



## Stand Back Bro!

By Yaakov Fuchs, 11th Grade

**Y**aakov Avinu tells his messengers at the beginning of this week's Parsha to tell Eisav, "I have sojourned with Lavan." Rashi comments, "Although I have sojourned with Lavan, I still observed all of the six thirteen Mitzvos and didn't learn from his evil ways." Adds Rav Meir Shapiro of Lublin: "This had a negative connotation. Although I stayed true to Hashem and observed the six thirteen Mitzvos, I didn't learn to perform my Mitzvos with as much excitement as Lavan performed his Aveiros with." One would think after seeing this that Yaakov clearly has had enough experience with Reshaim to be confident when confronting another one. But this is not the case. Yaakov davens to Hashem. "Hatzileini Na Miyad Achi, Miyad Eisav!" "Save me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Eisav!" This redundancy makes no sense. Don't we already know that Eisav is Yaakov's brother? And also, why is Yaakov Davening to be saved from a Rasha again? Doesn't he know how to confront this situation? The Kedushas Levi gives the following answer. The concept of Eisav as a whole represents everything bad (i.e the Yetzer Hara, Malach Hamaves, etc.). Eisav is always trying to take us away from Hashem. Yaakov is saying, "Hashem, please don't let me view my Yetzer Hara as my friend!" The Yetzer Hara sometimes tricks us by making us think we're doing a Mitzvah, when in reality we're doing an Aveirah. As members of Klal Yisrael, our natural

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## Friend=Foe

By Ezra Sicklick, 10th Grade

**I**n this week's parsha, Yaakov prepared to meet with his brother Eisav after many years of separation. Yaakov did three things in preparation for this meeting. He prepared a gift for Eisav, he prepared for potential war, and he davened to Hashem. In Yaakov's tefilah to Hashem, Yaakov said, "Hatzileini na mi'yad achi mi'yad Eisav," loosely translated as "Please save me from my brother from Eisav." The Beis Haleivi asks, why does the pasuk need to say from Eisav? Don't we know that Yaakov only had one brother? According to the Beis Haleivi, Eisav presents two distinct dangers to Yaakov. On one hand, Eisav is a physical danger to Yaakov because Eisav may want to kill him. (As we know, Yaakov left Yitzchok's house on bad terms with Eisav). On the other hand, Eisav presents a spiritual danger to Yaakov because Eisav may rub off negatively on him. It is for this reason that Yaakov asked Hashem to save him from "achi" and then from Eisav. One danger is that he may act like the Eisav we know, a wild man who hates Yaakov; The second danger is that Eisav can act like a brother, in which a spiritual danger will replace a physical danger.

The Beis Halevi draws support for his position that there were two distinct dangers from the fact that an earlier

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**Torah Teasers***By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum, 9th Grade Rebbe***Parshas Vayishlach****Questions**

1. This parsha begins: "And Yaakov sent messengers" to Esav. Where does the Torah state: "And Yisrael sent messengers"?
2. In this parsha, what verse has 8 words in a row ending with the letters *yud-mem*?
3. What competitive sport is mentioned in this parsha?
4. Who is mentioned in the Torah as walking with a limp?
5. In this parsha, who has a name that is also the name of an animal? (5 answers)
6. In this parsha, who dies during childbirth? Where else in Tanach does a woman die during childbirth?

**Answers**

1. Numbers 21:21 states that "Yisrael sent messengers" - i.e. the Jews sent messengers to the Emorite king for permission to cross his land.
2. In Genesis 32:15, the gifts of Yaakov to Esav are enumerated, with 8 words in a row ending with the letters *yud-mem*.
3. Wrestling is mentioned in Genesis 32:25: "And a man wrestled with him [Yaakov]."
4. Yaakov walks with a limp after he is injured in the wrestling match (Genesis 32:32).
5. The following people have names of animals: Chamor (donkey) is the father of Shchem (Genesis 33:19). Devorah (bee) is the wet-nurse of Rivka (Genesis 35:8). Rachel (sheep) is one of the Matriarchs. Aya, which means "buzzard" (Genesis 36:24). Dishon, which means "elk" (Genesis 36:25).
6. Rachel dies when giving birth to Benjamin (Genesis 35:18). In Tanach, the wife of Pinchas ben Eli dies in childbirth (1-Shmuel 4:20).



1st aliyah- the parsha starts off by telling us that Yaakov was going home back to Yitzchak after leaving for 20 years because of Eisav. In order to appease Eisav, Yaakov sent ahead messengers with a message. The messengers returned to Yaakov with a report saying that Eisav is coming to "greet" Yaakov with 400 men on his side. Yaakov was worried and divided his family and belongings into 2 groups- one group to flee and one to be in war. He then davened to Hashem asking Him for his protection.

2nd aliyah- In attempt to soothe Eisav, Yaakov sent him a nice and warm gift, consisting of hundreds of heads of cows and sheep. But he did this in small amounts- one herd at a time. That night, Yaakov and his family crossed the river, but after they all crossed besides for him, he had an interesting encounter with Eisav's angel. They wrestled with each other until dawn and although the angel was not able to beat Yaakov, the angel broke the gid hanasheh (sciatic nerve) of Yaakov causing him to limp. When the angel wished to leave, Yaakov refused to let him go until he gave him a bracha. The angel gave Yaakov a bracha and informed him that his name would eventually be changed to Yisrael.

3rd aliyah- The torah tells us in this aliyah that we don't eat this gid hanasheh of other kosher animals because of this wrestling encounter in this previous aliyah. Eisav arrives on the scene and sees his brother and they both run towards each other and hugged and cried on each other.

4th aliyah- Yaakov's family approached Eisav and greeted him. At first Eisav didn't want to take Yaakov's gift that he sent in an earlier aliyah but at the end of the day, Eisav takes the gift. Eisav offers to accompany yaakov on his trip home but Yaakov declined the offer. Eisav returned to his home in Se'ir and Yaakov continues on his journey to the city of Sukkot. Eventually, we see Yaakov arrives at the outskirts of the city of Shechem,

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# 10-Minute Halacha Shiur

Given by Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz  
on yutorah.org

Transcribed by  
Chezky Rothman

## Listening to Secular Music

### I. The Power of Music

- 1) Piasezna Rebbe: There are people who sing a lot but their hearts are removed from Hashem.
- 2) Rav Emanuel Feldman in the book "Tradition": Music is like Simcha. If a bad person expresses Simcha, it is a sign of something bad. However, when a good person expresses Simcha, it is a sign of something good. The same thing applies by music, it is an expression of emotion that can be positive or negative.
- 3) Rav Yakov Hillel: When we listen to music, we connect to the intentions and emotions of the composer/singer.
- 4) Sefer Shmuel 1: When they searched for musicians for Shaul, they wanted people who has Hashem with him, and has positive attributes.

### II. Problems with the Music (Tune)

Q: Can you listen to the music of a certain composer who wrote Jewish music but did things that were not so appropriate?

- 1) Possible issue of "Shem Rishaim Yirkav" - The names of the wicked should rot.
  - a) Rav Moshe Kuntris Electric Siman 74/ Debritziner Rav: This is an issue of Shem Rishaim Yirkav, and it is even worse than a Sefer Torah written by a Min/Apikoreis where it should be burned, because if he started off as a kosher person and ends up a Min, you can use it.
  - b) Rav Moshe Igros Moshe Even Haezer Chelek 1 Siman 96: no problem of using this music. Only an issue of Shem Rishaim Yirka by matters of spirituality and music isn't something that is spiritual. Furthermore, someone who does inappropriate things, isn't an apikoros, if he wrote a Sefer Torah it would still be O.K. Certainly, anything written while he was good is no problem. However, a Baal Nefesh should be Machmir.
- 2) When a musician writes music he gives over a piece of his Neshama.
  - Likutei Moharan: It is difficult to serve Ha-

shem when you are listening to music written by a Rasha, but if you are listening to a good person it is good for you.

- Rav Shachter: This is the main concern of Secular music. Tapping into a non-pure neshoma

2 counterclaims:

1. Even people with bad Nishomas have moments of spirituality from a good place.
2. Even if it is from a bad Neshama, but when channeled through us, it can become positive.

Practical differences of what the issue of secular music is:

1. What if he is a Goy, not a Rasha?
2. What if the Music is written anonymously?
  - ⇒ If like approach #1, no issue of promoting his name, but if like approach #2, there is an issue of a bad Neshama.

### III. Problems with the Words

- 1) Avodah Zarah - Obviously shouldn't sing songs with Avodah Zara (Like a carol).
- 2) Nivel Peh (inappropriate topics): Shabbos 33a: Anyone who uses Nivel Peh will have bad decrees, bad tidings....
  - Kisubos: Even if someone has 70 years of good, if he says Nivel Peh, all that good turns to bad.
  - Shaar Hatzion Siman 560 Seif Kattan 25: It is forbidden even to sing it to a baby who doesn't understand the words.
- a) Rabeinu Yonah Shaarei Teshuva Shaar 3 Siman 229: A characteristic of the Jewish people is being modest. We shouldn't be talking about these types of things.
- b) Barteinura in Sanhedrin Perek 10 Mishna 1: People who read Seforim Chitzonim do not get Olam Habah. This includes people who read love songs/poems. Furthermore, another issue is that it is a waste of time, nothing positive is gained from it.
  - Yerushalmi in Sotah: After the Sanhedrin was disbanded, it was forbidden to sing in the party places because, we were afraid people will sing inappropriate lyrics.

# The Impact of Prayer

Aaron Nassir 10th Grade

In this week's parsha, Yaakov receives the news that, his wicked and vengeful brother, Esav is coming with 400 of his men to fight. Rashi points out that upon hearing the news, Yaakov has three choices before him as his plan of action: to appease Esav through gifts; to prepare for war with him; or to pray. Yaakov chose to utilize all three options, but the order in which he chose to implement them is worthwhile to point out, especially the point at which he chose to use prayer. Rashi notes that Yaakov chose to prepare for battle first by dividing his people, only then did he pray, and then he sent gifts.

It seems surprising that Yaakov, one of the Fathers of the Jewish People, would not immediately turn to God for help. Another familiar story where the Jewish People do turn to God first, is the at the splitting of the Sea. With the Egyptians behind them and the sea in front of them, what did the Jews do? They prayed. They asked God to help them. Hashem answered them saying that they should move forward, to walk into the deep ocean. The Midrash relates that Nachshon Ben Aminadav began to walk into the sea. He walked deeper and deeper, and right before the sea engulfed him, it dramatically split. In this we find an important insight into what prayer is all about. Hashem responds to us based on our choices. Belief in the power of prayer is also the belief in our responsibility to make the supreme effort. Prayers are meaningful and effective when preceded by serious action and intent. Hashem creates a situation where we are faced with a choice, because through that conflict and choice we have the ability to grow and realize our true potentials. Of course we need His help, but to sit around and pray for everything in life, without ever making our effort in all possible areas, is to misunderstand why the situation happened in the first place.

Prayer is also the confirmation of the Jewish concept of The Almighty as a personal God. Relating to Him should be a daily part of one's life, and not just reserved for a special occasion or a pressing situation. One doesn't have to be in shul, and it doesn't have to be in Hebrew. Prayer is talking to God, it can be in English, Chinese, Spanish, or whatever language one feels most comfortable as long as they are heartfelt words. Hashem understands and wants to hear our prayers. We should make sure to avoid the mistake of going to shul and saying hello to friends, neighbors and the rabbi, walking out, having forgotten to say hello to The Creator. Yet Hashem does not truly need our prayers. He doesn't need anything. He has no needs; He can only give, and although Hashem doesn't need our prayers, we do. Through prayer we recognize our Creator and come close to Him, and as we know there is no better feeling than that of being close to Hashem. When we pray, we recognize that Hashem gives us everything we have. Through our prayers we can ask for all that we aspire to be in life and for whatever we need. Nothing is too big, and nothing is too small. We are not bothering Hashem, and we are not using up His attention. We should also know that Hashem answers all of our prayers as well, sometimes the answer is yes, and sometimes it's no. When the answer is, "No", we should reflect upon ourselves and think about what Hashem is telling us and what there is to learn from this. We should fill our prayers with praise and thanks for all that Hashem is giving us, and ask for things for ourselves, and for others. But at the same time never forget the lesson of Yaakov. We must also make efforts in our own lives and know that G-d is there, protecting us, sustaining us, and watching over us. May we all merit to have our prayers answered and remember to take the first step in action to have them answered as well, Shabbat Shalom!

Adapted from torah.org



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# What was Accomplished by Changing Yaakov's name?

Menachem Neiman

10th Grade

What is accomplished by changing of Yaakov's name?

In this week's parsha, Yaakov's name gets changed to Yisrael after fighting with the "Angel of Esav". After fighting Yaakov refuses to leave until he gets a bracha from the Angel. Famously, the Angel responds by asking Yaakov what his name was.

Yaakov responds by saying his name, Yaakov to which the Angel responds by saying "no longer will it be said that your name is Jacob, rather Israel, for you have striven with the Divine and with man, and won out." The question is, what is accomplished by this name change?

Famously we know that the Angel changed the name to Yisrael, because Yisrael means struggle, and the name is to remember the fight that just transpired between Yaakov and the Angel. If we take this a step further, the name Yisrael could also mean a profound shift. The basis or reason for the name Yaakov is, when Yaakov and Esav were born, Yaakov came out holding onto Esav's heel. This might show Esav had superiority over Yaakov. Furthermore, in Parshat Toldot when Esav realized he got tricked by Yaakov, he cries out "vayakiveini," which means to trick. Do we want one of our Forefathers to be associated with trickery and dishonesty?

The name Yisrael portrays a shift in character. Instead of showing inferiority, Yisrael signifies equality with an angel, certainly on a higher level than man, and this angel also happened to be the Angel of Esav showing that Yisrael was on the same level as the higher form of Esav. The name Yisrael will also carry a level of respect. As mentioned above, Yisrael can mean struggle, so we can remember the fight that happened. Fighting an angel is an extremely noble act, and someone like this will be held in a high regard. Yaakov tricked Yitzchak into receiving the brachos, a dishonest and ignoble act. So, what is accomplished by this renaming is, a shift in the character as this seemingly inferior, cunning and deceiving name which is Yaakov, to this superior, noble and glorified Yisrael.

Adapted from [prospectheightsshul.org](http://prospectheightsshul.org)

*(Yaakov Fuchs- Continued from page 1)*

instinct is to do the right thing, to do good in the eyes of Hashem. The problem is that in every bad there's good, it's all from Hashem! Meaning, our problem is that when we see the good aspect in something bad, the good becomes the more important piece, turning bad into good. This is especially true in cases of Toeles with Lashon Hara. We may think we're telling someone something for their benefit, but in reality we're really just saying Lashon Hara. The key is to look deeper within our actions. Is what we're doing good, or is it completely good? Yaakov's Tefillah is that Hashem shouldn't let the Eisav (Yetzer Hara) inside of us become our brother, let him not come so close to us that I can't tell the difference between bad things that have elements of Hashem in them versus things that are complete and fully good. In life, we sojourn with Lavan all the time. He's our friend, our classmate, our teammate. He's going on a different path than us, and we go our separate ways. But the journey after Lavan is the Eisav that's ever present. Our mission is to know our Eisav, let's not let him become our brother.

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# Our Everyday Struggle

Dovi Flug  
10th Grade

In this week's sedra, the Torah relates an episode about Yaakov spending an entire night wrestling with a malach, whom Rashi identifies as the Saro Shel Eisav. R' Elchonon Wasserman, in Kovetz Maamarim, ponders: why did this malach choose to fight only with Yaakov Avinu? Why didn't he do combat with his predecessors, Avraham and Yitzchak?

Each of the Avos represented a different characteristic of Judaism. Avraham's was chesed, Yitzchak's was avodah, and Yaakov's was Torah. So the attack on Yaakov was, in fact, an attack on Torah. This then is the essence of R' Elchonon's real question: why did the Saro Shel Eisav feel it necessary to attack the Torah more than any of the other middos?

R' Elchonon prefaces his answer by describing the importance of the Torah and Torah study. He states, "[At times] Hakodosh Baruch Hu is prepared to tolerate [even] idolatry, immorality, and murder, but is never willing to condone bitul talmud Torah." He supports this teaching with a posuk "Why was the land destroyed?...because they abandoned My Torah" (Yirmiyahu 9:11-12). Chazal emphasizes this by explaining that had we only forsaken the Ribono Shel Olam but not His Torah, we would not have been exiled, since Torah would have led us back onto the right path.

Obviously, the above statements require some explanation. R' Elchonon creates the following analogy: A nation in war may lose a battle or two yet still recover and win the war as a whole; however, if its weaponry were to be wiped out by the enemy, it would immediately be consigned to lose the war. This parable can be applied to our everyday struggle with our Yetzer Hara. If we lose some battles to our Yetzer Hara – even major ones, such as idolatry, immorality, or murder – we can still bounce back and ultimately win the war. But, if the Yetzer Hara were to remove our ammunition – the Torah – all would be lost. In fact, the Gemara in Kiddushin (30b) says that the Ribono Shel Olam has attested to this fact Himself, stating "I have created the Yetzer Hara, and I have created Torah as the perfect remedy for it!"

The Minchas Elazar, in Shaar Yisoschor, makes mention of the minhag of Chassidim and Anshei Maaseh to specifically make a siyum during the 9 Days and eat a meat meal. This certainly wasn't because they wanted meat so badly, especially since these people were always so medakdek in keeping chumrahs. So what was the reason behind this minhag?

To answer, he quotes the Megaleh Amukos, who says that the months of Tammuz, Av, and Elul, which correspond to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov respectively, (in fact, the Gematriya of Avraham + Yitzchak = Tammuz + Av) were all given to Eisav. When Yaakov battled with the Saro Shel Eisav, they were fighting for control over Elul, which Yaakov managed to win back, something Avraham and Yitzchak were unable to do. Since each of the three Batei Mikdash corresponds to one of the Avos, the first to Avraham, the second to Yitzchak, and the third to Yaakov, Eisav was able to destroy Avraham's and Yitzchak's Batei Mikdash because they did not have power over him; whereas Yaakov, who won the battle with Eisav, will never have his (the 3rd) Bais Hamikdash destroyed. The reason for making siyumim during the 9 Days and having a fully-fledged celebration with meat is because being mesayaim a part of Torah weakens the Saro Shel Eisav, who doesn't want us to learn Torah.

The Torah also mentions a couple of specific details regarding this episode: that it took until just before sunrise and that the malach struck Yaakov in his thigh. R' Elchonon writes elsewhere that since the thigh supports the rest of the

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pasuk states, “Va’yira Yaakov m’od va’yetzter lo,” meaning that Yaakov was very afraid and Yaakov was distressed. In this pasuk, the Torah uses two separate words to describe Yaakov’s fear, indicating that there were two separate sources for Yaakov’s fear.

This Beis Halevi teaches us an important lesson. At different times, the Jewish people will be susceptible to the same two dangers that Yaakov faced. The Jews were physically persecuted countless times in history. In fact, we unfortunately continue to see anti-Semitic acts being committed nowadays; thus, we understand that we have to daven for protection from our open enemies. We must remember, though, that there is also a second danger, a spiritual danger, that can severely damage the Jewish people. This is the danger of assimilation, the danger presented when the outside world treats us like a brother. While this danger is sometimes not as easy to see, we have to remind ourselves to ask Hashem to protect us from this spiritual threat also.

(Dovi Flug- Continued from page 6)

body, it symbolizes the supporters of Torah study, which in turn supports Klal Yisrael. It is during galus that the willingness to support institutions is muted. Analogously speaking, sunrise is equivalent to bias haMoshiach, when support for Torah will be at its weakest. Therefore, we can conclude that when we see the diminishment of the support of Torah study, it is a sign that we are approaching the coming of Moshiach, bimheira viyameinu amen.

Adapted from a dvar torah given by Binyamin Davidson

(Aliyot Summary- Continued from page 2)

where he purchased a piece of land and made a mizbeach to offer תקרבות לHashem.

5th aliyah- In this aliyah, Yaakov's daughter Dinah went out into the city of Shechem, and Shechem, the prince of the city, took her, violated her and kept her as a prisoner. Chamor, the governor of the city, went over to Yaakov and told him that his son, Shechem, was in love with Dinah and wants to marry her. Yaakov agrees on condition that all men in the city get a bris milah. At the end of the day, they agree to have a bris milah. On the 3rd day following the bris milah of all the men, Dinah’s 2 brothers Levi and Shimon entered the city and killed all of the men, and liberated Dinah from Shechem. Yaakov was upset at this act and feared the counterattack from the Cananim. Nonetheless, Yaakov traveled on, and the “yiras shamayim” was upon the other cities and Baruch Hashem they didn't harm Yaakov and his family. Yaakov arrived in Canaan, in Beis Kel and Hashem appeared to him, gave him a bracha, and changed his name to Yisrael.

6th aliyah- Yaakov's family continued on his way to Chevron. When he was en route, Rachel, Yaakov's wife, passed away while giving birth to her 2nd son Binyamin. Yaakov buried her on the spot, the Derech Beit Lechem. They kept on traveling, and Yaakov's oldest son Reuven interfered with Yaakov's marital life. At last, Yaakov arrived in Chevron. Yitzchak had passed away and was buried in Mearas Hamachpela alongside with his wife and parents. After this incident, the torah lists the wives and descendants of Eisav, who left Canaan and settled in Se'ir.

7th aliyah- The parsha ends off with listing the princes of the original Se'ir nation, as well as the rulers of the land that descended from Eisav.



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## STORIES OF GREATNESS

TOLD OVER BY: DOVID BLANK

There is a story of a young entrepreneur who wanted to buy stocks to make some money. This man had a job working for his family business, but he wanted to create his own path and make his own decisions so he can become rich and famous. In order to do this, he had to leave his current job against his parents wishes. He said, "I think my path is right and my parents are wrong, I can do this independently". To get his dream started, he went to the best salespeople he could find, and with guidance, bought a share in the stock market called Apple. As time went on, the stock went up and he didn't sell until he became a millionaire. Instead of putting his riches away immediately, he decided to treat himself with some new clothes. On the way to the store, he met a man who told him that there is a new business idea that would turn his millions into billions. The young entrepreneur decided why not, and he put all his money into this man who seemed to be able to work miracles. He never saw this man again.

After realizing he was robbed, the man was sad and confused, wondering why this happened and what he could have done better. The man decided to go back to the stock market in an attempt to re-make his fortune. After being conned, he did his job without any risks, as this seemed to be the reason why he lost the money. Once he saw he was making money, he quickly sold the stock to get out with what he could. This method was not sufficient and he was not making much

money. After coming to the truth that he couldn't even finance his car, the young man decided he would admit to his parents that he was wrong, and hopefully be taken back into the family business.

We see a similar idea in this week's parsha of how doing an action without guidance can be detrimental. In order to prevent Esav from taking Dina as a wife, Yaakov hides her during their meeting. This, according to some mefarshim, gave Dina a certain mindset that she is better than other woman, and wouldn't have to comply with the laws of tzniut (modesty). As a result, she went out by herself to the town of Shechem - a dangerous place where she shouldn't have been alone. This is what led to her to being taken captive and attacked by Shechem. Consequently, her brothers, Shimon and Levi, acted impulsively and attacked and killed the entire city in order to avenge their beloved sister. After he found out what they did, Yaakov cursed them. This was because they did this act on account of their own judgment, and did not further inquire whether it was actually the correct thing to do.

We should all be zocheh to learn from this lesson, and always look to others for their perspective and advice on the situation.

Have a good Shabbos.

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