc. So now that Hashem has made all the stones into one larger stone, why don’t we see each part of the stone fighting with other parts because Yaakov’s head won’t be touching all the parts all at once, will it?? Now that the stones are as 1 they all have the honor of resting Yaakov’s Head. This is where the second Rabbi gets his Pshat from. The tallis is all one garment it doesn’t matter which tzitzis we kiss more or have nearer to our head!
In the same way we as Klal Yisroel are as one! When a matter comes along to do something that anyone can, for instance davening from the Omed, as long as someone does it, it doesn’t matter. Why should we be like those stones looking for Kavod and hang around near the Gabbai of

a shul hoping to be asked to do the job, when in reality anyone in the shul can do it.
Klal Yisroel is one! We have enough enemies; let's not fight amongst ourselves about matters of Kavod!!

Vayeitzei

Written by Rabbi Dovid Sipper

There was no doubt that in our rich history there were few bachelors as eligible as Yakov. Those attuned to spirituality knew that this great man held the key to building the nation, and Rachel could not have been happier than to be his partner in molding Jewish destiny. As Yakov worked for the greedy Lavan for seven years in order to buy the privilege of taking his daughter in marriage, Rachel's excitement grew as quickly as Lavan's devious plans. On the long-awaited night as Rachel was enlightened on a plot to trap Yakov in Lavan's business, she was going to have to relinquish her marriage plans and allow her sister Leah to take her place. This evil plot was not unexpected, and as a precaution, a sophisticated code system was put into play between the betrothed couple to prevent this from occurring.
However, there was one flaw: Rachel's immense sensitivity. When Rachel realized that the codes were bound to show up her sister as a charlatan, she selflessly divulged the secrets, and the exclusivity of her marriage to Yakov fell to Leah. This phenomenal act of generosity became the trademark of Jewish caring and, ironically, the best thing Rachel could have done to serve her best interests.
As the Torah records the painful period of Rachel's childless years, it states, "G-d remembered Rachel; G-d hearkened to her, and he opened her womb" (Bereishis 30:22). Rashi comments that Hashem remembered her and replaced her barren status with that of a delighted mother due to her previously virtuous act of kindness to Leah.

This idea is mind-blowing! Yes, Rachel could have stuck to her rights and could have been an indirect cause of embarrassment to her sister and been the sole wife to Yakov, but where would she have been a few years down the line? Barren! Yakov would have had to marry other women to fulfil his personal mitzvah of having children and the national obligation of building the Jewish future, and Rachel would have been the all-round loser.
To be alive is to be examined just how far we are ready to put our own interests on hold for the sake of our family and friends. Although at the time it all seems like a sacrifice, if we live this way we not only create a better society but also provide the very best future for ourselves.

From Galus to Galus

Written by d fine

The Chofetz Chaim asks a rather pertinent question in our sedra. The years of Galus were already being counted when Yaakov lived in Lavan's home. If so, why did HaShem make Yaakov go down to Egypt and continue the Galus there; why not stay with Lavan? The Chofetz Chaim answers that this is because the Galus of Lavan is too hard. The Galus of someone who pretends to be your friend is much harder than the Galus of an enemy who makes it obvious that he's your enemy. The tortures that the Jews faced in Russia were awful and unbearable – but we have lost many more Jews to the 'friendly' tide of assimilation in America than to the Jews in Russia. In Vayishlach, Yaakov prays 'please save me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Eisav' (32:12) – 'my brother' refers to the Lavan-type 'friendly Galus,' whilst 'the hand of Eisav refers to the overtly anti-Semitic Galus.' And Yaakov put the friendly Galus first in his prayers – for that is the Galus which poses the most danger to the Jewish People…

HUMOR

The 50th Anniversary

A Jewish couple is celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. The wife stands up and says to the room, *"I want to make a toast for sticking it out with him for 50 years. I can honestly say that the 50 years of our marriage went by like two days."*
Everyone at the party gasps and thinks, *"What a romantic marriage!"*
Then a *nudnik* (pest) in the back stands up and yells, *"Excuse me, ma'am—why do you say the 50 years went by like two days? Why not say it went by like one day?"*
She looks right at him and says, *"Because our relationship for 50 years felt like Tisha B'Av and Yom Kippur—the two toughest days in the Jewish calendar!"*

The 4-Letter Words

A young woman calls her mother from her honeymoon, crying hysterically.
"Mom! It's terrible!" she sobs. *"He's already using all these awful four-letter words!"*
The mother says, *"Calm down, darling. What kind of four-letter words?"*
Through her tears, the bride yells, *"Words like W-A-S-H and C-O-O-K!"*

Marriage is no joke.

Shimon and Reuven are playing golf one day at their local golf course. Shimon is about to chip onto the green when he sees a long funeral procession on the road next to the course.

He stops in mid-swing, closes his eyes, and bows his head in prayer.

Reuven says, “Wow, that is the most thoughtful and touching thing I have ever seen. Shimon, you truly are a kind man.”

To which Shimon replies, “Well, we were married for 35 years.”

Birthing classes

A couple was expecting their first child and signed up for birthing classes.

“Ok everyone,” said the instructor trying to get everyone’s attention. “We are going to do an exercise now; its purpose is to help the men sympathize with their partners.”

“We have here what’s called a pregnancy suit,” said the instructor, holding up an artificial stomach with a strap. “This imitates the feeling of being pregnant. Which husband volunteers to be the first one to try it on?”

“I will,” said the husband, taking the suit and trying it on. “This isn’t too bad,” he said, walking around the room. “I think I could get used to this.”

“Ok”, said the instructor, smiling. “Now I would like you to bend down and pick up my pen from the floor.”

“You want me to pick it up? Just as I would if I were pregnant?”

“Yes!” said the instructor.

“Honey,” he said, turning to his spouse, “do you mind picking up that pen for me?”