

# OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHAT VAYISHLACH • 15 KISLEV 5778 – NOVEMBER 23, 2018 • VOL. 26 NO. 8

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

### Quinoa: Food for the Soul?

*“Yaakov became very frightened and it distressed him...” (32:8)*

I must confess I tend to be a bit cynical when it comes to “miracle” stories. It’s probably the influence of my highly litvishe background. My grandfather *a”h* couldn’t stand sweet gefilte fish. “Ach! Poilisch!” he would exclaim. Apparently he used to put salt on his cornflakes. In my mind, the impact of second-hand stories of *hashgacha pratit*, Divine supervision and near-miraculous intervention, tend to weaken in direct proportion to the number of ‘hands’ they pass through.

The following story is only “third-hand.” I heard it from my daughter who heard it from the person to whom it happened.

A well-known Israeli Jewish outreach personality whom we will call Avi was visiting the Negev in the south of Israel on a Thursday. He stopped by a friend to have lunch and they served a Quinoa salad. Avi had never tasted Quinoa in his life.

Quinoa is a gluten-free, high-protein plant food, one of the few that contain all nine essential amino acids. It is also high in fiber, magnesium, B vitamins, iron, potassium, calcium, phosphorus, vitamin E and various beneficial antioxidants. Another benefit of Quinoa is that it is great for dieting: One cup of cooked quinoa has about 40 fewer calories than the same amount of white rice, but the real benefit is in the carbohydrates. White rice has almost 15 times more grams of carbohydrates, and quinoa provides five more grams of fiber and double the protein.

But what really attracted Avi to Quinoa was its taste. He loved it. That night, back in Tel Aviv, he told his wife that he wanted to make some Quinoa for

Shabbat the following evening. She said, “Let’s ‘go to town’ and make a whole load of Quinoa recipes.”

Friday night arrived and, as was normal, Avi had invited some young boys and girls from the local army base to come for a Shabbat experience with an Orthodox family.

One of the young girls came to the Shabbat table and her jaw dropped.

“Quinoa!” she gasped.

Avi said, “I’m sorry if you don’t like Quinoa. We’ve got a lot of it tonight!”

“When you invited me for Shabbat, I forgot to tell you that I’m on a special diet. I only eat Quinoa. On the way over here I thought to myself, ‘I’m going to have sit there and eat nothing’. So I said, ‘G-d, if You really exist, make it that there will be some Quinoa there tonight!’”

As far as I know this is a true story, but then why shouldn’t it be? They say that anyone who believes every “Rebbishe maaseh” (miraculous story about a Chassidic Rebbe) is gullible, and anyone who says that they are all rubbish is an *apikorus* (heretic).

*“Yaakov became very frightened and it distressed him...”*

The Midrash says that Yaakov was distressed that the prospect of confronting Esav frightened him, for such fear indicated a lack of trust in G-d’s promises (28:15 and 31:3).

If Yaakov could find himself lacking when it came to trust in G-d, how much the more can our trust in miracles become a little rusty. But let us not forget that we are surrounded by them, and, sometimes, G-d even gives us more than just a glimpse of them.

- Sources: Midrash; E. Conick

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# TALMUD TIPS

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by Rabbi Moshe Newman

## Menachot: 86-92

### Just the Right Amount

*“The Torah is concerned about not wasting the money of the Jewish People.”*

This reason, which shows how wrong the Torah considers wasting any money or any item of any value, is offered in the gemara as explanation for why the calculation of the amount of oil needed for the Menorah in the Beit Hamikdash was made from “low to high”. What does this mean?

The mishna (88a) teaches the amounts of water or oil that is required for the fulfillment of a variety of mitzvahs. The final one mentioned in the list is “three and a half (lugim of oil) for the Menorah, one-half of a lug for each lamp.” The gemara addresses how this measure of one-half lug per lamp was determined. (By the way, one-half of a lug is exactly double the volume of a *revi’it*, a measure that we are accustomed to from making Kiddush and other mitzvahs, since a *revi’it* means “a *revi’it* of a lug” – i.e., a quarter of a lug.)

The importance of determining the correct amount was to ensure that the Menorah would continue burning with light throughout the night, from sunset until the following morning. This is taught in a verse that states regarding the Menorah, “from evening to morning” (Shmot 27:21), which the *beraita* on our *daf* explains as meaning “to put into it a measure of oil so that it will kindle from evening until morning.”

One opinion states that they first experimented with a *revi’it* of a lug of oil per cup, and when they saw that it didn’t suffice for the night they then used more for the next night. After a few nights they saw that the Menorah burned for the entire night until morning, and the amount that was needed to accomplish this was one-half lug per cup.

The other opinion holds that they first tried with one entire lug per cup. When they saw that there was still oil left in the morning, they realized they needed to try with less oil the following night. They continued diminishing the amount of oil per night, until after a few nights they discovered that the correct measure for the Menorah to kindle “from evening to morning” was one-half a lug for each cup.

What was the rationale for trying to find the correct measure using one particular method rather than the

other? The first opinion was concerned with not wasting oil. Wasting oil is the equivalent of wasting money and the Torah does not want us to waste money. Therefore, at first a small amount was used, which gradually increased until the correct measure was reached – without any waste. The second opinion reasoned that the more important concern was to reserve the honor, glory and grandeur of the Beit Hamikdash. Therefore, a larger amount was tried at first, gradually lessening until the correct amount was discovered. Although this resulted in a waste of some oil, it preserved the more important principle of “not behaving in an impoverished and undignified manner in a place of great wealth and Divine importance.” (Tosefot points out that according to this opinion, not only does this principle override the concern for wasting financial resources, this same principle of “there is no poverty in a place of wealth” superseded any concern of wasting oil that had holiness, and therefore the testing was not done with regular, mundane oil.)

Nevertheless, isn’t it obvious that the nights are longer in the winter and shorter in the summer? Accordingly, if the standard amount of one-half of a lug per cup was used throughout the year, this might either not be enough for the long winter nights, or too much for the short summer nights – or both! Tosefot addresses this question and offers two answers. One answer is that this measure of oil was sufficient for the long winter nights, and although there was leftover oil during the shorter summer nights, this is not considered a problem. Another answer that Tosefot proposes is based on a teaching in the Jerusalem Talmud. Although the measure of oil was indeed a fixed amount throughout the entire year, the Jerusalem Talmud states that the thickness of the wicks that were used varied from season to season. Thick wicks, which consumed more oil, were used in the summer for the shorter nights. Thin wicks, which absorbed less oil, were employed in the winter for the longer nights. The initial measurements that led to the measure of one-half lug per cup were made using wicks of medium thickness. *Menachot 89a*

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# PARSHA Q & A

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1. What sort of messengers did Yaakov send to Esav?
2. Why was Yaakov both "afraid" and "distressed?"
3. In what three ways did Yaakov prepare for his encounter with Esav?
4. Where did Dina hide and why?
5. After helping his family across the river, Yaakov remained alone on the other side. Why?
6. What was the angel forced to do before Yaakov agreed to release him?
7. What was it that healed Yaakov's leg?
8. Why did Esav embrace Yaakov?
9. Why did Yosef stand between Esav and Rachel?
10. Give an exact translation of the word nisa in verse 33:12.
11. What happened to the 400 men who accompanied Esav?
12. Why does the Torah refer to Dina as the daughter of Leah and not as the daughter of Yaakov?
13. Whom should Shimon and Levi have consulted concerning their plan to kill the people of Shechem?
14. Who was born along with Binyamin?
15. What does the name Binyamin mean? Why did Yaakov call him that?
16. The Torah states, "The sons of Yaakov were twelve." Why?
17. How old was Yaakov when Yosef was sold?
18. Esav changed his wife's name to Yehudit. Why?
19. Which three categories of people have their sins pardoned?
20. What is the connection between the Egyptian oppression of the Jewish people and Esav's decision to leave the land of Canaan?

## Answers

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

1. 32:4 - Angels.
2. 32:8 - He was afraid he would be killed. He was distressed that he would have to kill.
3. 32:9 - He sent gifts, he prayed, and he prepared for war.
4. 32:23 - Yaakov hid her in a chest so that Esav wouldn't see her and want to marry her.
5. 32:25 - He went back to get some small containers he had forgotten.
6. 32:27 - Admit that the blessings given by Yitzchak rightfully belong to Yaakov.
7. 32:32 - The shining of the sun.
8. 33:4 - His pity was aroused when he saw Yaakov bowing to him so many times.
9. 33:7 - To stop Esav from gazing at her.
10. 33:12 - It means "travel". It does not mean "we will travel." This is because the letter nun is part of the word and does not mean we as it sometimes does.
11. 33:16 - They slipped away one by one.
12. 34:1 - Because she was outgoing like her mother, Leah.
13. 34:25 - Their father, Yaakov.
14. 35:17 - His two triplet sisters.
15. 35:18 - Ben-Yemin means "Son of the South." He was the only son born in the Land of Israel, which is south of Aram Naharaim.
16. 35:22 - To stress that all of them, including Reuven, were righteous.
17. 35:29 - One hundred and eight.
18. 36:2 - To fool Yitzchak into thinking that she had abandoned idolatry.
19. 36:3 - One who converts to Judaism, one who is elevated to a position of leadership, and one who marries.
20. 36:6 - Esav knew that the privilege of living in the Land of Israel was accompanied by the prophecy that the Jews would be "foreigners in a land not their own." Therefore Esav said, "I'm leaving. I don't want the Land if it means I have to pay the bill of subjugation in Egypt."

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# LOVE OF THE LAND

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

## Who Needs Peace?

**T**he greatest political controversy in Israel today is what price to pay for peace with those enemies who wish to destroy us.

Without entering into the practical aspects of this issue, it is worth reflecting on what the Torah says about the importance of peace.

After promising plentiful rain, bountiful harvests and a booming economy if the Jewish People study

the Torah and perform the mitzvot, G-d adds that "*I will grant peace in the Land.*" (Vayikra 26:6)

One can have food and drink, explain our Sages, but they have no value if there is no peace.

"*This teaches us,*" they conclude, "*that peace is equal in value to everything else.*"

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## PARSHA OVERVIEW

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**R**eturning home, Yaakov sends angelic messengers to appease his brother Esav. The messengers return, telling Yaakov that Esav is approaching with an army of 400. Yaakov takes the strategic precautions of dividing the camps, praying for assistance, and sending tribute to mollify Esav. That night, Yaakov is left alone and wrestles with the Angel of Esav. Yaakov emerges victorious but is left with an injured sinew in his thigh (which is the reason that it is forbidden to eat the sciatic nerve of a kosher animal). The angel tells him that his name in the future will be Yisrael, signifying that he has prevailed against man (Lavan) and the supernatural (the angel). Yaakov and Esav meet and are reconciled, but Yaakov, still fearful of his brother, rejects Esav's offer that they should dwell together. Shechem, a Caananite prince, abducts and violates Dina, Yaakov's daughter. In return for Dina's hand in marriage, the prince and his father suggest that Yaakov and his family intermarry and

enjoy the fruits of Caananite prosperity. Yaakov's sons trick Shechem and his father by feigning agreement; however, they stipulate that all the males of the city must undergo brit mila. Shimon and Levi, two of Dina's brothers, enter the town and execute all the males who were weakened by the circumcision. This action is justified by the city's tacit complicity in the abduction of their sister. G-d commands Yaakov to go to Beit-El and build an altar. His mother Rivka's nurse, Devorah, dies and is buried below Beit-El. G-d appears again to Yaakov, blesses him and changes his name to Yisrael. While traveling, Rachel goes into labor and gives birth to Binyamin, the twelfth of the tribes of Israel. She dies in childbirth and is buried on the Beit Lechem Road. Yaakov builds a monument to her. Yitzchak passes away at the age of 180 and is buried by his sons. The parsha concludes by listing Esav's descendants.

OHRNET magazine is published by OHR SOMAYACH Tanenbaum College

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Love of the Land, written by RAV MENDEL WEINBACH, zt"l • General Editor: RABBI MOSHE NEWMAN • Design: RABBI  
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# ASK!

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By Rabbi Yirmiyahu Ullman

## Self-centered Stumbling Stone

### From: Rachel

Dear Rabbi,

*Like many people, I am very troubled by the modern world's extreme, exploitative consumption of the environment. And my concern is not just for the ideal of preserving nature, but practically, for the well-being of humanity. Because our abuse of the environment is clearly boomeranging back to harm us, and will continue to do so more and more if we don't act more sensibly, responsibly and with more foresight. What I would like to ask is: If and what Judaism might say about this? Thank you.*

Dear Rachel,

Regarding the Torah's general approach to environmental preservation, mankind's Divinely-given dominion over the Earth (Gen. 1:28) is qualified in the Torah as a mandate to guard and protect it: "And G-d took man and placed him in the Garden of Eden, to work it and to guard it" (Gen. 2:15). Thus, the Torah attitude is not to conquer the world by abusing it and destroying its resources, but rather to both permit and obligate: cultivation with concern, progress with restraint, growth with conservation, and technology with preservation.

A Midrash (Kohelet Rabbah 7:13) beautifully summarizes the Torah approach to environmental issues: "When the Holy One, Blessed Be He, created the first man, He took him and showed him all the trees of the Garden of Eden and said to him, "See My works, how beautiful and praiseworthy they are; and I created all of it for you. Be careful not to spoil or destroy My world, because if you spoil it, there will be no one after you to repair it".

Regarding your specific, practical concern, the Talmud (Baba Kama 50b) presents an exemplary teaching via the following story: A man was discarding unwanted stones from his property into the public domain. A pious man who observed him said, "You wicked fool! Why are you removing stones from

another's domain (by which he meant to say that it is his today, but will be another's tomorrow) into your own domain (the public realm is forever for all, including himself)"? But the man jeered at the pious person's observation (not understanding his intention). It wasn't long before the man was obliged to sell his field, and, while walking along the same road, he stumbled over the very stones he had discarded there. He then exclaimed, "How correct were the words of the pious man when he said, 'Why are you removing stones from another's domain into your own'!"

This is an explicit criticism of the tendency of people, out of self-centered interest, to secure their own immediate needs in their own narrow space despite its harmful effect on the world around them. And, what's worse, their selfish short-sightedness blinds them to the fact that they are ultimately harming themselves through the very means by which they seek self-betterment.

Unfortunately, the modern world's lack of concern for the environment has escalated this harmful dynamic to a global scale. In the name of progress, but motivated by profit, we have "improved" our relatively narrow sphere of life while casting the resulting unwanted debris into the public realm, thereby polluting and contaminating the air we breathe; the water we drink and from whose life we feed; as well as the earth whose growth we eat and whose creatures we consume. It's no wonder we are plagued with the most malicious of maladies, as we constantly breathe, eat and drink the very unwanted wastes we expel into realms we consider outside of our own, but are just as much "ours" – if not more so – than any of our narrow "patches".

And speaking of patches, the Great Pacific Garbage Patch is a perfect example of this. In the North Pacific Gyre, which is the largest ecosystem on earth, an incredibly vast area of ocean is polluted with vast amounts of our discarded plastic, collected by currents from around the globe and captured in the

gyre. This patch covers 1.6 million square kilometers, contains an estimated 80,000 metric tons of plastic, and consists of 1.8 trillion pieces of plastic! And the patch is rapidly accumulating, as are similar such patches in the Atlantic Ocean and the other ocean gyres. It is beyond our scope to detail the alarming damage this causes to the environment, and the manifold ways it ultimately harms humans worldwide. But even a little thought goes a long way toward understanding how we're stumbling over our own unwanted, discarded waste.

As if the damage we're causing ourselves from the self-centered stumbling stones we've scattered in the air, earth, and water across the globe is not enough, we still haven't learned the simple teaching recorded in the Talmud so long ago, and now we're doing the same thing to the next great frontier – Space. According to the European Space Agency (ESA), over 5,000 launches into space over the last 60 years have resulted in about 42,000 tracked, free-floating fragments and an estimated 170 million total pieces of debris!

Much of this space debris actually re-enters our atmosphere, from dozens to hundreds of times a year, including occasional significant episodes. In 1979, the re-entry of NASA's 154,000 lb. Skylab rained space junk all over Australia. The 2001 re-entry of the even larger 286,000 lb. Russian space station Mir was just as earth-shattering. After China lost contact with its space station Tiangong, resulting in its plummeting, uncontrolled re-entry of 2018, this 19,000 lb. hurtling schoolbus-sized debris raised great concern, as experts were unsure where it might strike.

In one notable event, a woman was actually struck "out of nowhere" by a piece of space debris in Oklahoma in 1997. Larger pieces from that same re-entry landed in several places in Texas, including right

in a farmer's front yard. More recently, a hiker in Colorado found a titanium tank from a Russian upper-stage rocket launched in 2011. As Earth's orbit becomes more and more crowded with junk, our space-strewn debris will increasingly return to haunt us, and it seems only a matter of time until what has been mainly misses might hit more and more close to "home".

I'll conclude by adding that Judaism's attitude toward protecting nature is not just for tangible results in the present. The Torah also teaches to plan preservation strategies for the future. The Talmud (Ta'anit 23b) relates that Choni HaMe'agel was walking on the road. He saw a man planting a carob tree. He asked the man, "How long until this tree will produce fruit?" He answered that it will take seventy years. Choni asked him, "Are you sure that you'll still be around in seventy years?" The man replied, "Just as my fathers planted for me, so will I plant for my children".

Thus, in addition to being wise and alert enough not to scatter and be harmed by our own self-centered stumbling stones, we also need to be far-sighted enough to bequeath the world in its G-d-given state to our children, and not discard stones, which, even if they may not currently harm us, most likely will be injurious stumbling stones to our progeny.

#### Sources:

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# WHAT'S IN A WORD?

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Synonyms in the Hebrew Language  
by Rabbi Reuven Chaim Klein

## Like a Rock (Part 2)

Last week we discussed two words for stones. The first was the word *even*, which we understood was a general term for all types of rocks. The second word we dealt with was *sela*, which we understood was an especially hard rock. This week, we will study the words *tzur* and *chalamish*. Both Rabbi Shlomo Pappenheim and the Malbim write that a *tzur* is a harder rock than a *sela*. We will explore exactly what type of rocks are considered a *tzur*, and in doing so will accrue a greater appreciation of why G-d is sometimes referred to as a *Tzur* (for example, *Tzur Yisrael*, “The Rock of Israel”).

As Rabbi Pappenheim explains, the hardest types of rocks are called *tzur*. The word *tzur* is related to *tzarur* (“cluster” or “bundle”) because its components are so tightly packed together that the resulting stone is quite hard. Rabbi Pappenheim explains that one type of *tzur* is called *hornstein* (German for “horn stone”), or *chert*. Pieces of *chert* generally have very sharp edges, so they can be used for cutting in lieu of metal knives. In fact, Rabbi Yosef Kimchi (1105-1170), the father of the Radak (Rabbi David Kimchi, 1160-1235), writes in *Sefer Ha’Galui* that *tzor/tzur* specifically refers to a sharp rock. When Moshe’s wife Zipporah took a stone to circumcise her son, the Bible uses the word *tzur* to describe that stone (Ex. 4:25). Similarly, when the Jews in Joshua’s time performed mass-circumcision (Josh. 5:2-3), their instrument of choice was described as *charvot tzurim* (literally, “stone swords”).

The word *chalamish* is commonly translated as “flint”, which is a glassy rock formed from silicate fossils. Like the *tzur*, flint stones are generally sharp because when they break, they form conchoidal fractures which always have sharp edges. Both *chert* and flint have historically been popular stones for making arrowheads. Interestingly, in Modern Hebrew the word *tzur* refers specifically to the “flint” stone.

Nonetheless, Rabbi Pappenheim argues for a different way of identifying *chalamish*. He explains that *chalamish* does not refer specifically to “flint”, but is rather a sub-category of *tzur* which refers to the hardest types of rocks within that category. To this effect, *chalamish* even includes diamonds (called *yahalom* in Modern Hebrew, after one of the precious gems mentioned in Ex. 39:11), which are generally considered the hardest natural mineral. By a small stretch of the imagination, Rabbi Pappenheim links the word *chalamish* to *chelmon* (“egg yolk”), explaining that both are round and smooth. The word *chalamish* sometimes appears attached to *tzur* as part of a construct phrase, such as *tzur hachalamish* or *chalamish tzur* (Deut. 8:15, 32:13); while other times it appears in the absolute as simply *chalamish* (Ps. 114:8, Job 28:9, Isa. 50:7).

In order to better appreciate the nuances that we are highlighting, I refer the reader to Moh’s Scale of Mineral Hardness. That scale rates minerals based on their hardness, with talc – the softest of minerals – rated at 1. In Moh’s scale, calcite-based rocks (what we defined as *sela* in last week’s essay) are rated at 3, while *chert* (a type of *tzur*) – which is much harder – is rated at 7. Diamonds, of course, take the cake at the hardness rating, at 10. If the conventional identification of *chalamish* as flint is accurate, then *chalamish* should be rated at 7. However, as Rabbi Pappenheim puts it, *chalamish* can reach up to a 10, because it includes such hard minerals as diamonds.

Malbim notes that a *sela* is the type of rock which is porous and can have water inside, while a *tzur* denotes the type of rock which is so hard that there is no possibility of water inside. This fits neatly with Rabbi Chaim Vital (1543-1620), who wrote that a *tzur* or a *tzur ha’chalamish* is the type of rock which produces fire. If a *tzur* had water in it, then certainly it cannot create a fire. Interestingly, Rabbi Yisrael Menachem Mendel Sacharov (d. 1966) points out that the word

*ha'tzur* ("the *tzur*") equals the same gematria as the word *aish* (fire).

Rabbi Chaim Friedlander (1923-1986) explains that a *tzur* refers to the bedrock upon which the foundation of a building rests. As any engineer knows, if the foundation is sturdy, the edifice has on what to stand. G-d is also called a *tzur* because He is likened to the sturdiest foundation. The implications of this empowering idea is that at all times we can rely on G-d to help us out, just as a building must constantly rely on its foundation in order to remain standing.

Maimonides in his famous *Guide for the Perplexed* (1:16) explains that the word *tzur* refers to a mountain and to a type of hard rock. He further writes that *tzur* also refers to the quarry from where rocks are hewn. To bolster this assertion he adduces the prophecy of Isaiah, who implores the Jewish People to look back at their history: "Look to the rock (*tzur*) from which you were hewn... look to Abraham, your forefather and to Sarah, who bore you..." (Isa. 51:1-2). In this context the word *tzur* refers to the genealogical root of the Jewish People. From that usage, explains Maimonides, the word *tzur* was borrowed to mean any type of "root" or "source". It is in this spirit that G-d Himself

is referred to as a *tzur* (see Deut. 32:4, 32:18, 32:30, I Sam. 2:2, Isa. 26:4) – for He is the Ultimate Source of everything. Based on Maimonides' explanation, Rabbi Moshe Teitelbaum (1759-1841) explains that a *tzur* is the source of stones, while *even* or *sela* are the stones themselves.

Similarly, Rabbi Pappenheim explains that G-d is called a *tzur* because, as the Prime Force behind all of Creation, He "ties" (*tzorer*) together all aspects of creation under one common thread: everything requires Him in order to exist. As Hannah (the mother of Samuel the Prophet) famously exclaimed: "There is no Rock (*tzur*) like our G-d!" (I Sam. 2:2). The Talmud (Berachot 10a) expounds on this passage by taking the word *tzur* – and interpreting it as *tzayir* ("Fashioner" or "Creator") – further cements the connection between G-d's rock-epithet and His role in Creation. The Rock is not only the peoples' champion, but the champion of all of creation. Can you dig that?

*For questions, comments, or to propose ideas for a future article, please contact the author at [rcklein@ohr.edu](mailto:rcklein@ohr.edu)*

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## LETTER AND SPIRIT

*Insights based on the writings of Rav S.R. Hirsch*  
by Rabbi Yosef Herman

### Gid Hanasheh: Emblem of Jewish History

In this week's parsha we are informed of the second commandment that will become part of Torah law for generations. Earlier, Avraham was commanded to circumcise himself and all male children. Now, after Yaakov's encounter with the angel of Esav, we are informed of the prohibition to eat from the gid hanasheh, the sciatic nerve.

Yaakov wrestles with his adversary, the angel of Esav, during the entire night. Ultimately, realizing that he cannot prevail against Yaakov, the angel is able only to injure Yaakov's leg, at the gid hanasheh, at the upper joint of Yaakov's thigh. Surely, the subsequent

prohibition to eat this sinew is not intended to inform Yaakov's descendents of the historical fact that their forefather limped as a result of a wrestling match, a fact, which standing alone, has little significance. Its commemoration by a Divine commandment can be explained only if it reflects a truth of deeper significance to our destiny as a people.

The word *nasheh* shares a root with the words for creditor (*nosheh*) and a temporary forgetting or relinquishing of spiritual or intellectual assets (*nasheh*). The word's basic meaning is to be in the power of another. Thus understood, gid hanasheh is the sinew



of submission and powerlessness. When Yaakov's sinew was dislodged, the muscle was unable to control the bone. However, this was only a temporary loss of control. Yaakov is the nosheh, creditor, who has a large account to settle with the angel, and nation, of Esav.

Throughout their long struggle, the angel of Esav was unable to defeat Yaakov. Instead, he was able only to dislocate his joint and prevent him from using his material power. Thus will Yaakov make his way through history: limping, unable to stand on both feet, without a firm stand and firm walk. In this way, his survival and successes will clearly reveal the protection of G-d.

Yaakov's descendents forgo consumption of this sinew, which symbolizes their physical strength. They remind themselves that their survival depends neither on their sword nor on their firm stride, but upon

higher powers, against which the sword of Esav cannot prevail.

If Yaakov falls, he falls not because of his limited physical power, but because he fails to cultivate G-d's protection. Conversely, if Yisrael stands firm, it is not because of his physical and material strength but because G-d bears him aloft on the eagle's wings of his Almighty power.

This is the message that is given expression in the commandment of gid hanasheh, to be borne forever in the hearts of Yisrael. Where the mitzvah of circumcision sets the spiritual mission of Israel, gid hanasheh is the emblem of Jewish history.

- Sources: Commentary, Bereishet 32:33

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## MEZUZAH MAVEN

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by Rabbi Ze'ev Kraines

### “Curve-ball” Archways

*Q: Virtually all the doorways in our house are archways. To be more specific, their doorposts rise straight up for about a meter and then begin arching. Here's my problem: If I put the mezuzah within the top third of the straight part of the post, it will not be within the top third of the doorway. Yet,*

*if I put it on the top third of the doorway, it will be on the curved section, which is really the lintel!*

*A: This is a common conundrum, and each of the placement options you mentioned is supported by halachic authorities (and rejected by others!).*

#### Option One

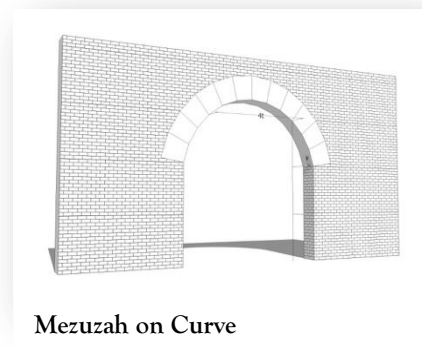
Many authorities assert that when the sides rise straight-up at least ten tefachim before arching, the area above the beginning of the arch is deemed to be the lintel, and the area below that point, the post. These authorities hold that one should never place the mezuzah anywhere on the curve, just as one may never place it on a lintel.

Accordingly, one measures the post from the floor to the start of the curve and places the mezuzah in the top third of this area.

Now, ordinarily, one must be careful to place a mezuzah at least one tefach below the lintel, which in this case would be one tefach below the beginning of the curve. However, in order to stay within the top

third of the overall height (to fulfill option two, as well), it would be allowed to place the mezuzah within the top tefachim before the curve.

#### Option Two



Other authorities rule that the mezuzah is affixed to the top third of the entire doorway, even if that would mean placing it in the curved area. (When measuring, keep in mind that the halachic “top” of the doorway is the point at which the two sides of the arch come within four tefachim of each other.)

This opinion cautions that if one places the mezuzah on the straight part of the doorpost when it is not within the top third of the entire post, he may not have fulfilled the mitzvah.

Ideally, one should consult one’s local rabbi in this matter as to local custom. If that is not feasible, one may rely on either approach, as both are halachically well-based.

• Sources: *Turei Zahav* Y.D. 287:2; *Chovas HaDar* 7: n. 35; *Agur B’ohalecha* 12:27; *Kuntres HaMezuzah* 287:17; *Pischei Mezuzos* 289:12

### Got a mezuzah question or story?

Email [rabbi@ohrsandton.com](mailto:rabbi@ohrsandton.com) or submit on my website [mymezuzahstory.com](http://mymezuzahstory.com). Free *Mezuzah Maven* book for every question or story submitted (when published in the near future!)

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## BUSINESS ETHICS

by Rabbi Ari Wasserman

### Affixing a Mezuzah to an Office Door

*Q: I just started my own business, which involves renting a small office in a large building. My wife dropped by to help with arranging and decorating the office, and she noted that there were no mezuzot on the doors, which I had not even noticed.*

*Do I need to put mezuzot up on the doors, or is that only necessary at home?*

#### Halachic Background

Halachic authorities debate if stores, offices, classrooms, war rooms, workshops, factories and the like, require a mezuzah. And, if a blessing should be said when it is attached or not.

The Rambam and the Shulchan Aruch both rule that a holiday succah during Succot, a cabin aboard a ship, and “stores in marketplaces” do not require a mezuzah. However, the poskim disagree regarding the definition of “stores in marketplaces.”

According to the Taz, this means stores where no one dwells at night, which makes them temporary dwellings.

According to the Yad Ketanah, however, this means only temporary booths, such as those used at

fairs, whereas regular, permanently located stores require a mezuzah. This is because people dwell in them all day (just as students dwell in a beit midrash), and/or because the merchandise remains stored in them even at night (and “storehouses” require a mezuzah).

Furthermore, the Talmud states: “Regarding two craftsmen’s booths, one inside the other, the inner one is not considered a succah and requires a mezuzah, but the outer one is a succah and requires no mezuzah.” And, in his commentary on the above passage, Rashi explains that potters would build two booths, one within the other. The inner one required a mezuzah because they would dwell there as if in a home, while the outer one required no mezuzah because they used it only for merchandise and other crafts.

It would seem, then, that a building designated only for one’s work and livelihood does not require a mezuzah. This is also the Bach’s opinion.

However, there are Achronim who disagree and require a mezuzah on an office, even if it is only used for work and not for sleeping. For example, the Aruch

HaShulchan rules that a “work shop” requires a mezuzah, whereas an artisan’s “booth” doesn’t because its structure is considered temporary. Apparently, he would rule that an office requires a mezuzah for the same reason. Similarly, according to Yalkut Yosef even if workers are present only during the day (and not at night), “factories” and “offices” require mezuzot.

In summary, regarding all the various categories of work places – be they factories, offices, stores, or artisan’s booths in which no one actually resides – some poskim exempt them from a mezuzah, and some don’t.

Then the question arises: If one does affix a mezuzah, should it be done without a blessing?

Yalkut Yosef says yes. But Chovas HaDar says no.

And then we have this from Teshuvos VeHanhagos:

*“The poskim debate whether a store and office require a mezuzah because they are not lived in day and night and not called a dwelling, but it’s worthwhile to affix a mezuzah... Regarding a store or office in which no one sleeps at night, no blessing should be recited upon affixing a mezuzah... contrary*

*to the custom today that when one opens an office, he invites the public for the affixing of the mezuzah and recites a blessing upon it. But if the office contains a door connecting it to a dwelling, it requires a mezuzah along with a blessing.”*

## Response

In practice, it’s difficult to give a blanket response if offices require a mezuzah or not. Each situation needs to be analyzed separately, in light of the amount of time spent in a given office, if articles of merchandise are left there during the day and night, if you handle personal matters there which you would otherwise handle in your home, and if you also eat there.

Bottom line, I would advise that you affix a mezuzah in your office, but without reciting a blessing.

*L’iluy nishmas Yehudah ben Shmuel HaKohen  
Breslauer*

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## @OHR

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*Profiles of Ohr Somayach students, alumni and staff  
by Rabbi Shlomo Simon*

**Jacob Janofsky (26), Mt. Laurel, NJ**  
**Drexel University, BS in Business Management**  
**(2015)**  
**Center Program since June, 2018**

**T**he Meshech Chochma in Parshat Bechukotai outlines what might be called the “*Wave Theory of Jewish History*.” Without going into detail, he observes that the Jewish People go through periods when they are very connected to G-d and his Torah, and periods when that connection is weak.

This theory certainly seems true in the case of Jacob Janofsky’s family. Both sets of his grandparents

were among the founders of Reform synagogues in America – one in Cherry Hill, New Jersey and the other in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. Jacob’s “Jewish Tradition” was thoroughly Reform. He had Friday night/Shabbat dinner with his grandparents, and afterwards went with them to their respective synagogues for the Friday night services. He attended Reform Hebrew School from third to 12th grade and in the summers went to a Reform kosher-style camp. By the time he was in high school he was a regional leader in BBYO, a pluralistic Jewish Youth movement.

This involvement with Jews and Judaism, albeit Reform, was an important factor in his eventual and commitment to Torah and mitzvahs. When he left for college at Rutgers University, he immediately sought

out the company of other Jewish students at the Hillel House. While there he met Rabbi Yehoshua Lewis, an outreach rabbi on campus, and started learning Torah with him.

In January 2011, Jacob went on his first trip to Israel with a Birthright group from Rutgers. The leader of the group was the director of the campus Hillel, who happened to be Orthodox. While visiting Tzefat, he suggested to some of the boys that they might want to come with him to the Ari's mikveh. Jacob was intrigued and joined the group. While submerged in the freezing waters, he had an epiphany. He saw in his mind's eye a large black letter "Shin". He felt moved to recite the Shema. His neshama was touched.

After returning to Rutgers he became more involved in the religious life at Hillel, but felt the need to return to Israel. Rabbi Lewis connected him to the JIntern program at Ohr Somayach. He also did a six-week program at the Yeshiva in 2011. Rabbi Dr. Yitzchok Greenblatt was the madrich, and the group had classes from many of the outstanding rabbis here, including Rabbis Breitowitz, Gottlieb and Lazarus. After that summer Jacob decided that he needed more time in Yeshiva, and so he stayed and learned in the Mechina Program for eight months.

In April of 2012 he returned to the States and transferred to Drexel University in Philadelphia where he was active in the kiruv program on campus run by Rabbi Shimon Kaye, another Ohr Somayach alumnus. In 2015 Jacob graduated and started working as an operations manager with Amazon in Baltimore. He was responsible for the fulfillment department with its 175 employees. The job was grueling. A typical workday was 10-14 hours with nary a few minutes to



gobble down lunch or dinner. After a year-and-a-half of this routine, he had had enough and quit to work for a Chinese tech start-up in Washington DC as its US supply chain/logistics manager. As happens often in the tech world, that start-up failed a year after he started.

While the start-up was winding down, Jacob, who is not one to let the grass grow under his feet, began working on political campaigns as an operations manager. He collected data, organized volunteers to knock on doors and designed t-shirts and campaign signs. In the six months between January and June 2018, he worked on six state and local primary elections. He found it dynamic, energizing, fun and a good use of his skills.

For all the excitement of his working life, his spiritual life was suffering, and it bothered him. He felt that he had to come back to Yeshiva.

He spent the summer in the Ohr Somayach JLE Connect program and has been in the Center program since Elul zman. He plans to spend at least a year here. Describing his experience so far at the Center, Jacob says: *"It's been life changing; spiritually awakening; deeply fulfilling; inspiring; and humbling. The quality of the talmidim and rabbeim is very high. It's an amazing opportunity to work on myself and see where it takes me."*

With such an attitude, we think it will take him far.

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