

Time Flies

By Jonah Loskove, Layout Editor, 11th Grade

In Parshas Vayetzi, Yaakov agrees that he will work for Lavan for 7 years to be able to marry Rachel. The Torah describes Yaakov's fulfillment of this arrangement as follows:

“And Yaakov worked for Rachel seven years, but they appeared to him like a few days because of his love for her.”

Seven years is a long time. The question can be asked: as much as Yaakov loved Rachel, is it really possible that seven years of work could only seem like a few days?

The commentators offer various interpretations of this verse. The Tur, in his commentary on the Torah, uses a fascinating analogy to help explain Yaakov's perspective, and why, to Yaakov, seven years was not too long or unreasonable.

The Tur compares Yaakov's deal with Lavan to a person who spends a considerable amount of money to buy a flawless jewel. An outsider may see the amount paid by the purchaser and be shocked by the amount. The purchaser, however, who believes that the value of the jewel is far greater than the purchase price, will not be bothered by the amount paid at all. In fact, the purchaser will view the transaction as being a great deal.

Similarly, Yaakov believed that Rachel was perfect and loved her dear-

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Surpassing Our Limits

By Chezky Rothman, 11th Grade

This week's parsha discusses the story of Yaakov and his journey to Charan. Chazal tell us that he spent 14 years learning in Yeshivas Shem v'Eveir. On his way back, the Torah says he slept "b'makom hahu" – in that place. Rashi says that this choice of words teaches us that he slept in that place, but not before that. Rav Chaim Shmulevitz asks the following question: How is it possible that Yaakov didn't sleep for 14 years? He answers that Yaakov Avinu attained a level at which he could strengthen himself to extend himself beyond his physical capabilities. For example, if someone is in a life threatening situation he would be able to muster enough strength to survive regardless of the difficulty.

Similarly, the Chafetz Chaim refers to the pasuk, "Sos anochi al imrasecha k'motzei shalal rav" – I rejoice on your Torah like finding a tremendous treasure. We see from this Pasuk that not only does one extend himself beyond physical capabilities when he is in physical danger, but it applies to wealth as well. For example, if someone is placed in a vault for 5 minutes, he will amass the strength to collect as many as he can.

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Torah Teasers

By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum, 9th Grade Rebbe

Parshas Vayetzei Questions

1. After Yaakov has a dream he takes a *neder*, a vow (Genesis 28:20). Where else in the Torah is an actual *neder* taken (not a *shvuah*)?
2. Which of the sons of Yaakov, whose birth is recorded in this parsha, is not named by a mother?
3. For which child born to Leah is there no reason given for the name?
4. In this parsha, Rachel steals the *terafim* (idols) from her father Lavan. Where else in Tanach does another woman handle *terafim*?
5. Aside from the Matriarchs, which two other women in Tanach are described as "barren" (*akara*)?
6. Aside from the seven years that Yaakov worked for Rachel and Leah, where else in this parsha is the number seven mentioned?

Answers

1. In Numbers 21:2, the Jews vow to consecrate all of the spoils of war.
2. In naming all the sons, the verse states "And she called." Only with Levi does it state "**he** called his name Levi," implying that he was not named by his mother (Genesis 29:34).
3. The Torah does not state any reason for the name of Leah's daughter, Dina (Genesis 30:21).
4. Michal placed *terafim* in the bed of David to help him escape from her father, Shaul (1-Shmuel 19:13).
5. The mother of Shimshon is called *akara*, a barren woman (Judges 13:2). Chana, the mother of Shmuel, refers to herself as *akara* (1-Shmuel 2:5).
6. After Yaakov and family run away, Lavan catches up with them after seven days (Genesis 31:23).

The Haftarah Corner

Written By Adam Zahler

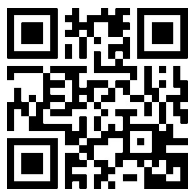
This week's haftarah is unique in that Sephardim and Ashkenazim read different portions for the Haftarah. Both of the readings come from Hosea. But the Sephardim begin the Haftarah from Chapter 11 (Hosea 11:7- 12:12), concluding the Haftarah in the middle of Chapter 12, which is the point the Ashkenazim start (Hosea 12:13-14:10).

At the beginning of the Sephardi reading, the Prophet starts off his message. One of the opening verses of the Haftarah states, "They will follow after Hashem, like a lion, he will roar, for he will roar (Hosea 11:10)." It is important to follow after Hashem with the same strength and vigor as a lion. It also connects to our parsha through Yehuda, who was born in this week's parsha from Leah (Bereishit 29:35). Later on, Yaakov gave Yehuda the blessing that his descendants will rule over the Jews just like a lion rules the animal kingdom (Bereishit 49:9). Hosea chastises the 10 tribes for their involvement in idolatry. This ultimately led to them being exiled. The respective ancestors of these 10 tribes were all born in this week's parsha.

At the beginning of the Ashkenazi reading, there is another connection to the Torah. In this week's parsha, Yaakov goes to Charan, where he meets his future wives. Lavan then makes him work for 14 years to be able to marry them. We see reference to this, as the verse states "Yaakov fled to the field of Aram and labor did Israel for a wife and for a wife he guarded (Hosea 12:13)."

Teshuva is a very vital part of Judaism. It is almost impossible to go through life without sinning. Teshuva is a way in which people can get better. Hosea gives the people hope, stating how they should pray to Hashem, asking for forgiveness from all transgressions (Hosea 14:3). Anyone can be forgiven. The Gemara in Eruvin, Daf 21, says that there is always hope, even for the evil. It is important not to get too down on oneself. As Rocky Balboa once said, "It ain't about how hard you hit. It's about how hard you get hit and keep

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10-Minute Halacha Shiur

Given by Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz
on yutorah.org

Transcribed by
Moshe Simon

Lost or Damaged Kesubos

The Situation

Unfortunately, there were some fires that destroyed many homes in Eretz Yisrael recently and many people had their Kesubos destroyed. A question remains in this case, whether a man and wife are still allowed to live under the same roof.

Why is it a problem?

There is a Gemara in Masechet Kesubos on Daf 56B that quotes the opinion of Rav Meir. There was a story where a woman lost her Kesubah. They asked the question to Rav Yosef and he told them that Rav Meir would hold you would need a new Kesubah. However, the Chachamim hold you can live up to two or three years without a Kesubah.

At the end of the day, we paskin like Rav Meir in that you need a new Kesubah in this case.

What is the psak nowadays?

Both Chief Rabbis of the State of Israel gave a joint psak that you can still live under the same roof, but you need to get a new Kesubah, per the accepted psak of Rav Meir, as soon as possible.

What is the Kula based on?

There are five kulas: The Rama himself relies on a kabalas kinyan in a shas hadchak. As long as the chosson does the kabalas kinyan (the accepting, or acquisition, of the Kesubah), we could rely on that and not the document itself. Rav Aharon Soloveitchik said that when you don't know where the Kesubah is, you can rely on this Rama in order to have a reasonable amount of time to search for it.

The Rabbanut relied on a different Kula in that they actually keep a copy of every Kesubah they draw up. Rav Zilberstein writes in his sefer "Kesubos Kihilchata," on page 309, that Rav Eliyahiv said you should never rely on the copy that the Rabbanut has

kept. If you are relying on that copy, then you are saying you have two different kosher Kesubos which is not allowed.

Rav Shternbuch agrees with this psak in his sefer, "Teshuvos Vehanhagos," Cheilek Aleph, siman 760. The Shulchan Orech in Choshen Mishpat, Siman 41, Sif aleph, writes that you should not keep two different kesubos unless you clearly write on the second that it is only a copy. However, Rav Zilberstien also quotes Rav Shlomo Zalman who held that in a shas hadchak, a desperate situation, you can rely on the second Kesubah of the Rabbanut.

The third, is of the Rama, in Siman 66, Sif gimel, who says that the whole reason you do not live with your wife without a Kesubah is because you might think it is so easy to just divorce her. Nowadays, since we are not allowed to divorce without the consent of the woman, this might not apply in a shas hadchak.

The fourth Kula is that there is a machlokes Rishonim about what you can not do without a Kesubah. If we hold that there is only an issur biah (like the Yesh Omrim in the Rama against the Mehaber) then the husband and wife can still live together. Rav Zilbestein adds that if there is an issur biah, then there is also a heter yichud. Rabbi Bleich suggests to people that if you do lose a Kesubah, you should write a check for whatever amount the Kesubah is worth, and in the memo line write "hineni mitchayiv bezeh lekesubahs ishti".

What if you don't have the funds to back it up? The check can still work as a shtar chov. The psak of Rav Zilberstein was that they should not have biah, but they can still live with each other.

YONAH LEBOWITZ
12TH GRADE

ON THE CLOCK

In the beginning of the parsha, Yaakov sets off on a journey from Be'er Sheva to Charan, during which he lies upon the ground and goes to sleep. Rashi comments over there that it was the first time in fourteen years that Yaakov had gone to sleep since he had been learning in the yeshiva of Shem v'Ever.

Fast forward to later in the parsha: Lavan is chasing after Yaakov and his family, and Yaakov angrily says to Lavan, "What do you want from me? I worked for you for twenty years, took care of all your animals, and did everything for you!" The Medrash over there tells us that Yaakov also did not sleep while he was working at Lavan. What is the connection between Yaakov not sleeping in the beginning of the parsha and then again not sleeping at the end of the parsha?

The answer to this question may be found in the Rambam, who tells us that if one is an employee, he must be scrupulous in logging working time so as not to get paid for any breaks. This means that if one is given a twenty minute break, he may not take more than the twenty minutes allowed. The Rambam continues and says that when Yaakov was working for Lavan, he did not take a single break; the same is true when Yaakov was learning — he also did not take a single break.

This might be the connection between the beginning and the end of the Parsha: Yaakov understood that when it was time to learn, it was time to learn, and when it was time to work, it was time to work. We see from here how great the work ethic of Yaakov was, that both when he was at Lavan and when he was learning, he did not take a single break or rest.

(Surpassing Our Limits—Continued from page 1)

Thus, we see the desire to gain Torah knowledge to be a driving force, where it is as if both your physical and material survival are at stake. Accordingly, Yaakov was able to surpass his physical limits to attain spiritual greatness.

(Time Flies—Continued from page 1)

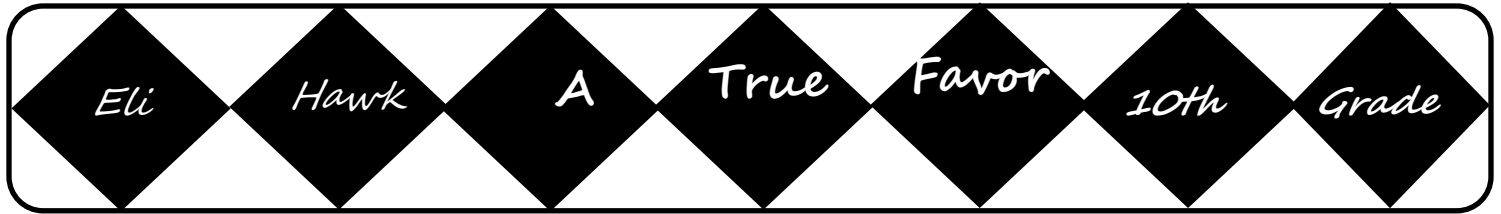
ly. To Yaakov, there was no amount of work that would have been too much to be able to marry Rachel. As a result, when Yaakov made the deal to work for "only" seven years, he considered it to be a great bargain, because he knew that Rachel was "worth" so much more. It is for this reason that the Torah states that Yaakov's work for Rachel seemed only like a few days.



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Growing up together, there was competition between Rachel and Leah, over which man each would marry. Years later, they clashed over whose tent Yaakov was to sleep in one night. The Torah describes the story of Reuven getting the flowers for his mother and then Rachel asking for the flowers, and Leah not giving them over, complaining about Yaakov's liking of Rachel more than herself.

Immediately after, Rachel's life changes forever: "*Va'yizkor Elokim es Rachel; va'yishma eileh'ha Elokim, va'yiftach es rachmah*" – "*And Hashem remembered Rachel, and Hashem listened to her tefillos. Rachel gives birth because of the kindness she did for Leah, by giving over the signs for her to marry Yaakov.*"

But years had passed since then – why remember Rachel's kindness only now?

R' Ezra Hartman explains that this episode contains an incredible principle about kindness. How could Leah so ironically accuse Rachel of taking her husband? Without the codes, Leah could not have married Yakov; Rachel was the sole reason that Leah was not discovered! So in fact, Leah had taken Rachel's husband! Such a reply would have been utterly devastating.

But Rachel did not do that.

R' Ezra Hartman explains that sometimes, people like to keep a record that they've done someone a favor, and now they're owed something. Genuine kindness is not something you keep track of. In fact, it is possible to dress up the favor so the recipient is not even aware. Rachel mentioned the signal in passing, something like, "You should know that Yaakov's favourite thing is X and Y." Leah was completely oblivious to what Rachel had done for her.

Rachel did not say a word about what had happened years earlier, and just talked about the flowers. By holding her tongue, and declining the perfect opportunity to silence Leah forever, her silence was rewarded. It is specifically at this juncture that Hashem remembers Rachel's incredible kindness.

It's one thing to do a good deed. It's another to do a good deed and not feel the need to call attention to it.

(Continued from page 2- Haftorah Corner)

moving forward." It is important to get up after we sin and say "I can and will be better." Sinning is almost needed in order to improve. We get better when we are able to analyze our faults. When everything's going right we usually fail to introspect. Hashem gave us this amazing gift of teshuva that allows us to become better individuals. Reuven was born in this week's parsha. He commits a great sin when he moves his father's bed. He had a lot of teshuva to do. That is what he was doing when Yosef was sold by the brothers. It is very tough to admit when we make mistakes and have faults, but through teshuva we can hopefully be zocheh for a full mechila from Hashem and become the best individuals we can be through the introspection that comes with teshuva.

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It's been a long time since I was at the Berkeley Chabad House. But if I close my eyes and concentrate, I can conjure up the smell of a delicious cholent simmering on the stove, and the memories of camaraderie and deep discussions which helped keep me on the path I chose, and continue to choose every day.

A SPECIAL KIND OF TORAH

MENACHEM GEWIRTZ 9TH GRADE

After Yaakov stole the blessings from Esav, he was told by his father to go to Padan Aram, to the house of Rivkah's brother, Lavan. Along the way, he stopped and lay down to go to sleep, for which the pasuk says, "vayishkav bamakom ha'hu." Rashi poses the following question: Why does the pasuk say "ha'hu" in this specific place? Rashi answers that the word "ha'hu" comes to teach us that Yaakov slept here for the first time since he began learning in the Yeshiva of Shem v'Ever for 14 years. Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetsky asks, if Yaakov was learning for the first 63 years of his life with Yitzchak and Avraham, then why did he find it necessary at this time to ignore his father's command and first go to learn in the Yeshiva of Shem V'Ever for 14 more years? What was he going to learn from this yeshiva that he had not learned already at home?

Rabbi Kaminetsky answers that Yaakov understood that the Torah he learned from Avraham and Yitzchak would not equip him to survive in an alien environment. While Avraham and Yitzchak built yeshivot and taught the masses, the Torah of Shem v'Ever had a new dimension. Shem lived through the iniquity of the Dor Ha'mabul, and Ever lived during the Dor Ha'flaga, who tried to build a tower to destroy Hashem, yet Shem v'Ever were not contaminated by their environment. Thus, when Yaakov was going to Lavan's house – a non-Hashem-friendly environment – he needed more than just his parent's Torah: he needed the Torah of Shem v'Ever to help him stay spiritually pure in Lavan's house, a house of idolatry and trickery.

Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetsky says that this can also explain the brothers' jealousy of Yosef, as well as two other Rashis found later in Sefer Bereishis. Rashi comments on the pasuk of "Ben zikunim hu," that Yaakov taught Yosef all that he learned in the Yeshiva of Shem v'Ever. Rabbi Kaminetsky explains that Yaakov specifically taught Yosef all the Torah of Shem v'Ever, as opposed to teaching it to the other brothers, because Yaakov saw through ruach ha'kodesh that Yosef would become a stranger by himself in a foreign land (Egypt). Therefore, while Yaakov taught Toras Avraham and Yitzchak to all of his sons, he added the that extra dimension of the Torah of Shem v'Ever to Yosef's curriculum. From the fact that Yaakov taught Yosef extra Torah, the brothers deduced that he was favoring him, and ostensibly rightfully so. In their grandfather and great-grandfather's houses, one son always got kicked out of the family: by Avraham, it was Ishmael, and by Yitzchak, it was Esav. Thus, the brothers felt that in their family, they would be the ones kicked out and that Yosef would remain as Yaakov's primary descendant; so they took him and shipped him off to Egypt.

This could also explain why Yehuda was sent ahead by Yaakov to Egypt and why there was no need for the brothers to learn the Torah of Shem v'Ever, even though they too were going to be leaving Eretz Yisrael. Why? Because they weren't each going to this foreign land on their own — they went together. In fact, Rashi quotes the Medrash Agadah that Yehuda was sent ahead to establish a Yeshiva. By founding a Yeshiva in Mitzrayim, Yaakov ensured that his children, who were coming as a group, would have an environment where the Torah of Avraham and Yitzchak could thrive.

As told by Rabbi Isaac Bernstein

(Stories of Greatness—Continued from page 7)

Someone asked me recently how I managed to "stay frum"—to keep up religious observance—after I'd come back from living in the bubble of a Jewish university in Israel where it wasn't hard to keep Shabbat. My answer: staying connected to a Jewish community. It was those connections which helped me stick to my commitments and deepen my understanding and love of Jewish life and observance.

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term paper due on Sunday—a regular school day in Israel.

So that week I stayed up late Thursday night working on my paper, and I spent hours on Friday finishing it. When the sun set Friday afternoon, I put down my pen and lit Shabbat candles.

My non-observant friends were busy working on their papers. I relaxed and enjoyed Shabbat. It was a freedom I had never experienced. I was free from schoolwork, and I didn't have to feel guilty! I was free from the telephone, free from worrying about weekday concerns. I never picked up a pen on Shabbat after that.

But the trouble started when I got back home. My parents, who kept a kosher-style home and went religiously to shul on Friday nights, felt I had rejected their values.

How could I not drive with them to shul?! How could I? Actually, one time I did walk to shul and back, as they drove slowly beside me. It was tricky for me, trying to bend but not break.

Then, after the summer, I returned to Berkeley. I had a non-Jewish roommate, who I'd made up to share an apartment with before I became observant. I didn't think that she would mind my religious observance so much, since I wasn't rejecting her values. But I only told her after we'd moved into the apartment that I

wouldn't be turning on or off lights on Shabbat, and would need the bathroom light left on. And by the way, I kept strictly kosher now, and that would mean some adjustments in our kitchen. Nelly had wrangled herself a job at the local donut shop, and she'd be working all day Saturday, so the Shabbat thing didn't seem to faze her too much.

But I wondered how I would hold fast to the commitments I made to keep Shabbat. It would be so hard away from that community of fun and welcoming kids I'd met in Israel. Indeed, a few of my friends had become Sabbath observers during that year in Israel, and over time they slid back to their secular lifestyle.

But thankfully, I found my way to the Berkeley Chabad House, not far from my apartment, right in the middle of "fraternity row." There, I could again be swept up in the Shabbat spirit, with services, lively singing and delicious food. But at Chabad House it wasn't potluck. Every week the cook prepared delicious homemade meals—for free! And everyone was invited. I didn't just hang on to my religious observance. My anchor of Chabad, and the friends I made there (several of whom I'm still friends with today, decades later), buoyed me. I grew in my Jewish observance and knowledge, and I felt, again, part of a special, accepting community.

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STORIES OF GREATNESS

TOLD OVER BY: NETANEL YOMTOV

"You're going to sit home ALONE instead of driving to shul to be with other Jews at Shabbat services?!" my parents demanded.

I was twenty years old, and had come home from a year in Israel as a different person—one who was now "shomer Shabbat," Sabbath observant. That meant not turning on or off lights, not shopping, and not even driving with my parents to services on Shabbat.

Over the previous year, while I was studying at Hebrew University, I had decided to re-claim the observance of past generations. I had committed to not desecrate the Sabbath. This included not doing any of the thirty-nine prohibited melachot, categories of creative activities derived from those used to build the Tabernacle.

In fact, it was the restrictions observed on Shabbat which drew me to observance.

I was a study-aholic. Before I went to Israel, I attended UC Berkeley. I used to head for the university library at 10:00 a.m. Saturday mornings, right after breakfast. I would sit and study until 5:00 p.m. My mother would say, "Jolie, if you're going to spend a long time studying, take out ten minutes every hour. It will make your studying more effective." I responded, "But if I did that, I'd lose more than an hour of study time!"

So the idea of having a day off when I could put down my pen and leave the library behind was liberating for me beyond belief.

Before I went to Israel, I'd heard that

all Orthodox girls were cliquey and snobby. I thought it would be best to keep away from them, if I did meet any. But then on a school trip in the Sinai desert, I heard someone say, with a strong New York accent, "I need a milkshake! Where's the nearest McDonald's?!" The girl behind the voice, I was to learn, was an Orthodox girl from Manhattan, who was not only very funny, but also friendly, kind, and accepting. She didn't meet that stereotype at all—and neither did the other Orthodox girls I met.

The non-observant kids spent Friday nights at the disco on campus, or studying in their rooms. Not the religious kids. They got together for potluck meals for Friday night dinner and Saturday afternoon lunch. One brought the grape juice for Kiddush, another brought the challahs. Some made a salad, another two brought grilled chickens from the market on campus. Usually there was fruit salad and cake for dessert, and different side dishes—a feast!

They sang Shabbat songs, and exchanged stories and jokes. Best of all, they accepted me into their group, even though I was not Sabbath observant.

After a few months of sharing in the Shabbat fun, I thought I would just try keeping Shabbat in the traditional way. I didn't really want go all out—I needed to listen to my music, of course. I needed to be able to write letters home. And, of course, I needed to write papers for school. Indeed, I had a

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