

Parashah #7

(Updated 12.06.08)

VaYetze ~ וַיֵּצֵא ~ And he went out

Parashah: B'resheet/Genesis 28:10~32:3

Haftarah: Hoshea/Hosea 11:7~14:10

B'rit Hadashah: Yochanan/John 1:43-51

Wow!!! I have had a hard time getting out of the first part of this parashah! There is so much meat here!! But then there is so much meat in the rest of it, too!!! Oh well, let's try to cover what we can.

CHAPTER 28

In **B'resheet/Genesis 28:11**, (depending on your translation) the phrases “the place”, “of the place”, “a certain place” and “in that place” apparently have a lot of significance since it is used **3 times in one verse**. In Hebrew, it is **הַמָּקוֹם** (**ha makom**)

(**הַמָּקוֹם**), connoting **a sacred site** and it is believed that this is Mt. Moriah (pronounced mor-ee-ah), the very place where Avraham offered **Yitz'chak/Isaac** on the altar and the very place where the Temple, both the first and the second, was to be built in the future. Some even believe it represented the area of the Holy of Holies. It is also believed that this is the place where **Ya'akov/Jacob** instituted the (Mah-ah-reev) **Ma'ariv/Evening Prayer**.

There appears to be much symbolism in **Ya'akov/Jacob's** dream. It is said that dreams mentioned in Scripture are vehicles of prophecy and since words are used sparingly, at least in Hebrew, Torah would not report these dreams if they were not important.

One of the commentaries involving the angels ascending and descending the ladder, reported that **Ya'akov/Jacob** was shown the guardian angels of the Four Kingdoms that were to dominate Israel. He saw each angel climbing the number of rungs corresponding to the years of its dominance and then descending as it's time was coming to an end. For instance . . .

- The Babylonian angel climbed 70 rungs and then went down
- Media's angel, of the Media/Persian Empire, ascended 52 rungs
- Greece's angel, 130 rungs
- But the **Edom/Esau** angel kept climbing indefinitely, which symbolizes the current exile.

Speaking of exile . . . also in **verse 11** “. . . because the sun had set.” I read that ordinarily details of this sort aren't noted in the narrative. It could just as well have been written as “when he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night”, without mentioning that the sun had set. When **Ya'akov/Jacob** descends from the Land of Promise it is seen as a descent into spiritual darkness. Avraham's experience was similar in context concerning the Egyptian exile. “As the sun was setting, Avram fell into a deep sleep and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him.”

(**B'resheet/Genesis 15:12**)

Even in His day, the Master, Yeshua, referred to a coming darkness, when He warned His (tahl-m'deem) **talmidim/disciples** “Night is coming. We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work.” (**Yochanan/John 9:4**)

We know of other times when angels descended . . .

- To foretell Yeshua's birth to Zechariah (**Luke 1:11**)
- To Miriam and Joseph (**Mattityahu/Matthew 1:20 & Luke 1:26**)
- To announce Yeshua's birth to the shepherds (**Luke 2:13**)
- To warn Joseph about Herod (**Mattityahu/Matthew 2:13 & 19**)
- To feed Yeshua after the temptation in the wilderness (**Mark 1:13**)
- To open the tomb and announce the resurrection (**Mattityahu/Matthew 28:2 & Yochanan/John 20:12**)
- To witness the ascension (**Acts 1:10**)

And in the future angels will descend when “the Son of Man comes in His glory and all the angels with Him”. (**Mattityahu/Matthew 25:31**)

In **verses 16-19** **Ya'akov/Jacob** awakens, knowing that he has had a Divine Visitation from HaShem Himself and he grasps hold of the promises spoken to him. Therefore, he worships HaShem and calls the location by two names:

(Beht Ehl) **Bet El** (**בית אל**)/**House of G~d** and the (Sha-ahr Ha Shah-mah yeem) **Sha'ar HaShamayim** (**שער**

השמים)/**Gate of Heaven**. The experience had such an impact on him that when he arose, he set up a pillar, a monument, if you will. Then, it says, (he) poured oil on its top. I may be wrong, but I believe this is the first place/time in scripture that an anointing takes place. Could this be a reference to Yeshua, the “anointed one”? The more I'm in Torah, the more I see Yeshua in it, if I pay close attention. After the anointing, he called that place **Beth-El or Beit-El/House of G~d**. But scripture tells us that the town originally was called (looz) Luz.

Okay, hang with me here. I don't know why HaShem has me do these things but I think it's pretty interesting. The Hebrew letters which spell “**Luz**” are “**lamed**” (20), “**vav**” (6), and “**tzadi**” (70). As you can see, I have put the numerical equivalent beside each letter. When totaled, they equal 96. I went to my little book of Biblical numbers and found nothing for 96 (bummer!) but with the prodding of the **Ruach HaKodesh/Holy Spirit**, I checked on the number 48, half of 96 and this is what I found!!! Forty-eight is the number for “tabernacle” or “dwelling”, so if you doubled it, could it not be significant of “House of G~d”? Since HaShem gave it to me, I choose to think so!!!

In my studies, I learned in the ancient Near East, tall, stairway-tower temples called ziggurats served as “ladders” between men and their gods. Remember the Tower of Babel? Also, altars operated on the same principle. That's why altars were constructed at high places and included stairs of ascent. For that matter, when we see pictures of the altar of the Tabernacle and the Temple, there are stairs for ascent.

We should note here, that in addition to setting up the memorial stones, Ya'akov also made a vow of service to HaShem. It is the first recorded vow in Torah. One of the promises, which Ya'akov made to HaShem, was to give Him a tenth of his prosperity. This vow of a tenth, as well as the promise of a tenth that Avraham made to Malchi-Tzedek, were both voluntary gifts. HaShem had not commanded them.

Verses 20~22 show us the impact, the Divine Visitation had. **Ya'akov/Jacob** says “If G~d will be with me . . .” Some render this as doubt on **Ya'akov/Jacob's** part that G~d will do what He says He will do. I believe the word “since” would be a better translation. **Ya'akov/Jacob** is saying, I believe, “since HaShem is going to do all of this for me . . . , the least I can do is give back to You a tithe of whatever You will give me.” That's Batyah's rendering of those verses. As an additional side note: Rabbi Moshe Feinstein stated that a Jew should tithe not only his possessions, but also his time, by contributing time to worthy causes.

See, I told you I had a hard time getting out of just the first part of this Parashah!!!

CHAPTER 29

Is it a coincidence that **Ya'akov/Jacob** finds his “bride-to-be” at the well, much like Eliezer did for **Ya'akov/Jacob's** father **Yitz'chak/Isaac**? Later on we will learn that **Moshe/Moses** meets his wife-to-be, Zipporah at a well, also.

An interesting observance concerning this particular well had to do with the large stone or boulder that had been placed over the mouth of the well. Speculations regarding the covering of the well ranged from protecting someone from possibly falling into the well and drowning to protecting the well from intruders who might try to poison the water or sabotage it in some way. Anyway, in **verses 1-3**, when **Ya'akov/Jacob** approached the well, the shepherds there were waiting for the other herdsmen to arrive because it took the strength of **ALL** of them to remove the covering stone in order to draw water for their livestock. While **Ya'akov/Jacob** was still talking to the other shepherds, he sees **Raquel/Rachel** leading her father's flock to the well from a distance and apparently, it was love at first sight. Although **Ya'akov/Jacob** was tired from his long trip, it is told that he was able to remove the stone by himself. (**verse 10**) I believe this is a great illustration for **Yesha'yahu/Isaiah 40:31**; “those who trust in the L~rd shall renew their strength . . .”

Before we move on, I want to point out that it was **AFTER** he saw **Raquel/Rachel** that he rolled the stone away. I made an observation here; physically, Ya'akov was one “buff” Hebrew! Sometimes men (and women too, for that matter) will show their prowess to make an impression on someone they might be interested in. Anyway, if all of that was not enough, Ya'akov decided to impress her with his admiration of her and violated an unspoken Middle Eastern law – he kissed her upon their first meeting (**verse 12**). Technically, Raquel was a relative (cousin) of Ya'akov, but this is the only instance in the Tanakh where a man kissed a woman who was neither his mother nor his wife (yet!).

The first encounter **Ya'akov/Jacob** has with **Lavan/Laban** is an interesting one. **Verse 13** says “He (Lavan) ran toward him, embraced him . . .” I have a friend who is big on the “Law of First Mention” and I think we have another one here.

Seeing that Ya'akov is empty handed, Lavan thought Ya'akov might have money hidden on his person. As Lavan is greeting Ya'akov with an embrace he is "frisking" him to see or feel if his clothing might be laden with wealth and precious gifts. Lavan, being Lavan, thought surely, if a servant of Yitz'chak, Eliezer, came with 10 camels, loaded with precious gifts then Yitz'chak's heir must be extremely wealthy. (B'reshet/Genesis 24:10)

Probably much to Lavan's chagrin Ya'akov arrived with only the clothes on his back. As I understand the latter part of **verse 14**, Ya'akov worked for his room and board for an entire month before Lavan suggested some kind of payment arrangement.

Then we all know the story about **Ya'akov/Jacob** serving 7 years for **Raquel/Rachel's** hand in marriage and gets duped. There are a lot of rabbit trails to run down on this one. Apparently, Raquel and Leah must have resembled each other greatly, not to mention the fact that at the wedding the woman wears a veil over her face. And, I guess their voices must have been similar as well.

Verse 17 states that "Leah's eyes were tender". Some say the reason was that she wept in constant prayer that she wouldn't have to marry Esau. Since **Lavan/Laban** and **Rivkah/Rebecca** were brother and sister and each of them had two children; Laban had two girls and Rivkah had two boys, it was thought that perhaps Esau and Leah would marry as well as **Ya'akov/Jacob** and **Raquel/Rachel**.

Anyway, Raquel, feeling sorry for her "older" sister and not wanting to marry before her and cause her embarrassment, allowed Leah to take her place. Somehow, dad (Lavan) must have been in the midst of all this for it to come down the way it did.

I find it incredibly interesting that **Ya'akov/Jacob** didn't know that something was up until the next morning. Come on folks, he has been around both Leah and Raquel for seven years and he doesn't know the difference between them until the next morning? Give me a break!!! Maybe it was the wine at the wedding feast!!!! (**Verse 25**)

For those of us who have been told or led to believe that Ya'akov had worked seven years and wound up with Leah and then worked another seven years BEFORE he married Raquel, that is not so!!! ONE week later he takes Raquel as his bride but get this . . . he's still "sleeping" with Leah. It's hard for my "westernized mind" to get beyond a monogamous society. Never the less, all of this would not have succeeded if G~d had not allowed it. Leah was his primary wife because she had as many sons as the other three "wives" combined. Remember, the "nurses" of the two Matriarchs also bore him children. (**Verses 26-30**)

Because Leah was the unloved one, HaShem graciously caused her to become fertile while Raquel remained barren.

Leah's first born was **Re'uven/Reuben** (**רובן**) which means **see a son!** According to scripture, she becomes pregnant shortly thereafter with (**שמעון**) **Shim'on/Simeon** which means **hearing** and is taken from the Hebrew root word **shama** (**שמע**) and refers to HaShem hearing her heart's cry to give Ya'akov children. Leah conceived two more times before she stopped having children and their names were **Levi**, (**לוי**) which means **joining** according to most commentary, however, literally, **Levi** means **my heart**. and **Y'hudah/Judah**, (**יהודה**) means **praise/yadah** (**ידה**) in Hebrew (**Verses 31-35**). This name contains the sacred name for HaShem. It is also the name from which the word Jew is derived. Leah offered praise to HaShem for giving her a fourth son, thinking that this would surely win her husband's devotion.

CHAPTER 30

Verses 1 & 2 certainly indicate that the "honeymoon is over" and there is "trouble in paradise". Raquel lashes out at Ya'akov, "Give me children – otherwise I am dead" and Ya'akov flares back that he is not G~d and didn't make her womb barren. "Besides, it's not my fault, I'm not the barren one, obviously, I'm the one who can sire children; it's you, your womb!" Can't you just hear this angry diatribe? So Raquel does the "Sarai" thing and gives her maidservant, **Bilhah** which means **timid**, to her husband, Ya'akov, to have children for her. Raquel named Bilhah's first son, (Dahn)

Dan (**דן**), meaning **He judged**, **din** (**דין**) in Hebrew. Her second son was named (Nahf-tah-lee) **Naftali** (**נפתלי**) /**my wrestling** (**verses 5-8**), both of which had to do with jealousy between Leah and Raquel.

The sibling rivalry continues when Le'ah gives her maidservant, Zil'pah to Ya'akov. **Zil'pah** comes from a root word meaning **to trickle as myrrh or fragrant dropping**. Zil'pah bore two sons; the first one was (Gahd) **Gad** (גַּד), meaning **good fortune** and the second, (Ah-shehr) **Asher** (אֲשֵׁר), which means **happy**. (Verses 9-13)

Leah's first born, **Re'uven/Reuben**, went into the field and brought (due-dah-yeem) dudaim to his mother. There are several stories of interest here. All of them relate to **Re'uven's/Reuben's** desire to see others happy and his unselfish nature.

Verse 14 begins the story of the "mandrakes". All of the translations I looked at use this word except the Chumash and TaNaKH. Loving the (Eve-reet) **Ivrit/Hebrew** language so much, I really like the word used here, which is (due-da-yeem) **dudaim** and has been translated as **jasmine, violets, mandrakes** and **baskets of figs**.

Raquel wants some of the dudaim and long story short "sells" her night with Jacob to Leah for the dudaim (**verses 14-21**). Further research revealed that the dudaim was actually the bowl or basket-like structure in which the mandrakes were carried. According to Webster's Biblical Dictionary, the mandrake was a narcotic plant, resembling rhubarb, bearing a yellow, aromatic fruit and was used as an aphrodisiac.

So Jacob stays with Leah that night and she gets pregnant AGAIN! This time Leah has a son **Yissakhar/Issachar** (יִשָּׂכָר), which means **hire** or **reward**, taken from the Hebrew word **sacar** (שָׂכַר). Then, as if to add insult to injury, Leah has another son, **Z'vulun/Zebulun** (זְבוּלוֹן), which means **living together**, and is taken from the Hebrew word **zaval** (זָבַל) meaning **to dwell**. Leah had hopes that Jacob's heart would now be turned toward her.

Afterwards, Leah had one more child, this time a daughter, (Dee-nah) **Dinah** (דִּינָה) which means **controversy over rights** as well as **judgment**.

Poor Raquel, can you imagine her frustration. Finally, in **verse 22**, "God remembered Rachel, heeded her prayer and made her fertile." Since this verse says that HaShem heeded HER prayer . . . could this mean that Ya'akov wasn't praying for her fertility? Maybe he was enjoying his popularity! Remember when Yitz'chak and Rivkah were praying, it was Yitz'chak's prayers which were heard. Some translations say that HaShem "opened her womb". The Hebrew word for **opened** is (pah-tahk) **patach** (פָּתַח) and can also be read as **unlocked**. Based on this reading, the Sages believe that HaShem holds three keys: the key of rain, the key of the womb and the key of resurrection. Anyway, Raquel conceives and gives birth to **Yosef/Joseph**, (יוֹסֵף) which means **may he add** and is taken from the Hebrew word (yah-sahf) **yasaph** (יָסַף) because she desired yet another child.

Ya'akov has had his fill of Lavan and wants to leave to go back to **Eretz Isra'el/Land of Israel**. In **verses 26-34** they reach an agreement with regard to the sheep and goats. Ya'akov says he will take the animals that are speckled, spotted or brown and any born afterwards. If there were any found in his possession that was not speckled, spotted or brown, they would be considered as stolen from Lavan. Lavan was more than pleased with this proposition because these were very few and far between.

According to **verse 37**, Ya'akov tried some kind of genetic trick with stripping rods of their bark and positioning them at the watering troughs in front of the female animals during their mating time. However, I believe that HaShem created a few miracles so Ya'akov would profit greatly from the deal.

CHAPTER 31

As we read in **verse 1**, **Lavan's/Laban's** family became jealous of **Ya'akov/Jacob's** success; even Lavan, when he saw that Ya'akov had become rich, treated him much differently.

Verse 3 HaShem tells **Ya'akov/Jacob** to get himself home and that He will be with him. If Ya'akov chooses to stay in this foreign land, HaShem says His Presence will depart from Ya'akov.

Somewhere in the midst of all that has happened, I believe “the girls” get their eyes opened to the evilness of their own father. It becomes quite apparent that he has “sold” his own daughters as if they were slave girls. Furthermore, they realized that Lavan had “consumed everything he received in exchange for us.” (verse 15) They recognize that HaShem has blessed them through Ya’akov because of his faithfulness and they are just as ready to “git ‘n’ split” as he is. So Ya’akov instructs them to get everyone ready. In doing so, verse 19 says that Rachel stole the (teh-rah-feem) **teraphim/household idols** to keep her father from idol worship. According to the Sages, the Torah records this episode because her intentions were noble.

According to verse 20, Ya’akov outwitted Lavan, who had gone to shear his sheep, and he and his family leave with everything he had, cross the (Euphrates) River and set out for the hill-country of Gil-ad. Only after they had been gone for three days did Lavan learn of their departure!

After pursuing Ya’akov for seven day, Lavan finally caught up with him at Mount Gilead. The confrontation between the two of them takes place in verses 25-43. As Lavan begins to rant and rave about Ya’akov’s departure with all that belonged to him, Ya’akov maintains his “kewl” but finally loses it when Lavan is unable to find any hidden idols in Ya’akov’s camp. Not knowing that his beloved Raquel had taken the idols and was hiding them beneath her, Ya’akov suspects that Lavan’s charge was a rouse to enable him to make the search. That angered Ya’akov so for the next five verses (38-42) he defends himself and rightly so, I might add.

Lavan proposes a treaty beginning in verse 44. This agreement included two parts:

1. That Ya’akov would not mistreat Lavan’s daughters (verses 48-50) as if the last 20 years had not already proven that he was a model husband and father.
2. That neither party would pass this designated landmark with hostile intentions (verses 51-53)

Ya’akov agrees, they gather stones, make a mound and have a meal as part of the ceremony of the covenant. Ya’akov called that place (Gahl Ehd) **Gal-Ed/the pile of witness**, which was Hebrew because he refused to abandon the (Lah-shone Ko-dehsh) **Lashon Kodesh/sacred tongue**. Apparently there were two structures because one is referred to as “mound” or “pile” and the other as “monument” or a “standing stone” (verses 51-52); both were to be a witness. The monument must have been a much larger structure as it is referred to as (Ha Mits-pah) **HaMitzpah** which is Hebrew for **the watchtower**.

I remember the Mitzpah as a departing prayer in a couple of main line denominational churches I attended as a child. I can remember reciting, “May the L~rd watch between me and thee while we are absent one from the other.” I don’t recall knowing it from this event; perhaps the adults did. I don’t know that I knew it was even in the Bible. It was just a prayer we recited before leaving the service.

CHAPTER 32

Lavan arises early the next morning, bestowed a blessing on and kissed his daughters and grandchildren. (Only 1 translation out of 10 translated this correctly. The remainder say that he kissed his sons and daughters. Tradition indicates that even grandchildren were referred to as sons and daughters.) Ya’akov goes his way and encounters Angels of G~d. The Sages tell us that they were angels who minister in **Eretz Yisra’el/Land of Israel**. They came to accompany Ya’akov to the Holy Land, replacing the angels that had been with him outside the Land. Ya’akov named that place (mahk-ah-nah-yeem) **Machanayim/two camps**; indicating that there were two camps of angels:

- Those who ministered outside the Holy Land who had accompanied him and . . .
- Those of the Holy Land who now came to meet him.

VaYetze ~ וַיֵּצֵא ~ And he went out
Haftarah: Hoshea/Hosea 11:7~14:10

Our parashah tells us that “Ya’akov went out from Be’er-Sheva and traveled toward Haran.” (B’resheet/Genesis 28:10); the haftarah says that Ya’akov fled to the land of Aram (Hoshea/Hosea 12:12 or 13 depending on your translation). This is where the connection between the parashah and the haftarah is made.

The Stone Edition of the Artscroll Chumash tells us that **Hoshea/Hosea** was one of the greatest prophets and was a contemporary of **Yasha’yahu/Isaiah**. The biblical prophets wrote down exactly what the **Ruach HaKodesh/Holy Spirit** inspired them to write and Hoshea was no exception. He spoke to the Northern Kingdom of Israel, primarily, concerning

their idolatry and their unfaithfulness to HaShem. Because of their unfaithfulness, HaShem promised that He must judge them, but in the end, we see that the faithful and constant love HaShem has for His people would prevail and that He would win them back and restore the relationship. This is most vividly demonstrated in the words of 11:8, “. . . How can I give you up, or surrender you, Isra’el? . . . My heart recoils at the idea as compassion warms within me.”

Hoshea encourages (B’nay Isra’el) **B’nei Isra’el/Children of Israel** to return to their G~d, make **t’shuvah**, which is the Hebrew word for **return** and means a 180 degree turn around back towards the Truth. Having a contrite heart was what moved HaShem to forgiveness.

VaYetze ~ וַיֵּצֵא ~ And he went out
B’rit Hadashah: Yochanan/John 1:43-51

Right away, in **verse 51**, we see the parallel to our Torah Portion, when Yeshua refers to the ladder of Ya’akov’s dream (**B’resheet/Genesis 28:12**). Yeshua is our ladder, our connection between heaven and earth. Truly, this is a picture of our Messiah Yeshua as he told (Nahk-deh-moan) **Nakdimon/Nicodemus**, “No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man.” (**Yochanan/John 3:13**) Again, in **Yochanan/John 6:38**, Yeshua says “For I have come down from Heaven.” And again in **Yochanan/John 20:17** he says “I ascend to My Father and your Father and My G~d and your G~d.”

Another B’rit Hadashah passage that Brother Lynn suggested is **Kefa Aleph/1st Peter 3:8-12**. The Complete Jewish Bible rendering of this passage follows:

“Finally, all of you, be one in mind and feeling; love as brothers; and be compassionate and humble-minded, not repaying evil with evil or insult with insult, but, on the contrary, with blessing. For it is to this that you have been called, so that you may receive a blessing. For **“Whoever wants to love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit, turn from evil and do good, seek peace and chase after it. For Adonai keeps His eyes on the righteous and His ears are open to their prayers’ but the face of Adonai is against those who do evil things.”** (Psalm 34:13-17[12-16])

Based on these words, it appears to me that Ya’akov falls into this category of keeping his tongue from evil and it is why HaShem blessed him in all his ways. May we strive to uphold the words in Psalm 34.

The corresponding Psalm for this Torah portion is: Psalm 3