Parsha Questions

1. When Yaakov traveled to Charan, the Torah stresses that he departed from Be'er Sheva. Why?
2. On the night of his dream, Yaakov did something he hadn’t done in 14 years. What?
3. In his dream, Yaakov saw angels going up and down. What were the missions of these angels?
4. Hashem compressed the entire land of Israel underneath the sleeping Yaakov. What did this symbolize?
5. Why did Yaakov rebuke the shepherds?
6. Why was Rachel tending her father’s sheep; that is, why didn’t her brothers tend the sheep as was customary in those days?
7. Why did Yaakov cry when he met Rachel?
8. Who was Elifaz, and why didn’t he kill Yaakov when he had the chance?
9. Why did Lavan run to greet Yaakov?
10. Why were Leah’s eyes tender?
11. How old was Yaakov when he married Leah and Rachel?
12. Why did Rachel envy Leah?
13. Who was Yaakov’s fifth son?
14. How do you say “dudaim” in Arabic?
15. “Hashem remembered Rachel” (30:22). What did He remember?
16. What does “Yosef” mean? Why was he named that?
17. How many times did Lavan change Yaakov’s wages?
18. Where are there two Aramaic words in this week’s Parsha?
19. Who was Bilhah’s father? Who was Zilpah’s father?
20. Who escorted Yaakov into Eretz Yisrael?

Bonus

“And he removed the stone from the mouth of the well...” (29:10)

Yaakov single-handedly plucked a giant boulder from the mouth of the well, a stone which normally took many men just to roll. Why was it necessary for Yaakov to display his superhuman strength at this particular stage in his career?

I Did Not Know That!

“It was the next morning and — Behold! — she was Leah!” (29:25).

Yaakov said to Leah, “You swindler, daughter of a swindler! Last night I called ‘Rachel’ and you responded!”

“I learned that from you,” said Leah. “Your father (Yitzchak) called ‘Esav’ and you responded (in order to steal Esav’s blessing)!”

Daas Zekenim Mibaalei Tosafos
Recommended Reading List

Ramban

28:12 Yaakov’s Dream
29:2 Three Flocks
30:2 Yaakov’s Anger
31:19 The Terafim

Sforno

28:12-13 Yaakov’s Dream
29:6 A Proper Guest
29:11 Why Yaakov Cried
31:32 Yaakov’s Curse
32:1 A Father’s Blessing

Answers to this Week’s Questions

All references are to the verses and Rashi’s commentary, unless otherwise stated.

1. 28:10 - The departure of a righteous person leaves a noticeable void in that place.
2. 28:11 - Sleep at night lying down.
3. 28:12 - The ascending angels accompanied Yaakov in Eretz Canaan. The descending angels accompanied Yaakov outside of the Land.
4. 28:13 - That the Land would be easy for his descendants to conquer.
5. 29:7 - He thought they were loafing, stopping work early in the day.
6. 30:27 - Her brothers weren’t born yet.
7. 29:11 - He saw prophetically that they would not be buried together; or because he was penniless.
8. 29:11 - Elifaz was Esav’s son who chased Yaakov in order to kill him. But because Elifaz had grown up under the tutelage of Yitzchak, he relented.
9. 29:13 - He thought Yaakov was carrying money.
10. 29:17 - She cried continually because she thought she was destined to marry Esav.
11. 29:21 - Eighty-four.
12. 30:1 - She envied her mitzvos, thinking they were the reason Leah merited having children.
13. 30:5 - Dan.
14. 30:14 - Jasmine (Yasmin).
15. 30:22 - That Rachel gave Leah the “signs of recognition” that Yaakov had taught her, so that Leah wouldn’t be embarrassed.
16. 30:24 - “Yosef” means “He will add.” Rachel prayed to Hashem for another son, in addition to Yosef.
17. 31:7 - One hundred times.
18. 31:41 - Yagar Sahadusa, meaning ‘wall of testimony.’
19. 31:50 - Lavan.
20. 32:1 - The angels of Eretz Yisrael.

Yaakov wanted to marry Rachel, but her father, the money-hungry Lavan, would never agree unless it somehow served his own selfish interests. Since Yaakov was empty-handed, the only thing he could offer Lavan was his services. He therefore displayed his exceptional strength and prowess so Lavan would desire him as a servant.

Heard from Rabbi Avigdor Miller

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Parshas Vayeitzei

For the week ending 7 Kislev 5758, 5 & 6 December 1997

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