

The Torah Sparks

SHABBOS COMPANION

PARSHAH OVERVIEW

Yaakov prepares to confront his wicked brother, Eisav. Yaakov fights with the angel of Eisav, who ends up injuring Yaakov. Yaakov positions his family and sends gifts, and then confronts Eisav. Dina, the daughter of Yaakov is abducted by Sh'chem. Shimon and Levi take revenge and kill Chamor, Shechem, etc. Hashem tells Yaakov to travel to Beis Ail and his name is changed to Yisroel. The last tribe, Binyamin, is born. Rachel passes away. Yitzchak passes away.

QUICK VORT

The Torah tells us that Yaakov Avinu sojourned in the house of Lavan - עם לבן גרתי. Rashi says the word גרתי is the same gematria as תריג (613), thus teaching us that תריג מצות שמרתי - *I have kept all 613 mitzvos.*

The Chasam Sofer says something startling. Yaakov could not have kept all 613 mitzvos since we know during the time he was at the house of Lavan, he did not fulfill the mitzvah of Kibbud Av Va'em.

The Chasam Sofer says a massive chiddush. The word שמרתי (I have kept) here does not mean "kept," rather it means **"I have yearned for and anticipated,"** like the Lashon of שמר ואביו השדבר - *and his father anticipated the matter* (regarding what will become of the dreams of Yosef).

What kept Yaakov Avinu spiritually strong was his constant thirst, his t'shuka, his anticipation of the fulfillment of all 613 mitzvos! In life, we must strive to always stay thirsty for more and more spirituality.

THE JEWISH PEOPLE KEPT HOPE ALIVE AND HOPE KEPT THE JEWISH PEOPLE ALIVE.
(RABBI J. SACKS ZT'L)

PARSHAH STATS

153 Pesukim **1976** Words **7458** Letters **1** Mitzvos

GEMATRIA

Chazal tell us בראתי יצר הרע... - *I have created the Yetzer Hara, but בראתי תורה תבלין - I have created the Torah as its remedy.*

Perhaps, it's not a coincidence that the gematria of בראתי is the same as - תריג 613, a reference to Torah!

We must utilize the "weapon," that is the Torah, to overcome the Yetzer Hara.

But no, it's not a weapon of mass destruction; rather, the Torah is a weapon of mass construction. It is meant to build us to become better!

CHASSIDUS

Rashi tells us that Yaakov made himself into a bridge, עשה עצמו כגשר.

The Likkutei Halachos (in Laws of Tefillin) says that the attribute of Emes - truth - is a bridge.

Yaakov was a an exemplar of the attribute of truth, as we say: תתן אמת ליעקב.

In a world filled with so much שקר and falsehood, we need to take inspiration from our father, Yaakov Avinu, and become people who live by the truth.

Truth stands. Falsehood falls down.

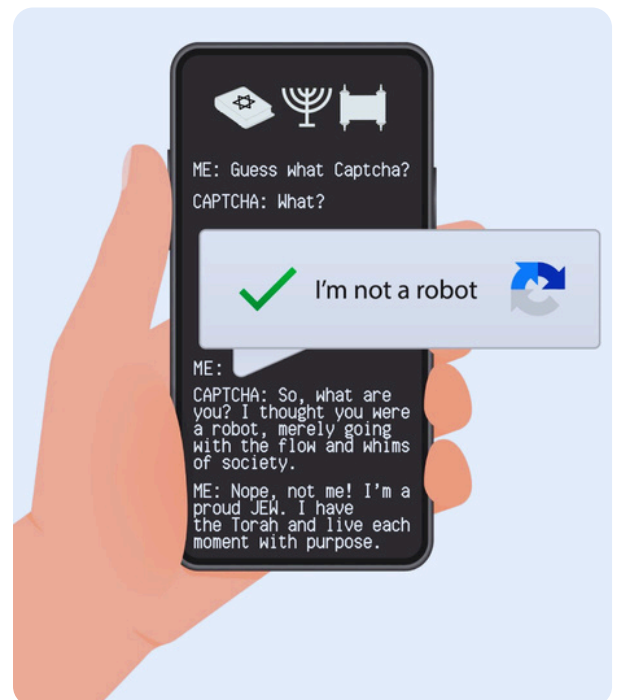
DID YOU KNOW?

When Rashi says that Yaakov made himself into a bridge, some commentaries learn this literally. He was like a bridge, passing things from one side to the other (see Midrash).

.....
The Chanukah oil came from the very jars that Yaakov Avinu went back for (seforim).

.....
We don't eat the Gid HaNasheh because that is the area where Yaakov Avinu was injured by the Angel of Eisav.

INSPOGRAPHIC CORNER



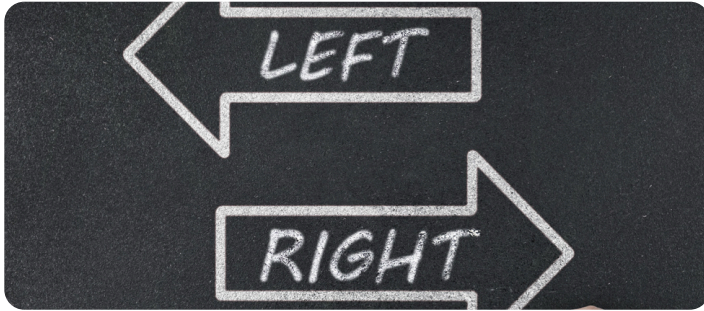
Dvar Torah for Parshas Vayishlach

From Right to Left



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Always Place Your Judaism First



Henry Kissinger, former U.S. Secretary of State, died last year, on November 29th, 2023, at the age of 100. A fascinating story that took place many years ago between Kissinger and Israeli Prime Minister, Golda Meir, has resurfaced.

In a meeting, Henry Kissinger told Golda Meir, *"You must remember that first I am an American, second I am Secretary of State, and third I am a Jew."*

Golda Meir replied, **"Henry, you forget that in Israel we read from right to left!"**

I heard from my Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Goldberger *shlit'a*, Rav of Congregation Tiferes Yisroel, a powerful vort from Rav Shlomo Twerski *zt"l*. In last week's Parshah we are told of the story with Yaakov and Lavan. Initially, when Yaakov comes to the house of Lavan, the blatant impurity and שקר of Lavan was so discernable and detestable in the eyes of Yaakov. But, in Chapter 31, Verse 2, the Torah says that Yaakov noticed the face of Lavan was not like it was *"yesterday and the day before."* It was precisely at *that* moment, **when Yaakov Avinu felt that Lavan did not look as bad as he used to**, that he decided it was time to leave.

Living in Galus, exile, is not an easy task or an easy ask, by any means.

Perhaps, the single greatest challenge of living in Galus is becoming too comfortable here. After a long time of dwelling in the diaspora, people naturally tend to feel relaxed and content with their current state of "distance" from Hashem and the Holy Land of Eretz Yisroel.

In this week's Parshah, Vayishlach, the Torah famously tells us that despite having lived among the wicked Lavan – עמ לבן גרתי, still, Yaakov Avinu was able to stay connected to his roots and not only survive, but thrive in his Avodas Hashem.

The Meforshim explain that Yaakov Avinu did not "live" with Lavan, he *sojourned* with Lavan.

This was his secret to thriving in Galus. He did not dwell in Galus, he merely was traveling and passing through Galus.

A Jew must know that first and foremost, before all else, he is a Jew.

Henry Kissinger made the grave mistake of embracing his Jewish identity last, as an after-the-fact, as secondary to everything else.

Not embracing our Jewish identity is a recipe for individual and national spiritual catastrophe.

Let us listen to the words of Golda Meir and train ourselves to read from right to left, to put our Judaism first.

Let us not get too comfortable while living in Galus.

Let us realize that we are just passing through, with the knowledge at the forefront of our minds that we are proud to be Jewish.

Everything else is commentary.

*Have a holy Shabbos!
R' Ori Strum*

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