

O H R N E T

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

JUDAISM AND THE ART OF ESPRESSO MACHINE MAINTENANCE

“...he took the stones of the place which he arranged around his head...” (28:11)

About 250 years ago, way before Starbucks reinvented coffee as the drink of the age, my parents bought me a Pavoni espresso machine for my thirtieth birthday.

I have that machine to this day. I love it. It has more chrome on it than a Chevy Impala. The Pavoni is the Harley-Davidson of coffee machines. It's built to tolerances of about plus or minus half an inch, which makes it incredibly easy to service and repair — just get the parts somewhere near each other and it'll work. Even if you're not a grease monkey you could strip the whole thing down and replace all the gaskets in an hour or two. Many times I have thought about replacing this 29 year-old tank with one of the modern micro-processor-controlled beauties in the store. Mine's rusting underneath and it leaks a bit. The rubber base is starting to perish and I've lost some of the washers, but it still makes a really good cup of coffee. (This article is being powered by two of those cups right now.)

Last time I de-scaled it I thought it would have to go because the coffee started to taste bad; then I realized I used the wrong kind of vinegar to clean it out. During the couple of days that its “head was on the block” I went through something that I can only describe as withdrawal symptoms (and not from the coffee — I used *instant* in the meantime.)

Here was this old warhorse whose guts I knew, which I had managed to repair more than once, about to be replaced by a machine that would be impossible for me to do more than... make coffee. If — and more probably — when it broke, I would have to take it to a repair center where doubtless they would tell me it would be cheaper to buy a new one.

Repair is a dying art.

Many years ago the economic balance between labor and material tipped toward material. Once upon a time, labor was cheap and materials were expensive. Nowadays, even in places like China, labor is comparatively expensive and there

are a plethora of new materials — mainly plastics — that are ludicrously cheap. Which basically means: Exit the repairman.

Apart from any nostalgia of which I may be guilty (nostalgia tends to increase in proportion to the number of years over which you have to *nostalge*), repairing something gives us a sense of achievement that merely producing our credit card fails to do by miles. But I think there's a deeper reason here as well.

The world was made to be fixed.

In the *Aleinu* prayer that a Jew says three times a day, we pray to G-d, “to fix the world under the Kingdom of *Sha-dai*.” We refer to G-d in many ways. For example: *Ado-nai* — the Tetragramaton — G-d's four-letter name, which is never pronounced as it is written; *Elokim* — the name that signifies precise judgment; and *El* — the name of mercy. In His essence of course, G-d has no ‘Name’. G-d's names are the way He manifests Himself in His world, the way we perceive His interface with the creation. What, then, is the connection between the idea of ‘fixing the world’ and the name *Sha-dai*?

When G-d created the world, He did not create it as a complete and finished entity. Instead He fashioned a single point (actually a rock that sits on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem) and the rest of the Universe expanded from there. At a certain point He said “*Dai!*”, which means “Enough!” In other words, the potential for *more* exists in this world, but G-d intended that the world should be left *lacunae*, incomplete, and that Mankind would have the opportunity and the obligation to bring it to its completion. The world can be — and needs to be — fixed. Thus, in *Aleinu* we use the name “*Sha-dai*” when talking about the fixing of the world.

G-d's original plan for the world was that there should be one being who would fix the lacking of this world and bring it to perfection. That being was called Adam, Man. Man was “born” on Friday and the entire history of the world should

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PARSHA OVERVIEW

Fleeing from Esav, Yaakov leaves Be'er Sheva and sets out for Charan, the home of his mother's family. After a 14-year stint in the Torah Academy of Shem and Ever, he resumes his journey and comes to Mount Moriah, the place where his father Yitzchak was brought as an offering, and the future site of the *Beit Hamikdash*. He sleeps there and dreams of angels going up and down a ladder between Heaven and earth. G-d promises him the Land of Israel, that he will found a great nation and that he will enjoy Divine protection. Yaakov wakes and vows to build an altar there and tithe all that he will receive. Then he travels to Charan and meets his cousin Rachel at the well. He arranges with her father, Lavan, to work seven years for her hand in marriage, but Lavan fools Yaakov, substituting Rachel's older sister, Leah. Yaakov commits himself to work another seven years in order to also marry Rachel. Leah

bears four sons: Reuven, Shimon, Levi and Yehuda, the first Tribes of Israel. Rachel is barren, and, in an attempt to give Yaakov children, she gives her handmaiden Bilhah to Yaakov as a wife. Bilhah bears Dan and Naftali. Leah also gives Yaakov her handmaiden Zilpah, who bears Gad and Asher. Leah then bears Yissachar, Zevulun, and a daughter, Dina. G-d finally blesses Rachel with a son, Yosef. Yaakov decides to leave Lavan, but Lavan, aware of the wealth Yaakov has made for him, is reluctant to let him go, and concludes a contract of employment with him. Lavan tries to swindle Yaakov, but Yaakov becomes extremely wealthy. Six years later, Yaakov, aware that Lavan has become dangerously resentful of his wealth, flees with his family. Lavan pursues them but is warned by G-d not to harm them. Yaakov and Lavan agree to a covenant and Lavan returns home. Yaakov continues on his way to face his brother Esav.

ISRAEL Forever

HOW EASY IT SHOULD BE

Should maintaining the hold of the Jewish People on their Land promised to them by G-d always be such a difficult challenge?

In this week's Torah portion we learn of G-d's promise to the Patriarch Yaakov that "the ground upon which you lie will I give to you and your descendants". Rashi quotes the Talmud which explains that G-d folded the entirety of Eretz Yisrael under Yaakov, to indicate that it would be as easy for his descendants to conquer the entire Land as if it were only the four cubits upon which he slept.

This promise was fulfilled when our ancestors entered the Land and won miraculous victories over their enemies. It is regretful that our own generation lacks the collective merit to deserve such Divine assistance in eliminating all threats to our promised Land.

If Yaakov was prophetically shown how easy it would be to inherit the Land promised to him, we must derive from this that when Jews finally restore holiness to the Holy Land there will be no problem in gaining and maintaining Israel forever.

LOVE OF THE LAND - THE PLACES

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

TSEFAT – THE OLDEST YESHIVA

The oldest yeshiva in history was that of Shem, the son of Noach who survived the great deluge and his great-grandson Ever. It was in their yeshiva that the Patriarch Yaakov studied Torah.



Tradition has it that this place of study was in a cave located in the center of Tsefat. The Ari Zal is cited as stating that this cave was the final resting place of the Talmudic Sage Rabbi Dosa ben Hyrcanus.

לע"נ
מרת לאה בת ר' יצחק אייזיק ז"ל
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

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PARSHA Q&A ?

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. G-d compressed the entire Land of Israel underneath the sleeping Yaakov. What did this symbolize?
4. Yaakov said "I will return with *shalom*." What did he mean by "*shalom*"?
5. Why did Yaakov rebuke the shepherds?
6. Why did Rachel, and not her brothers, tend her father's sheep?
7. Why did Yaakov cry when he met Rachel?
8. Why did Lavan run to greet Yaakov?
9. Why were Leah's eyes tender?
10. How old was Yaakov when he married?
11. What did Rachel find enviable about Leah?
12. Who was Yaakov's fifth son?
13. Who was Leah's handmaiden? Was she older or younger than Rachel's handmaiden?
14. How do you say *dudaim* in Arabic?
15. "G-d remembered Rachel" (30:22). What did He remember?
16. What does "Yosef" mean? Why was he named that?
17. G-d forbade Lavan to speak to Yaakov "either of good or of bad." Why didn't G-d want Lavan to speak of good?
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*?

PARSHA Q&A!

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. 28:13 - That the Land would be easy for his descendants to conquer.
4. 28:21 - Completely without sin.
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. 29:13 - He thought Yaakov was carrying money.
9. 29:17 - She cried continually because she thought she was destined to marry Esav.
10. 29:21 - Eighty-four.
11. 30:1 - Her good deeds, thinking they were the reason Leah merited children.
12. 30:5 - Dan.
13. 30:10 - Zilpah. She was younger.
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 asked G-d for another son in addition to Yosef.
17. 31:24 - Because the "good" that comes from wicked people is bad for the righteous.
18. 31:41 - *Yagar Sahaduta*, meaning "wall of testimony."
19. 31:50 - Lavan.
20. 32:1 - The angels of *Eretz Yisrael*.

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- *Kiddushin* made dependent on consent of a parent
- A father who contracted *kiddushin* for his daughter as a minor but does not recall with whom
- The credibility of one who claims that he was the one
- A father's credibility in regard to establishing his minor daughter as a divorcee or ransomed captive
- The effect on his widow's status of a dying man's declaration regarding having children or brothers
- Confusion caused by a father with many daughters who declares that he contracted *kiddushin* for an unspecified one
- When man and woman dispute whether *kiddushin* took place
- Credibility of a single witness in regard to *kiddushin* and other matters
- King Yannai's confrontation with the Sages
- The validity of the service of a *kohen* who is later discovered as being ineligible
- The status of a child born from a forbidden marriage
- Patrilineal descent for Jews and others

THE SURVIVING SAGES

A spiritual holocaust descended on the Jewish people and it was Jewish king who was responsible. King Yannai was instigated by a wicked fellow named Elazar ben Poira to slay the Sages who opposed his attempt to serve as *kohen gadol* because of a doubt regarding his legitimacy as a *kohen*. When the king asked what would happen to Torah study, this villain countered that the Torah would remain in its corner and would be accessible to all who wished to study.

Accepting this argument was heresy because even though the Written Law would still be accessible, the understanding of the Oral Law depended on the Sages. The tragic result was the murder of all the Sages, which left the world desolate.

One Sage, however, survived. Rabbi Shimon ben Shatach was the brother of the queen and she managed to hide him when the slaughter took place. This lone survivor succeeded in restoring Torah study to its former glory.

• *Kiddushin* 66a

What the SAGES Say

"A person will not pass up the opportunity to fulfill a mitzvah incumbent upon him in order to do a mitzvah not incumbent upon him."

• *Gemara (Kiddushin 64b)*

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ROLE REVERSAL

From: Anonymous

Dear Rabbi,

I was not raised religious. A few years ago I met a girl who was raised religious and who was religious at the time. We started a relationship that was really meaningful with a lot of promise for the future. It was very important to her that I become religious. We spoke about the fact that I couldn't and shouldn't become religious for her, but rather only if it came to mean something to me personally, independent of our relationship. She was great in that she didn't pressure me, and over time I did actually start learning Torah and keeping Shabbat until I actually did become religious. The problem is that at some point we went to separate colleges where I kept on being religious and now she's the one who has stopped being observant. I can't believe that she's the one who inspired me to become religious, she's the one whose family was an example for the type of family we could have and now she's the one who's left it all. What's going on with her, why did this happen and what should I do?

Dear Anonymous,

I really empathize with how you must feel. It sounds like you're hurting and confused, which is perfectly understandable given the circumstances.

Still, the first and most important thing I can say to you is that just as you were rightly and admirably reluctant to become religious for her, you must refuse to leave your own independently-found religiosity because of her. If your relationship was based on mutual understanding and growth, she must not pressure you leave the path, nor should you feel any pressure to do so.

What's more, since your relationship was based on spiritual meaning and significance, with an eye to the Jewish future, removing that from your relationship will only lead to dissatisfaction and void. Pursuing that path will only mar the beauty of what you once shared.

Of course, I can't know for sure why she's dropped being religious. However, you should realize that while you grew up irreligious and made the conscious decision based on your comparison of both worlds to become religious, she was raised religious without really experiencing anything else. It's pretty likely that going to college and being away from her family was her first opportunity to experience things she's never done. Now while that's not right, and a good Jewish education should protect one from that, the reality is that people are people, particularly young people, and they're greatly affected by what's going on around them. This happens to some young people raised religious. Most return.

Similarly, I can't know why this role reversal happened and why you were involved. It could be that G-d wanted you to become religious and gave you a special opportunity by meeting her while choosing for yourself. She has an important role in that, the merit of which is hers. However, that doesn't necessarily mean that she was meant for you. Perhaps she did her role and now you must go your own separate ways. And even though in many ways she and her family were a model for you, ultimately G-d may want you to go on to Jewishly bigger and better things.

What should you do? Try and talk to her, persuade her, understand her and help her understand herself and what's going on with her and your relationship. If she needs time and space, let her have it. Be patient with her and realize that just as you could not have and should not have made the decision for her, so she can't and shouldn't for you. But just as your own decision validated your religiosity and enhanced your relationship with her, so her decision to do so will be for the ultimate good of herself, your relationship and you.

If G-d wants it to be, it will happen — and all the more so if you maintain your ideals. Because if it's meant to be, that's why He brought you together in the first place. If it's not meant to be, you'll see that whatever you do just won't work. At that time you'll have to make the difficult decision to move on with your life. But if it comes to that, always be thankful that she introduced you to G-d and be confident that G-d will ultimately introduce you to your real soulmate.

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TAKING ACTION AFTER BEING SHORTCHANGED

Question: After purchasing an item in my local supermarket I discovered that its contents failed to match the amount promised on the package. I felt that I was the victim of either the store or the manufacturer. What is the right thing to do?

Answer: If you carefully read what is usually written on the package you will note that the manufacturer invites complaints from consumers and promises to compensate them. It is not fair to blame your supermarket, because you cannot expect it to check every single item it places on its shelves.

There is another phenomenon which consumers such as you should be aware of. Some manufacturers decide to save money by reducing the amount they put into a can. Even though the new weight is listed, they rely on the fact that most consumers do not read the labels and they shirk their responsibility to inform the public of the change. Class action suits have been brought against such manufacturers who were either fined or compelled to somehow compensate the public by providing, for a while, extra weight at no cost.

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

THE TZADDIK AND THE THIEF

It was late at night when the famous Jerusalem *tzaddik* Rabbi Aryeh Levin heard a knock on the door. When he opened the door he heard from two men standing there that a thief was right now in the process of stealing the contents of a store in the Machane Yehuda Market. Since they themselves were afraid of starting up with such an outlaw, they came to enlist the aid of Rabbi Levin.

This great man, who was renowned for his ability to influence people in a gentle manner, quickly got dressed and rushed to the scene of the crime. When he arrived he saw that the thief had already succeeded in completely removing everything from the store's shelves and was preparing to

take it all away.

"How dare you steal," the rabbi challenged the thief, "when the Torah prohibits doing so!"

The thief was so moved by the combination of gentleness and force in which this was said that he asked the rabbi what he should do now with all the goods he had removed from the store. The answer was that he must return them to the shelves and that the rabbi would help him do so. When their work was completed Rabbi Levin made a special *mi sheber-ach* prayer for the thief who had so gallantly fulfilled the Torah command to return stolen property

PARSHA INSIGHTS

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have been played out in the hours of Friday and finished with the commencement of Shabbat. Had Adam not transgressed the one prohibition that G-d had commanded him, G-d's purpose in creation would have been fulfilled. Adam would have fixed the world.

As we know, things didn't quite turn out like that.

By ingesting the forbidden fruit Adam internalized and actualized the latency of evil inherent in the creation when G-d said "Dai!" — "Enough!" By bringing evil into his body Adam made it impossible for the body to ascend to its elevated eternal state without having to suffer death, decay and resurrection. Nevertheless, man was created to fix the world. It's in our genes. It's part of our programming.

One of the ways this latent motivation emerges is in the ecology movement. Judaism has always recognized that Mankind has the ability to build the world or to destroy it. In fact, ecology has always been a fundamental part of Jewish

thought. However, there exists a deeper side to ecology than is generally understood.

When Yaakov was fleeing his brother Esav, the Torah describes how Yaakov laid his head to rest on some stones. The stones then had what can only be described as an argument over which stone the *tzaddik* would lay his head on (Talmud Bavli 91b). The stones argued because they understood the tremendous elevation that the physical world experiences when it is used by a holy person in the service of G-d.

Judaism's concept of ecology is when we do a *mitzvah*, be it the simplest action, by kindness, by prayer, we elevate not just ourselves but the world's eco-system as well.

My desire to fix that espresso machine goes deeper than DIY, deeper than saving a buck or three. It is none other than my aspiration to fix the world, masquerading as a cup of coffee. *L'Chaim!*