

# OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHAT VAYEITZEI • 12 KISLEV 5781 NOVEMBER 28, 2020 • VOL 28 NO. 6

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

### “Two Torahs”

“*And Yaakov departed...*” (28:10)

**M**y daughter is studying for a Master’s degree at arguably the best university in Israel for her particular subject. Nearly all of the other students there are from Tel Aviv and Hod HaSharon and she is one of less than a handful of Orthodox women there. When asked to speak about herself, she said, “I am married to an *avreich* who immerses himself in Torah night and day, and I have no interest in changing who I am.” She said, “I am ‘different’ than you. I respect you. I respect what you have to teach me here, but I have no interest in becoming like you. And if I do become like you, then we will both have ‘lost.’ Because I treasure my religious values and way of life, and you need skilled Orthodox women professionals in this particular field.”

Later, she told me that she would never have even thought of doing this Master’s in such an environment had it not been for the *chinuch* (education) of her home. Our house, thank G-d, has always seen a procession of Shabbat guests of all shapes, sizes, and persuasions – especially when we used to live across the street from Ohr Somayach.

You can bring your children up in one of two ways. One alternative is that you can try to ‘insulate’ them totally and cut yourself off to the maximum degree from any negative lures of the secular world. But even this might not be hermetic enough. I once heard a parable from Rabbi Yaakov Hillel *shlit’a* about a king who was so concerned for his son’s

purity that he locked him up in a tower with the windows shuttered so he could not see the street. One day, the shutters flew open by mistake, and, there in the street was a lady of questionable morals. The prince said to his father, “Father! What is that?” “Ech! It’s a dog, my son!” To which the son said, “Daddy, get me a dog, please!” Ivory towers are not foolproof.

Alternatively, you can face the challenges of the modern world and give your children a pride and a love of Torah Judaism that you hope and pray very hard will inoculate them against the cesspools of society at large. There’s no guarantee in either choice.

We chose the second route, but, to be honest, I don’t think we had much choice. Maybe if I’d been younger when I became observant, I could have attempted to do a major personality graft, learned Yiddish, as well as Hebrew, diminished interaction with secular relatives, and started a completely new identity (and changed my name back to my father’s original name of Spivack). As it was, we opened our house pretty much to everyone on Shabbat, and my children grew up understanding that we were Torah Jews, and there were other people, including their grandparents, who were not as observant.

Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetzky *zatzal* comments on this week’s Torah portion that Yaakov learned “two

Torahs,” so to speak. One was the teaching of his father Yitzchak, which he learned in his first sixty-three years. This was a Torah where father and son learned together in an atmosphere hermetically sealed from the corruption of Canaan. However, to survive the spiritually toxic environment of Haran in the company of Lavan and his cohorts, Yaakov needed the Torah of Shem and Ever. For Shem had lived together with the generation of the Flood, and Ever had lived with those who had built the Tower of Babel. Yaakov’s sojourn of fourteen years with them inured him to the spiritual dangers of Haran.

To be a parent in today’s world is an unprecedented challenge. To succeed we also need these two aspects of Torahs. We need the unshakeable commitment and faith in the Torah of truth that was given to us at Mount Sinai. And that we continue to study nowadays, and try to fulfill its mitzvahs, down to the finest detail. But we also need to remember that the Torah is a Torah of love, tolerance and compassion. With these two together, with the help of Hashem, we can protect our nearest and dearest from the worst that the world has to offer.

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## TALMUD TIPS

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by Rabbi Moshe Newman

### *Pesachim 9-15*

#### No Third Meal?

*Rabbi Elazar ben Yehuda from Bartuta taught in a beraita, “When Shabbat is the day before Pesach, one should burn all of his chametz before Shabbat... and leave over only enough chametz food for two meals for Shabbat, to be eaten up until four hours of the daytime.”*

There is a type of conundrum when Shabbat is the day immediately before the first day of Pesach (as is planned for the upcoming Pesach of 5781, aka 2021). On the one hand, there is a mitzvah to eat three meals on Shabbat (as taught in Masechet Shabbat 117b and Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 291). However, we are not allowed to eat chametz after the first few morning hours on Shabbat when it is *erev* Pesach. Since the normal meaning of a meal according to halacha is “a meal with bread,” how can we have a third meal on this Shabbat? We cannot eat chametz on Shabbat afternoon for the third meal. Also, we cannot eat matzah on Shabbat afternoon so that we will have a hearty appetite for matzah when we eat it for the mitzvah of matzah at the Pesach Seder.

There is a gamut of *Poskim*, from different places and eras, who make a variety of rulings regarding the third meal of Shabbat in this case.

Rashi explains, on our *daf*, that when Rabbi Elazar ben Yehuda says in the *beraita* to save enough

chametz for two meals, he means, “and not three meals, since although on Shabbat there is a mitzvah to have a first meal on Friday night, a second one on Shabbat morning and a third one in the afternoon, on *erev* Pesach it is forbidden to eat a meal from the time for *Mincha*.” It appears from Rashi’s words that in this situation no third meal is eaten on Shabbat.

In addition to Rashi’s explanation, there is at least one other approach found in the writings of the Rishonim. According to them, when Rabbi Elazar ben Yehuda said to keep chametz for “two meals” for Shabbat, he was not indicating that this quantity of chametz would provide for only two meals on Shabbat. Rather, he meant that the amount of chametz that would normally be consumed in two meals on a regular Shabbat, would suffice for three meals on Shabbat that is on *erev* Pesach. A person should have the second and third Shabbat meals in the first hours of Shabbat morning, with *birkat hamazon* and a pause between them. Since he eats the meals within a relatively

short time period, he will manage with half the normal amount of chametz at each morning meal. Accordingly, there are in fact three Shabbat meals: one at night and two in the morning, during the time when eating chametz is still permitted. (*Tosefot on Shabbat 118a, Tosefot HaRosh, Magen Avraham*)

The Rema in Orach Chaim 444 offers another option. On Shabbat afternoon a person can fulfill the mitzvah of the third meal with an alternate meal of “fruit, fish and meat.” (See the Aruch Hashulchan 444:5 for a fascinating, novel approach to the reason for the Rema omitting the possibility of egg matzah for the third meal, the order in which the Rema presents these items of food, and a possible reason for not allowing *kneidlach* for this meal that is not related to the issue of *gebruks*.)

A personal anecdote: Prior to our marriage, my wife and I had been accustomed to follow the Rema’s ruling, eating the likes of *kneidelach* and salads for the third meal. However, shortly after our marriage, there was a case when Shabbat was *erev* Pesach and, for personal reasons and in consultation with our Rav, we ate two meals in the first hours of the morning, as the Magen Avraham suggests as an option. After early morning prayers, we had a meal with pita and a little something (I forget exactly what) and said *birkat hamazon*. We then got up from the table and went for a walk in the neighborhood before returning to a second morning pita meal, finishing the pita and finishing the three required Shabbat meals. To be honest, it was somewhat rushed and not exactly my idea of an *oneg Shabbat* – and I also felt that having the two meals so close together in time was like a loophole and “trick” – and, after speaking with our Rav, we returned to our previous “*kneidelach* in the afternoon” custom, as per the Rema.

Another apparent option for the third meal that is cited by halachic sources is the practice of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai to learn Torah in lieu of eating. It is written in the name of the Gaon from Vilna that Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai’s behavior

shows that there is no proper solution for this dilemma. Rabbi Avraham Azulai, a kabbalistic Master, suggested a seemingly different message from Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. He wrote that the optimal way of fulfilling the mitzvah of eating the third meal on Shabbat *erev* Pesach is to “consume a meal of Torah study.”

A completely different approach is found in the brilliant writings of the Aruch Hashulchan. He asks why Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai did not also have fruit, which would serve as the third meal of food, as we see in the ruling of the Rema. Due to this question and other considerations, the Aruch Hashulchan suggests that when Shabbat is on *erev* Pesach we are *not* commanded to eat three meals. Only two. When something is not possible, or if our Sages found reason for us not fulfill a mitzvah or for them not to enact a mitzvah – there is no command to fulfill a certain mitzvah in that case. For example, we do not fulfill the mitzvah of eating three meals when Yom Kippur is on Shabbat, and we do not fulfill the mitzvah of shofar or lulav when Rosh Hashana is on Shabbat or on Shabbat during Succot, respectively. Likewise, there is no mitzvah to eat a third meal on a Shabbat that is on *erev* Pesach. This would explain Rashi’s mention of only two meals on this Shabbat. (As might be expected, there is much discussion of this subject in a large array of *Poskim* and Torah commentaries, which include consideration of other factors, such as whether the third meal may be fulfilled when eating in the morning, or only in the afternoon – possibly at that time with egg matzah and depending on one’s custom.)

\**Author’s note:* Please see the brilliant mini-series in Ohrnet Magazine by my dear friend and esteemed Torah scholar Rabbi Yehuda Spitz, *shlita*. The series is called *The Rare Calendar Phenomena of 5781*, and this week’s installment, part 5, has a section dealing with the subject of three meals on Shabbat *erev* Pesach. I am certain that you will find it to be enlightening and that it will serve as a catalyst to pursue increased Torah study. Learning his writings is an *oneg Shabbat* – and an *oneg* anytime.

• *Pesachim 13b*

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# Q & A

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## VAYEITZEI

### Questions

1. When Yaakov traveled to Charan, the Torah stresses that he departed from Beer 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*?

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

### Answers

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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# WHAT'S IN A WORD

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## Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

by Rabbi Reuven Chaim Klein

### Castle in the Sky

Leah named her youngest son Zevulun, saying, “This time my husband will live with me (*yizbeleini*), because I have birthed for him six sons...” (Gen. 30:20). The word *zvul* refers to a prominent dwelling place – a sort of castle or palace, if you will. There are two more Biblical characters whose names seem related to the word *zvul*: Zvul was a city official in Shechem who remained loyal to the local Jewish warlord Abimelech (see Judges 9), and Jezebel was a Tyrian princess who married Ahab the King of Israel and pushed him toward idolatry. In this essay we will explore five different words in Hebrew/Aramaic that refer to a “castle” or “palace” – *zvul*, *armon*, *apadna/padan*, *tirah* and *paltin*. In doing so we will seek out the etymologies of these apparent synonyms to help us understand how they differ from one another.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (to Gen. 30:20) writes that the word *zvul* does not simply designate a mere dwelling-place. Rather it denotes a home that completely meets all objectives of the one for whom it is intended. For example, the Talmud says (*Rosh Hashanah* 17a) that the term *zvul* there refers to the Holy Temple. Indeed, most of the times this word appears in the Bible, it unambiguously refers to that Holy Edifice (I Kings 8:13, II Chron. 6:2, Isa. 63:15). Rabbi Hirsch explains that *zvul* denotes that place as the fitting location for G-d’s presence to rest. He further notes that the common Mishnaic word *zevel* (“fertilizer”) serves a similar function, as it readies the ground to be a fitting “dwelling place” for seeds so that they may flourish and thrive there.

When the prophet Habakuk reflects back on Joshua stopping the movement of the sun and moon (Joshua 10:13), he says: “The sun and moon stood in their *zvul*” (Hab. 3:11). The commentators

(see Targum and Radak there) explain that in this context *zvul* refers to the place in which the sun and moon typically “dwell,” and is another way of saying that they stood still in their tracks. Indeed, our Rabbis teach us that *zvul* is the name of one of the seven heavens (*Chagigah* 12b).

In Ugaritic, Akkadian, and other Semitic languages, cognates of *zvul* mean “to lift” or “to elevate” (*zabalu*). Based on this, Rabbi Dovid Tzvi Hoffmann (1843-1921) suggests that the Biblical term *zvul* refers specifically to a lofty abode that is located in a high place, like the Holy Temple (which stood atop a mountain) or like the place of the celestial luminaries (which are up in the sky). He notes that an Arabic cognate of *zvul* refers to “butter” or “grease” because such oily grub “rises” to the top when mixed with water.

Before we begin exploring some other Hebrew words that are similar to *zvul*, I would like to digress a bit and speak about the English words *palace* and *castle*, and the differences between them. The English word *palace* or *palatium*, in the sense of a vast and luxurious residence that belongs or belonged to an important person, is ultimately derived from the proper name Palatium, which was one of the hills in Ancient Rome where imperial palaces were built. In Rabbinic literature, the Late Hebrew cognate of *palace* is *paltin/paltrin* (see *Sanhedrin* 2:3, 10:5). According to a renowned language scholar, the Late Hebrew word *paltrin* is actually derived from the Latin *praetorium* – which refers to the official residence of a Roman governor or general – and is seemingly based on the interchangeability of LAMMED and REISH.

In contrast to the word *palace*, the English word *castle* (related to the French word *château*, and

ultimately derived from the Latin *castellum*) originally meant “encampment” or “village.” Later, it came to refer to any large building or series of buildings that were constructed for defense purposes. In that sense, a castle refers to any sort of fortress or stronghold. Often, the terms *palace* and *castle* converge in one building, but they are not actually synonyms. Rather, the English word *palace* denotes a royal residence and the opulent lifestyle associated with wealth, while *castle* denotes a fortified structure regardless of its lavishness or extravagance. With these nuances in mind, we can better understand the different Hebrew words for “palace” and “castle.”

The most common word for “castle” or “palace” in Hebrew is *armon* (which appears 32 times in the Bible). Ibn Janach and Rabbi Shlomo Pappenheim write that the root of *armon* is REISH-(VAV)-MEM, which means “height.” This root relates to “palaces,” as they are typically tall buildings. Radak also cites this explanation, but ultimately concludes that *armon* is derived from its own root, ALEPH-REISH-MEM. Menachem Ibn Saruk similarly traces *armon* to the quadrilateral root ALEPH-REISH-MEM-NUN. [Ibn Janach invokes the interchangeability of LAMMED and REISH to explain that *almon* (Yechezkel 19:7, Isa. 13:22) means the same thing as *armon*.]

The Hebrew word *apadna* appears once in the Bible (Dan. 11:45), and the commentators explain that it refers to a “palace.” When *apadna* appears in the Talmud, it sometimes does not actually mean a full palace, but rather a den that is especially grand or kingly. This follows from Rashi (*Bava Metzia* 35a, *Bava Basra* 6b, *Shabbat* 77b) defining *apadna* as a “royal triclinium,” which basically means a fancy dining room. This word appears in the story of Rava dreaming that his *apadna* and Abaye’s *apadna* fell (*Berachot* 56a), in the story of the debtor who owned two *apadnas* (*Ketuvot* 91b), and in the various cases in which Rav Nachman allowed creditors to take away a person’s *apadna*, or threatened to do so (see *Bava Kama* 21a and *Bava Metzia* 35a, *Ketuvot* 50b).

According to Rabbi Dr. Ernest Klein (1899-1983), *apadna* comes from Old Persian – a language that descends from the Indo-European linguistic family.

On the other hand, Dr. Chaim Tawil actually traces this word to the Akkadian *appadanu*, which he understands to mean “a colonnaded audience hall.” According to Dr. Tawil, the word is of Semitic origin, and not Indo-European. Indeed, an Arabic cognate of this word, *fadan*, means “palace” or “high tower.”

Rabbi Shlomo Pappenheim of Breslau (1740-1814) traces the word *apadna* to the biliteral Hebrew root PEH-DALET, which means “redemption” or “freedom” (like in *pidyon* or *pedut*). One derivative of this root is the word *efod* (“vest” or “apron”) which is a sort of royal vestment worn by people who were “free” and “not indentured” (e.g., see I Sam. 2:18, II Sam. 6:14). In the same way, he explains that the word *apadna* refers to the sort of luxurious domicile where a free man might live.

Taking this a step further, Rabbi Pappenheim also suggests that the Biblical Hebrew word *padan* denotes an independent region that had its own sovereignty and/or was free from paying imperial taxes. He thus explains that the term *Padan Aram* (Gen. 31:18, 35:26 and 46:15) refers to the “Free State of Aram” as opposed to other polities which existed in the Aram area. [The classical understandings are that *padan* means “field/plain,” or that it refers to the “twin” cities of Aram Naharayim (Haran) and Aram Zoba (Aleppo), which stood on opposite sides of the Euphrates.]

The word *tirah* appears seven times in the Bible (Gen. 25:16, Num. 31:10, Yechezkel 25:4, 46:23, Song of Songs 8:9, Psalms 69:26, and I Chron. 6:39). It seems to refer to some sort of enclosed “castle” or “fort” – perhaps a “fortified village.” Ibn Ezra (to Gen. 25:16) writes that *tirah* means the same thing as *armon*.

Rabbi Shlomo Pappenheim finds that the root of *tirah* is the two-letter string TET-REISH, which means “straight line.” Other tributaries of that root include *tur* (“row”), *matarah* (“target” or “goal,” which one shoots straight towards), *matar* (“rain” that shoots straight downwards), and more. He explains that *tirah* is related to this root because it denotes the fact that the castle is typically

constructed by arranging various rows (*turim*) of boards. Radak also derives the word *tirah* from *tur*, adding that castles are typically built with rows of hewn stone.

Alternatively, Rabbi Pappenheim explains that *tirah* relates to the concept of *netirah* (“safeguarding,” “protecting”), which, in turn, also stems from the TET-REISH root. He explains that the constant vigilance and mindfulness needed to watch over something (*netirah*) means that one’s thoughts must be kept “straight” on it and may not deviate. Two related corollaries are the words *tahor* (“pure” or “clean,” a state which can only last if one carefully *watches* to make sure the pure item is not sullied), and *iter* (“closed,” something so closely *protected* that it is totally “locked up” and cannot function). Based on this last example, Rabbi Pappenheim explains that the word *tirah* refers to an impenetrable “castle” or “fortress,” whose defenses are so well designed that no one can enter or exit.

Rabbi David Chaim Chelouche (1920-2016), the late Chief Rabbi of Netanya, similarly writes that the word *tirah* derives from the root TET-REISH (“guarding”), as it denotes a sort of “fort” or

“citadel” built to protect a king’s subjects. He also writes that a *tirah* is generally built with a wall surrounding it and is thus similar to the Hebrew word *atarah* (“crown”) – a special ornament that goes around a regal head. He explains that *atarah* is derived from a combination of the roots AYIN-TET (“cover”) and TET-REISH (“guard”). (Interestingly, Rabbi Chelouche claims that the English word *tower* is actually derived from the Hebrew word *tirah*. That said, linguists say that the English *tower* comes from the Latin *turris*.)

To conclude, I’d like to offer a way of differentiating between all the terms we discussed. Firstly, *armon* is used both in the context of a king’s residence (II Kings 16:18, I Kings 15:25, Jer. 49:27), and in the context of a fortified stronghold used for defense (Prov. 18:19, Lam. 2:5, Mic. 5:4); thus it resembles both *palace* and *castle* in English. Secondly, the Hebrew word *apadna* seems to line up with the original meaning of *palace* as relating to the lap of luxury, and, thirdly, the Hebrew word *paltin/paltrin* is even a cousin of the English word *palace*. Fourthly, *tirah* seems to be associated with buildings used for defense purposes, thus aligning that term with the original meaning of the English *castle*. Finally, the term *zvil* somehow fits in to all of this, I’m just not sure exactly how.

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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# COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS

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by Rabbi Reuven Lauffer

## COMING BACK TO LIFE EVERY DAY – PART 1

*“My G-d, the soul You placed within me is pure. You created it, You fashioned it, You breathed it into me, You safeguard it within me, and eventually You will take it from me, and restore it to me in Time to Come. As long as the soul is within me, I gratefully thank You, Hashem, my G-d and the G-d of my forefathers, Master of all works, L-rd of all souls. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who restores souls to dead bodies.”*

The depth and significance of this blessing are almost limitless. Contained within its few lines are several tenets that are fundamental to the foundations of Jewish belief. Perhaps the first place to begin is with the opening words of the blessing.

*“My G-d, the soul You placed within me is pure.”* What is the soul and how are we supposed to define it? It is a problem, because the more spiritual something is, the harder it is to describe in physical terms. And, of all our faculties, it is the soul that it is the most acutely spiritual of them all. Our Rabbis describe the soul as being a part of G-d Himself (see Alshich on Genesis and Tanya chapter 2, based on the Book of Iyov 31:2). It is the soul that is the Divine “sparkplug” that gives us the ability to transcend the physical and connect to the spiritual realms.

The soul is truly something wondrous because it is not uniform. Each person is the recipient of their own individual and unique soul. And the soul is the most sublime dimension of all because it reflects the Divinity within mankind. This is what the opening words of the blessing are conveying. Found within each person is a part of G-d that is exclusive only to them. It is a part that is fashioned by G-d Himself, specifically for that person. For this very reason, the first sentence ends by telling us that the soul is pure. G-d is pure – therefore, the part of Him that resides within us is also pure.

The inference of the blessing is truly startling. The soul remains pure regardless of our sins. Our Rabbis explain that when we go to sleep at night, our souls go through a process of Divine cleansing. The sins that were accumulated throughout the day are removed and stored away in the spiritual realms. They remain there, either until the person repents or until the person passes from this world, at which point they will have to give an exact accounting of their actions. On reawakening in the morning, the soul is restored to the person in a pristine state. This is, perhaps, the most astonishing act of kindness of all. Because without this overnight cleansing, each day’s spiritual grime would be added to the already overwhelming amount that had accumulated throughout a person’s life. There would be such a buildup that even if a person managed at some point to harbor thoughts of repentance and a desire to return to G-d, he would not be able to penetrate the manifold layers of sin. And that would be the biggest tragedy of all, as it would render a person incapable of reconnecting to his beautiful and chaste soul.

So, this is the reason for the blessing beginning with a declaration that the soul is pure. The nocturnal purification is a Divine act of pure, unadulterated benevolence. It is an affirmation that each and every morning begins unencumbered by previous sins and mistakes that were made. And it is our daily task to try to protect and shield the soul to the best of our ability so that its purity remains discernable. Because, by doing so, the soul retains its spiritual integrity.

In effect, our blessing is telling us that, as each day begins, its uncharted spiritual potential is waiting to

be discovered and explored. And the most effective and potent tool at our disposal to reveal all of its sublime possibilities is our freshly cleansed and pure soul.

*To be continued...*

*Please note that there are two opinions as to where this blessing should appear in the order the Torah Blessings. The Tur, Rabbi Yaakov ben Asher, rules that it should be recited immediately after the blessing for the bathroom. The Mechaber, Rabbi Yosef Karo, rules that it should be recited at the end of the Torah Blessings. Both opinions are accepted within Jewish Law and are followed according to the customs of each community. Accordingly, each person should follow their own family or community custom. Anyone who is unsure as to what the correct order is for them should consult with a local Orthodox Rabbi.*

*Ohr Somayach announces a new booklet on  
The Morning Blessings  
by Rabbi Reuven Lauffer  
[www.ohr.edu/morning-blessings](http://www.ohr.edu/morning-blessings)*

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## PARSHA OVERVIEW

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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 Yissaschar, Zevulun, and a daughter, Dina. Hashem 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.

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# LETTER AND SPIRIT

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

## Behold! A Ladder of Lessons

**O**n Yaakov's way to Charan, he encounters "the place," where he falls asleep for the night. He did not just chance upon any place. The verse describes an "encounter" – literally, *he was struck* by the place. This specific place fascinated and captivated him. Although he was deeply moved by the grandeur of the place, which was at the border of the land of his future, he nevertheless lay down and slept in this place.

In his sleep, he has a vision. In the textual description, the word "Behold!" appears three times, each time heralding a new lesson for Yaakov to learn. Behold! Yaakov envisions a ladder; a ladder which was "set up toward earth and whose top reached to heaven." The ladder was not there by chance – it was deliberately set up from on high toward the earth. But the purpose of the ladder is not descent, but rather ascent – its top reached toward heaven. This is the first lesson of the ladder. Man's destiny is not to be found below on earth, but should be sought from above. Everything earthly is meant to ascend to a lofty goal.

*Behold! Angels of G-d were ascending and descending "against him."* He sees that man's fate is not decided on earth, in the physical world. He sees that G-d's messengers ascend the ladder and look at the ideal image of man as he should be, and then descend and compare the ideal image to the image of man as he

actually is. By this standard, they then deal with him for good or for bad. The Midrash (*Ber. Rabbah* 68:12) explains that the angels ascended on high and found Yaakov's image engraved as Israel glorifying G-d, but when they descended they found him sleeping – sleeping in the very place that was meant to awaken in him a higher awareness of his mission. The angels sought to harm him, but at once...

*Behold! G-d stood beside him.* While the angels see everything and every person strictly as they are and where they are, G-d stands by the person in His attribute of mercy. In this way, G-d not only sees the past and the present, but also sees and shapes the future, so that the kernel of good that lives in a person in potential is nurtured and developed.

Taken together the message of the ladder for Yaakov and all his descendants is this: Man was put on this earth with a higher purpose and he is constantly being measured and compared to the higher self of his potential. Yet, when he fails that higher calling, G-d stands beside him to preserve the good in him and enable him to develop and reach that potential.

- Sources: Commentary, *Ber.* 28:12

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# THE RARE CALENDAR PHENOMENA OF 5781

by Rabbi Yehuda Spitz

## (Part 5 of a new mini-series)

5781 is a year that is chock-full of rare calendar phenomena that we will *iyH* be witnessing, or, more accurately, taking an active part in. Let us continue exploring what is in store for us.

### Erev Pesach that Occurs on Shabbat

In the previous installment we discussed that this year there will be a *Purim Meshulash*. Yet, whenever this occurs, there is an even greater phenomenon with great halachic ramifications that will occur exactly one month later: *Erev Pesach on Shabbat*. When this happens we need an entirely new rulebook on how our Pesach preparations are supposed to ensue.

For example, the Erev Pesach *Taanis Bechorim* (fast of the firstborn) gets pre-empted two days earlier to Thursday. Perhaps more importantly, *Bedikat Chametz* cannot be done the night before Pesach as usual. Since Erev Pesach is Shabbat, *Bedikat Chametz* must be performed on Thursday night instead. But that means that the burning of the *chametz* has to take place on Friday morning, on *Erev Erev Pesach*. But we can't recite *Kol Chamira*, as we still need to save some *chametz* for the Shabbat meals (remember, Shabbat is Erev Pesach), and it is forbidden to eat matzah on Erev Pesach. So we need to keep some *chametz*. Yet, all of the *chametz* has to be finished before the "end of the time for eating *chametz*" on Erev Pesach.

So what are we to do? How are we to have our Shabbat *seudot* (meals)?

The answer is to leave over only a small amount of (hopefully not crumbly) *chametz* for the *seudot*, such as using pita for *Lechem Mishneh* on Friday night, *daven k'Vatikin* (at sunrise) and immediately start the Shabbat morning *seudah* afterwards. Alternately, there is another minority opinion – albeit one many Ashkenazim do not necessarily concur with – to have this Shabbat morning *seudah* with *matzah ashira*, i.e. Egg Matzah. Many *Poskim* maintain that exclusively on the morning of Erev Pesach (even when it is on Shabbat), Ashkenazim may indeed use *matzah ashira* for their *seudah*.

Optimally, one should "split" the morning *seudah* in order to be *yotzei* eating *Seudas Shlishit* (the third Shabbat meal) as well. This entails very close timing, as well as a sufficient break (and perhaps a walk) between the two meals, and making sure to finish all *chametz* before "*Sof Zman Achillat Chametz*." Afterwards, getting rid of the rest of the *chametz*, brushing off and cleaning up any *chametz* crumbs, rinsing and cleaning off hands and mouths, and reciting *Kol Chamira* – need all be done before the final time for burning the *chametz*. Rav Yosef Eliyahu Henkin advised that these *chametz seudot* should be served on disposables, thus enabling a much faster and easier cleaning up process.

Anyone who wishes to eat *Seudas Shlishit* afterwards cannot eat challah or matzah, and must eat other foods, such as fruit or *shehakol* items instead. As there is no way to be fulfill every matter in a *lechatchilla* way in this situation, including eating a *Hamotzi Seudat Shlishit* after *davening* Mincha, many *Poskim* advise eating matzah balls (*kneidlach*) on Shabbat afternoon after an early Mincha, for at least a *Mezonot Seudas Shlishit* (more germane for those who are not *makpid* on *Sheruya/Gebrochts*). This solution is due to the fact that one may not fulfill his matzah obligation on the Seder night with cooked matzah. Hence, *kneidlach*, although made with matzah-meal, are nonetheless permitted to be eaten on Erev Pesach. On this Shabbat Erev Pesach afternoon,

when neither *chametz* nor *matzah* may be eaten, this becomes an optimal way to fulfill the *Seudas Shlishit* obligation.

## No Seudat Shlishit?

There is an alternate view, that of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, that he would be involved in Torah study in lieu of *Seudat Shlishit* when Erev Pesach is on Shabbat. The Vilna Gaon writes that this shows that the Rashbi held that on this special day, as there is no full proper solution to fulfill *Seudat Shlishit* after *Zman Mincha* with bread, “*ain takana l’davar klal*” – there is no proper solution for this dilemma. Noted Kabbalist and ancestor of the Chida, Rav Avraham Azulai writes that the “*Mitzvah hayoter muvcheret*” – the optimal manner to have “*Seudat Shlishit*” in this situation – is “*lehashlim seudah hahi b’Divrei Torah*” – to have this “*seudah*” with *Divrei Torah* instead.

The *Aruch Hashulchan* maintains that this proves that on this special Shabbat Erev Pesach there is no actual obligation to have a *Seudat Shlishit*. Just as when Yom Kippur occurs on Shabbat, it pushes off some *mitzvot* of Shabbat, and when Rosh Hashanah, Succot or Purim fall out on Shabbat (like this year), the respective *mitzvot* of Shofar, Lulav, and Megillah get pushed off (as detailed previously), so too when Erev Pesach occurs on Shabbat, Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai was “*osek b’Torah*” instead, as the *mitzvah* of *Seudat Shlishit* got pushed off as well.

An important reminder for this marathon Shabbat: As it is the Shabbat that is immediately preceding Pesach, one may not perform any preparations on Shabbat for Yom Tov, and all Seder preparations may only begin from *Tzeit Hakochavim*, after reciting “*HaMavdil Bein Kodesh L’Kodesh*,” either by itself or as part of “*Vatode’ainu*” in the Yom Tov Maariv.

*To be continued...*

*Written l’zechus Shira Yaffa bas Rochel Miriam v’chol yotzei chalatzecha l’yeshua sheleimah teikif u’miyad.*

*This author wishes to acknowledge Rabbi Shea Linder’s excellent article on this topic.*

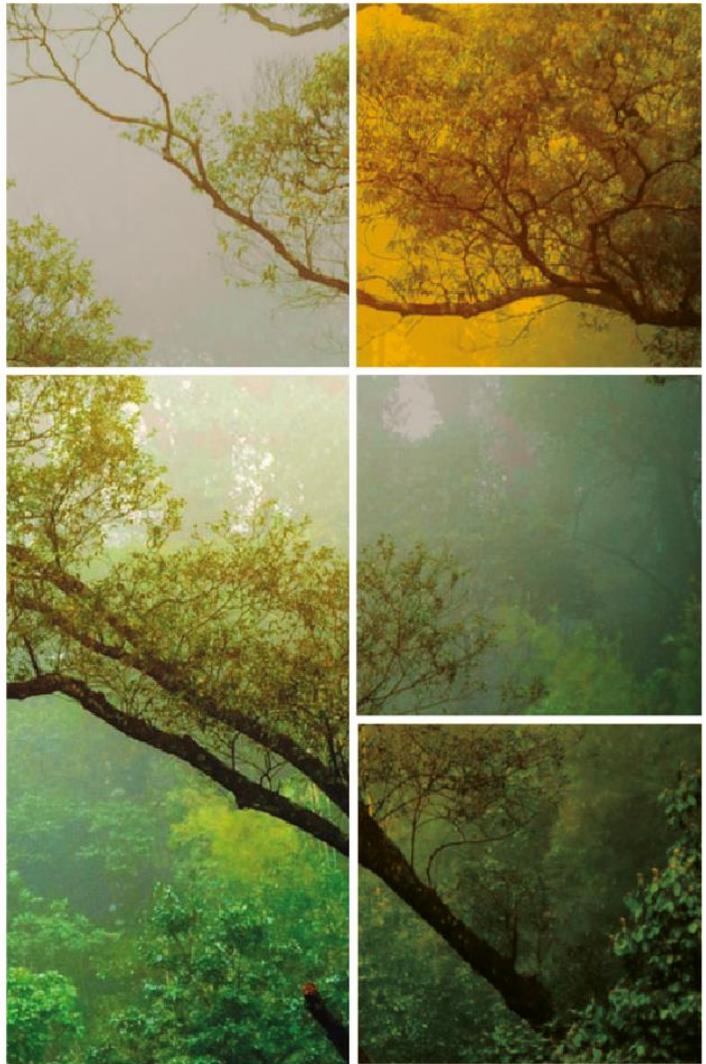
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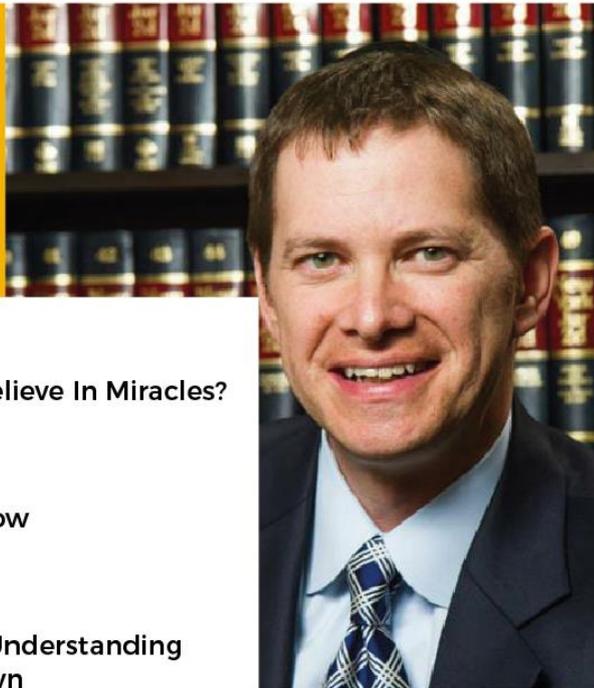
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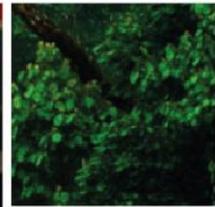
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