

# THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



PARSHAT VAYISHLACH

London's Leading Young Professionals Platform and Jewish Communal Centre



**RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL**  
*TAL Founder & Director*

## THOSE IMPORTANT DOTS IN YOUR LIFE!

In the English language, we have italics, which are slanted letters – *like these* to emphasise or contrast. The italics draw attention to some particular part of a text. Sometimes, a word is placed in **bold face** or ensconced in quotation marks to achieve the same end. The Torah, on the other hand, seldom has extraneous enhancements of its words. Instead, in rare occasions, it leaves out letters, hinting to the hidden meaning.

On even rarer occasions, the Torah adds symbols, tiny ones, dots placed above the word. They tell us to look deeper, to search beyond the words. And this week, in the narrative detailing the encounter between Yaakov and his brother Eisav, the Torah uses those dots.

They appear during an emotional encounter, Yaakov lifting his eyes and seeing "Eisav was coming, and with him were four hundred men. Fear and trepidation seized him as he positioned the women and children in safety. Then he himself went on ahead of them and bowed earthward seven times until he reached his brother" (Bereishit 33:2). The Torah tells us that Yaakov's fears seemed to be tenuous. "Eisav ran toward him, embraced him, fell upon his neck, and he kissed him; then they wept." The word for "and he kissed him," Vayishakeihu, is written in the Torah with a dot above each letter. It means that there is something going on, in this case above the kiss. The Midrash comments:

Said Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar, "Whenever there is more text than dots, one expounds on the text. Whenever there are more dots

than text, one expounds on the dots. But here, there is an equal number of letters and dots. From this we learn that at that moment Eisav's mercy was aroused, and he kissed Yaakov with all his heart." Rabbi Yannai replied to him, "If that's the case, then why are there dots at all? Rather, Eisav came, not to kiss Yaakov, but to bite him. Miraculously, Yaakov's neck turned to marble, and the wicked one blunted his teeth on it. Indeed, that is the meaning of "they wept" - Yaakov cried because of his neck; Eisav because of his teeth." (Bereishit Rabbah 78:9)

Looking at this midrash its curious that the midrash indicates that Yaakov's neck turned to marble. What's the significance of a hard stone such as marble as opposed to iron or brass, both of which would have achieved the same purpose of hardening? Let us look at the content of the midrash more closely. There appears to be a dispute as to the sincerity of Eisav's love when he met his brother.

The Shem Mishmuel explains that there is actually no dispute; rather, Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar and Rabbi Yannai are each discussing a different aspect of the meeting and in fact are not in dispute. Before he met his brother, Yaakov exclaimed:

Save me, please, from the hand of my brother, from Eisav... (Bereishit 32:12)

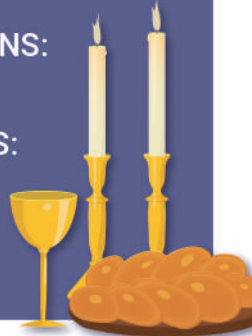
The commentators ask why Yaakov had to use both expressions, "from my brother", and "from Eisav"?

They explain that Yaakov was more frightened of Eisav as a brother and friend than as Eisav. For Yaakov was concerned lest Eisav become close to him and, in so doing, defile him with his vile life philosophy and twisted ways. Eisav as a "friend" would aim to influence Yaakov and take him away from Hashem in a "friendly" manner. Yaakov was aware of this and thus primarily feared his brother and only then Eisav.

15TH KISLEV 5783

SHABBAT BEGINS:  
15:37pm

SHABBAT ENDS:  
16:46pm



**DVAR TORAH**  
Those Important Dots...  
By Rabbi Jonathan Tawil



**DVAR TORAH**  
Parsha Insights  
By Rabbi David Baadani



**DVAR TORAH**  
Transmitting Lifestyles  
By Rabbi Yehonatan Salem



**OUR CHAHAMIM**  
Rabbi Meir Baal Hanes



**HALACHOT**  
By Rabbi Eli Mansour



**KIDS ZONE**  
Quiz and Wordsearch



Shabbat  
Shalom

This newsletter contains Divrei Torah and may contain Sheimot - Please dispose of accordingly

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As Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar claimed, Eisav's mercy was aroused at the moment when he met Yaakov. This, however, is only relevant to the previously stated aim of Eisav to kill Yaakov. For whatever reason, when Eisav saw his brother, his mercy was aroused, and he decided not to kill him. But as for Eisav's inherent and unchangeable desire to contaminate and influence Yaakov, this, of course, had not altered. Indeed, the fact that Eisav's mercy had been aroused by the meeting actually made it more likely that he would pursue this secondary aim, for he now wished not to eliminate him, but instead to unite and influence Yaakov in his direction. Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar was referring only to the physical aspect of Eisav's attack, which was indeed called off when the brothers met. We have no reason to assume that Rabbi Yannai disputes this. On the other hand, Rabbi

Yannai, when discussing the vicious aims of Eisav, was referring only to the spiritual dimension of the meeting. Eisav's attack in this context remained as strong as ever. We have no reason to assume that Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar disputes this. Indeed, Rabbi Yannai's comment about the relationship between the dots and the lettering in the verse can be understood to mean that he appreciated that both the letters (the simple meaning) and the dots (a slightly different meaning) were valid. Eisav wanted both to make peace and attack, albeit at different levels.

We can now understand why the Midrash points to Yaakov's neck becoming marble.

Vessels made from stone (of which marble is an example) are not subject to the laws of Tumah and taharah (ritual purity and impurity). Yaakov's neck was unable to contract any

impurity from Eisav's malicious advances! He was completely impervious to Eisav's designs, and marble, which is unable to receive Tumah, is a perfect metaphor for this.

Those dots teach us to focus on what happened behind the scenes and why it happened.

Yaakov had built himself strong. He had attended Yeshiva of Shem VeEver, he had lived with the scoundrel Lavan, built a strong G-d fearing family and understood the ramifications of the meeting with Eisav.

Yaakov through his actions was sending a message to all future generations: Prioritise your spiritual life, make sure that it is strong and permanent, pass that Torah passion down to your children and then even the "friendly" approach by Eisav will not lead to assimilation.



**RABBI DAVID BAADANI**  
*Director - TAL Chazanut Program*

## PARSHAT VAYISHLACH

In our Parasha we read about the story that gave us, the Jewish people - עם ישראל, our name. The story begins with Yaakov on his way back home, after moving his family to the other side of the ford of the Jabbok, for some reason he went back, alone. A man wrestled with him until the break of dawn. When he saw that he had not prevailed against him, he wrenched Yaakov's hip. The man asked to leave, "Let me go, for dawn is breaking." But Yaakov answered, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me." He responded, "Your name shall no longer be Yaakov, but Israel, ישראל, for you have striven with being divine and human, and have prevailed.

This is the story as brought in this week Parasha, and it raises some questions. Why did Yaakov go back? Who was that man? Why did they wrestle? Why did Yaakov ask him to bless him after wrestling all night? And why did he change his name from Yaakov to Israel?

The grandson of Rashi, the Rashbam,

(רשב"ם). Rabbi Shemuel Ben Meir brings an interpretation which based on the similarity between the story of Yona and Moshe, Jeremiah, Isaiah and more. The common denominator, according to the Rashbam, is that all of them like Yaakov were trying to take flight, to run away, they were afraid of something.

Yaakov, after preparing himself and his family, went back. And there, alone, in the middle of the night, he decided to take flight so he won't have to face Eisav and deal with what he left unsolved 20 years ago. Now he has two options, either Eisav will kill him and reclaim what is rightfully his. Or, as what actually happened, they'll kiss and hug each other, and cry upon each others neck. By doing that, Eisav will reconcile with his brother and Yaakov's rights will become indisputable.

Yaakov was more afraid of the second option, Yaakov was afraid maybe he is not worthy of getting the blessings, maybe he is not the right one to be the successor of Abraham and Isaac, to be one of the forefathers of the chosen nation. He wanted to run away.

So, G-d sent an angel to try to stop him. The entire battle was, according to the Rashbam, to stop Yaakov from running

away. They wrestled the whole night And in the morning the angel changed his name from Yaakov to Israel, for you have striven with beings divine and human, and have prevailed. Your name is Israel. Because you have the ability of wrestling and overcoming your challenges. This name ultimately became our name, the name of our homeland, of our nation, the name of the Jewish people. Israel.

Israel is our name; it captures our very essence. This name tells us. Your fear of overcoming challenges, your thoughts of being unworthy, your feelings of inadequacy although they may be true, they are still irrelevant. They're irrelevant because, it's the very courage to undertake the tasks that allows us to grow and fit into those shoes that we are so afraid of going into. Leaders grow by leading. Parents grow by parenting. We grow by willing to step forward despite the fear of being greater, despite the feeling of unworthiness. Because it is always by overcoming that sense of inadequacy and throwing ourselves into a task, that we will find ourselves lifted and enlarged by doing so.

לרפואת סבי הרה"ג הרב שמעון בעדני בן חביבה שליט"א.



## RABBI YEHONATAN SALEM

Transmitting Lifestyles

In this week's reading of the Torah we learn about the episode in which Dinah, the daughter of Yaakov Avinu, was kidnapped and assaulted by Shechem. Not until her brothers, Shimon and Levi, took the law into their own hands and killed all the male inhabitants of the city of Shechem, was Dinah freed.

The Torah states in one phrase how this tragedy came about, when it says "Vatetze Dinah" – "and Dinah ventured out" (Vayishlach 34:1). Her curiosity to know what was happening in the outside world led her to disregard the privacy, inner beauty and honour of Jewish women by going to explore the world of women of the other nations, and consequently, she was abducted. We must understand what made her go out and explore. Surely such a princess, brought up in the best of homes, where she was sheltered and

protected from unwanted influences, would not be interested in exploring an alien culture. Rashi (ibid.) therefore picks up on another inference: Why does the Torah relate that Dinah, who was the daughter of Leah, ventured out? Was she not also the daughter of Yaakov? Says Rashi, from here we learn the important concept, "like father like son" or "like mother like daughter." Just as we find that Leah ventured out (Vayetze 30:16), thus, this behaviour became the style of her daughter Dinah as well.

Apart from the genetic input of his parents,<sup>23</sup> a child is also greatly influenced by the environment in which he is raised. From the time that he is born, a child absorbs the atmosphere of the home, and later on, the habits, nuances and customs of the family in which he is raised.<sup>24</sup> The example that he is shown by his parents becomes ingrained into his character and affects his make-up. When he sees how his

parents deal with situations and the patterns of behaviour to which they accustom themselves, this influences him greatly, both consciously and subconsciously.

The Gemara (Succah 56b) states that what a child says in the street must be what he has heard in his home. Our behaviour, mode of speech and values, as to what we hold in esteem and what we despise, will become evident to others from the innocent conduct of our children.

Let us, as parents, conduct ourselves with the Torah-prescribed conduct of correct morals and values that we want our children to emulate. In the merit of this and our constant prayers to God for the success of our children, we may surely look forward to the next generation going on the right path; the path that has been our identity for almost four thousand years.

Shabbat shalom



## OUR CHAHAMIM

Rabbi Meir Baal Haness

Rabbi Meir Baal Haness, of the fourth generation of Tannaim, belonged to that group of men who developed Torah instruction after Bar Kochva's revolt.

His teachers were Rabbi Akiva, Rabbi Ishmael, and Elisha ben Abuya, and his manner of instruction consisted of one-third Halachah, one-third Aggadah, and one-third Proverbs. All classes of people appreciated his lessons.

His lineage was not well known. According to the Aggadah, Rabbi Meir Baal Haness stemmed from a family of converts to Judaism, descendants even of Emperor Nero himself.

They say that when Emperor Nero came to conquer Jerusalem, he shot divining arrows into the air and they all landed pointing in the direction of Jerusalem. Sensing that the event had been sealed and that he would only be an instrument of grief, he repented. From his descendants was born Rabbi Meir Baal Haness.

Rabbi Meir would say, "One should always teach his son a simple trade and pray to Hashem, Who is the source of all wealth. For wealth does not come by one's trade, since each trade has its rich and its poor."

He would also say, "There exist two types of friends: Those who rebuke you and those who do not. Love the first type above all."

And again, he would say, "Where do we learn that the resurrection of the dead is explicitly mentioned in the Torah? It is written, 'And Moses will sing'. The verb is in the future."

We say that his father-in-law, Rabbi Hanania ben Teradion, was busy spreading Torah during that difficult time. The Romans ordered that he and his wife be burned. His daughter, the sister-in-law of Rabbi Meir, was sent to a brothel. Rabbi Meir's wife, Bruria, told him, "It is an insult that my sister is in such a state." Rabbi Meir took a sum of money with him and said, "If she has not sinned, may a ness [miracle] be done for her." He disguised himself as a Roman and asked to meet her.

"Get away from me," she told him, "I don't feel well." With this, Rabbi Meir understood that she was innocent. He presented himself to the guardian of the brothel and said, "Give me this one." He then gave him the money and said, "Half of it is for you. The rest is to help her leave." The guardian asked him, "And when the money is spent, what will I do?" Rabbi Meir told him that when this happens, he should say, "May the

G-d of Rabbi Meir save me," and assured him that in so doing he would be saved.

"Let us test what you say," the guardian replied.

"Here are some vicious dogs," Rabbi Meir said. He then threw a stone at them and the dogs ran to attack him. He immediately said, "G-d of Rabbi Meir, help me," and the dogs calmed down.

The guardian then agreed.

Nevertheless, what the guardian did eventually became known, and he was ordered into prison. However, he uttered what Rabbi Meir had told him and was saved.

Amazed at what happened to him, he guardian told people of his encounter with Rabbi Meir. Drawings of Rabbi Meir's likeness were affixed everywhere in the market, and one day someone eventually recognized him. When he saw him, he ran towards him. Rabbi Meir then spotted some non-kosher food and dipped one finger in it and put another finger in his mouth. The man who had recognized Rabbi Meir then thought that this could not be him.

He thereafter went into exile and died outside of the land of Israel. His bones were buried in Tiberius, the place where people still go to make a pilgrimage to his grave.



## HALACHOT BY RABBI ELI MANSOUR

### Applying Cotton Balls and Alcohol to a Wound on Shabbat

In the case of somebody who needed an injection on Shabbat, and after the injection he wants to use a cotton ball to clean the area where the injection was made, a number of Halachic questions arise. Firstly, if he does not have cotton balls, and needs instead to rip a piece of cotton from a cotton roll, the question becomes whether this violates the prohibition of Kore'a – tearing on Shabbat. Indeed, Hacham Bension Abba Shaul (Israel, 1924-1998), in Or Le'sion (36:22), writes that it is forbidden to rip cotton on Shabbat, for this reason. Hacham Ovadia Yosef, however, disagrees. In Hazon Ovadia – Shabbat

(vol. 3, p. 377), he writes that cotton does not qualify as a "Hibur Gamur" – meaning, the strands of cotton are not completely attached such that removing a piece would constitute "tearing" with respect to the prohibition of Kore'a. According to Hacham Ovadia, then, it is entirely permissible to tear a piece of cotton on Shabbat.

A second question arises regarding the use of cotton to rub alcohol on the wound. The Halachic authorities note that if one pours alcohol onto a piece of cotton, it is all but certain that he will end up extracting absorbed alcohol from the cotton, in violation of the prohibition of Sehita. Cotton is so porous that it is virtually impossible to avoid Sehita when handling cotton

after pouring liquid on it. Therefore, one would either have to use a material other than cotton for applying the alcohol onto the skin, or pour the alcohol directly onto the skin and then gently pat the moist skin with cotton. This is the ruling of Rav Moshe Ha'levi (Israel, 1961-2000), in his Menuhat Ahaba.

**Summary:** It is permissible to rip a piece of cotton from a cotton roll on Shabbat. One may not, however, pour alcohol onto a piece of cotton on Shabbat, as he will then inevitably end up extracting absorbed liquid from the cotton. Therefore, one who needs to apply alcohol to his skin on Shabbat must either use a different material or pour the alcohol directly onto the skin.



1

What sort of messengers did Yaakov send to Esav?

32:4 - Angels.

2

Why was Yaakov both "afraid" and "distressed"?

32:8 - He was afraid he would be killed. He was distressed that he would have to kill.

3

In what three ways did Yaakov prepare for his encounter with Esav?

32:9 - He sent gifts, he prayed, and he prepared for war.

4

Where did Dina hide and why?

32:23 - Yaakov hid her in a chest so that Esav wouldn't see her and want to marry her.

5

After helping his family across the river, Yaakov remained alone on the other side. Why?

32:25 - He went back to get some small containers he had forgotten.

## Parshat Vayishlach נר לאפרים

י	א	ש	ו	ו	י	ש	ל	ח	ג	ג	ז
ע	ל	ר	א	י	צ	ש	ר	ק	ב	ק	ש
ק	נ	א	ב	ו	ח	א	ב	מ	נ	י	פ
ב	ל	ה	ה	ק	ק	ג	ה	ע	ת	ד	כ
ם	ע	ו	נ	ד	ה	ל	ע	ב	א	ם	י
ה	ק	צ	ש	ו	י	ק	ש	ה	ו	ל	ם
א	ס	כ	ו	ת	ב	נ	ר	ר	ך	ו	ק
צ	מ	כ	ר	י	ל	צ	ה	א	ר	ט	ט
ל	ע	ג	ר	ה	פ	ב	א	ה	נ	ר	נ
מ	ש	ק	ר	א	ו	ב	ן	ת	א	א	י
י	ב	ג	ח	ת	פ	ץ	י	ו	ס	ף	ם
ע	ש	ג	י	ד	ה	נ	ש	ה	ה	צ	ה

גרתי	יעקב	לאה	דינה
קטנתי	גיד הנשה	יוסף	סכות
וישקהו	יצחק	בלהה	רבקה