



PARASHAT HASHAVUA

VAYETZE BY RAV SHMUEL BLOOM

11 KISLEV 5767 MOTZAEI SHABBAT: 17:14

MESSAGE FROM THE RAV

Dear chevra

Welcome to our minyan! We hope you had a fulfilling week and wish you a spiritually uplifting Shabbat.

The Midrash tells us that Yaakov learned in the yeshiva of Shem and Ever for 14 years before arriving in Charan, and becoming involved with more worldly pursuits such as shepherding, dealing with wily business partners, and starting a big family. That focusing on Torah guided Yaakov throughout his life, and gave him the ability to face up to the challenges ahead. On the Pasuk "Im Lavan garti", Rashi comments that rearranging the letters of "גרת" gives us תריג (613), and comments that despite Lavan's constant deceitfulness, Yaakov managed to keep the Torah. The classic Jewish way of achieving success and overcoming obstacles is to imbue every action with the Kedusha of Torah.

We can learn a lot from Yaakov, particularly regarding the common problem of juggling all the aspects of our lives and maintaining balance. Devoting a decent amount of time to sit and learn Torah becomes the foundation upon which each person can grow and be inspired throughout the course of their life. In our busy lives, it's crucial to keep those sparks of inspiration blazing.

Yaakov, the "dweller of tents" had an approach to learning Torah which was intense and devoted. Though, he didn't leave his zealotry behind in yeshiva; he brought it with afterwards, always, with everything he did. The yeshiva environment taught him to take advantage of every moment and imbue it with kedusha. Upon arriving in Charan, Yaakov couldn't understand how anyone could sit around a well doing nothing; their apparent laziness disturbed him. All by himself, he lifted the large stone that usually took an entire group of shepherds to lift off the well. The power of an inspired mind way-overcomes the technical limitations of physicality.

Psychologically speaking too, inspired people are much higher achievers. They make headway faster, better and with more enjoyment. In Judaism, we are always climbing up a down-escalator. If we stop for one moment, we're going backwards!

May our community go from strength to strength and always be striding forwards with the inspiration we have inherited from our forefathers. Our constant motivation and commitment to the values of Torat Yisrael should always be our guiding light.

Shabbat shalom,
Rav Shmuel and Taly

"...AND (THEY'RE CLIMBING) A STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN..." (Adapted from the Divrei Beit Hillel mailing list)

Yaakov can be cited as the source for anyone who has ever fallen asleep in shul. Although we generally encourage congregants to try to stay awake in 'God's House', Yaakov has no problem catching some ZZZ's on the site of the future Beit Hamikdash. But Yaakov's schluff aside, isn't catching shut-eye on the holiest spot on earth a sketchy thing to do? Rav Matis Weinberg is puzzled as to why it is that after dreaming of the ladder, Yaakov wakes up, proclaims the awesomeness of 'the place', and then goes right back to sleep! If Yaakov is shocked by falling asleep in the 'House of God' then why does he go back to sleep in the same spot? In this case, the experience of sleeping on that site was an opportunity not to be missed and therefore Yaakov chose to sleep in the same holy campsite despite the 'awe-fullness' of the place.

But what is the message implicit within Yaakov's vision that made this dream of a cosmic ladder so

valuable? Rabbi Twerski says that the image of the ladder portrays both physical ("was set up on the earth") and spiritual ("reached to heaven") concerns. At this point in Yaakov's life, God was revealing the potential and necessity for greatness in both spiritual and physical realms. God reminds Yaakov to stand firmly rooted to the physicality of the earthly plane while simultaneously lifting the higher aspects of his self to the heavens.

The Rambam tells us that the vision of the ladder is the paradigmatic example of where the deeper meaning of symbols and metaphors of a prophetic vision become apparent to the prophet immediately after his vision. Thus the vision made an immediate impact on Yaakov and that is why he wanted to keep on dreaming. We must analyze the rest of the parsha for events that reveal that the post-dream Yaakov developed skills in his mediation of heaven and earth, of material and spiritual that supports our chosen

interpretation of the meaning of the ladder.

We know that prior to this dream, Yaakov was "a simple man, a tent-dweller." According to Rashi this means that "he was innocent and naïve" and was a student in the academy of Shem and Ever. But after the account of Yaakov's vision, the man we see is drastically different. He is now capable of removing a heavy stone from the top of a well like popping the top off a bottle, being a rugged rancher on the range, and husband to four wives producing 13 children. Whereas prior to this dream we see Yaakov as a man with his head in the heavens, afterwards we see a person who focuses on animal husbandry, his wages, and the settling of old debts.

For Yaakov, his zest for a good night's sleep on a very special site enables him to immediately integrate the parallel themes of materiality and spirituality into his life, his future, and our present.



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THE LLM IS 10 YEARS OLD

CHANUKA IS THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE LLM.

AS PART OF OUR CELEBRATIONS, WE HAVE DECIDED TO GATHER TOGETHER FOR "MEALS OF 8". THIS WILL GIVE ALL OF US MORE TIME TO KEEP THAT SHABBAT FREE ON OUR CALENDERS, IN ORDER TO GIVE A REAL OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY TO GET TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER

SHABBAT PARASHAT **MIKETZ**
DECEMBER 22ND

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*IF ANYONE NEEDS A PLACE FOR LUNCH, OR IF ANYONE HAS A SPARE PLACE AT THEIR TABLE, PLEASE SPEAK TO RAV SHMUEL AND TALY BLOOM AFTER SHUL, AND WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO ACCOMODATE EVERYONE.

*FOR COMMENTS ON THE PARSHA PAGE OR QUESTIONS FOR RAV BLOOM PLEASE E-MAIL:

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*IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUBMIT A DVAR TORAH TO THE PARSHA PAGE – IN HEBREW OR ENGLISH – PLEASE SEND IT TO RAV BLOOM BY MONDAY.

*IF ANYONE WOULD LIKE TO SPONSOR THIS WEEKLY PARSHA PAGE IN MEMORY OF A CLOSE ONE OR IN HONOUR OF AN UP-COMING SIMCHA, PLEASE CONTACT TAMMY WILSON AT: TAMMYWILSON@LATEMINYAN.COM

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SHABBAT SHALOM FROM THE LATE LATE MINYAN

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CHANUKA PARTY!

SAVE THE DATE
DECEMBER 20TH
MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW



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