

THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



PARSHAT VAYISHLACH

London's Leading Young Professionals Platform and Jewish Communal Centre



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
TAL Founder & Director

BEYOND DESTINATIONS: THE MEANINGFUL PATH OF AM YISRAEL

A man once came to see a psychiatrist. "Why are you here?" asked the doctor.

"I don't really know," replied the man. "My family insists that I have a problem."

"So, what's the problem?"

"I love pancakes," explained the patient.

"But what's wrong with that? I also like pancakes a great deal!"

"Really, doc? Then you must come to visit! I have 4,000 pancakes in my attic!"

How badly do you love pancakes?

Sometimes, our priorities stray. We immerse ourselves in the pursuit of wealth, neglecting our connections and straying from serving God toward self-service. This distraction leads to fleeting gains instead of seeking lasting peace for the soul. We need to grasp our true values and follow our faith.

In our Parasha Eisav and Yaakov finally meet up after many years of animosity, Eisav surprisingly hugs Yaakov and then there is an exchange of conversation. Eisav acknowledges all the gifts that Yaakov had sent him and says, "what is your relationship to this camp that I encountered?" And [Yaakov] said, '[I sent it] in order to find favour in the eyes of my master.' And Eisav said, 'I have plenty, my brother, let what you have remain yours.' ... [but Yaakov replied] 'G-d has been kind to me, and I have everything,' and he persisted and [Eisav] took." [33:8-9, 11]

Rashi explains that "I have everything" means that Yaakov claimed to have all that he needed. He was content. Eisav, on the other hand, said "I have plenty" – bragging that he had far more than his real needs.

The Chafetz Chaim, notes that we can also read in these expressions two entirely different outlooks on life and money. Eisav said "I have plenty," but even a very rich person desires still more: "one who has 100, desires 200." Yaakov, on the other hand, said "I have everything," meaning that he did not feel any need to acquire

more. Eisav wanted more and more money, while Yaakov was satisfied with what he had. His priority was ensuring that everything he possessed could be utilized in the service of God.

Those who set their sights on spiritual growth and accomplishment understand that, in terms of their materialistic standing, Hashem has sent them exactly what they need. Yesh li Kol! As we say in our daily morning blessings: "She'asah Lee Kol Tzarchee" – You have given me all of my needs. Happiness and satisfaction result not from what we have but rather, from how we deal with and view that which we have.

Looking back at all the Avot we can see how they approached life. Not only was their focus on serving G-d, but whenever they were faced with challenges, they understood that they had been equipped with all the necessary tools to deal with the challenge – they had Kol – everything they needed. The only determining factor after acknowledging that they had everything was to put in the effort to succeed and rise above the challenge.

There were times when it seemed that despite their effort, they did not achieve what they wanted, but nevertheless the Torah commends them.

Our Avot understood, that G-d is interested in the effort, the result of the effort is in the hands of G-d not the person.

On the third day after Avraham had his Brit Milah, he lifted up his eyes and saw three men standing in the distance. These three men were actually angels. He ran to invite them in and went through so much effort to prepare them a lavish meal, but he was in fact serving angels. The mitzvah of Hachnasat Orchim – welcoming guests is performed by inviting humans not angels!

So all that effort could be considered to be in vain. Yet G-d nevertheless considers the effort, and the intention and Avraham was rewarded.

Similarly, at the Akeida, Avraham went through extraneous pain and effort to offer up his son Yitzchak, only to be told not to go ahead with it in the end. One might think that since he didn't do it, there is no merit in his deeds, yet we mention the Zechut of the Akeida on Rosh Hashanah and in our daily prayers, as we are still enjoying the



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merit of his actions done thousands of years ago. It's the effort that counts, the ability to try and go for it even against the odds.

This principle extends to Yitzchak's servants battling for wells that they had dug. The local shepherds heard about this and claimed ownership over them (Bereishit 26:20-21). The quarrel was so big, they named one well עַסָּק, and the other one שְׁטֵנָה, representing the hardships and the fights that they had over the wells.

But the Torah doesn't tell us who won the argument and ultimately received the wells. This implies an ongoing battle against our innate desire for immediate worldly pleasure, redirecting our focus toward serving God and attaining truth and eternal rewards. When confronting the evil inclination (yetzer hara), the objective isn't

always outright victory; it's about standing resolutely and making the effort.

We are known as Am Yisrael - the people of Israel. Our name Yisrael comes from our third forefather – Yaakov. After battling the angel of Eisav, he persisted and asked the angel for a blessing. The angel tried to get out, but Yaakov persisted, eventually the angel revealed to Yaakov that G-d would change his name to Yisrael - (32:29) כִּי שְׂרִיתָ עִמָּי, "Because you have battled with an angel and with people and you have prevailed."

Our sages ask, if G-d is going to change his name to something that word should be Tucha (תּוֹכַח) – you prevailed and won the battle. Why was he named Yisrael?

The answer is that Yisrael represents the battle, and that is what counts in the eyes of G-d. The ability to choose good over evil,

even when it's easier to be evil, the ability to serve G-d in a mundane physical world even when it's tough.

Yisrael imparts the importance of directing our attention properly. In fact, the word "Yisrael" can be rearranged to spell "Li Rosh" – "my head is mine." It signifies that I have mastery over my mind, having confronted and triumphed over the Yetzer Hara.

Yaakov and the Avot imparted a vital lesson: the pursuit of purpose and fulfillment hinges on three truths—to maintain focus, derive joy and content from our possessions along the journey, and recognize that genuine significance emerges from the effort invested, transcending the mere attainment of destinations, crafting the essence of a truly meaningful life.

Am Yisrael Chai!



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 coming back to his birthplace. After moving his family to the other side of the ford of the Jabbok, 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, for you have striven with beings 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 was trying to take flight, to run away. They were afraid, terrified, and fearful of something. Yaakov, after preparing himself and his family, he 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 20 years ago. Now he has two options, either Eisav will kill him and reclaim what are his rights; or as what happened, they'll kiss and hug each other. By doing that, Eisav will reconcile with his brother and Yaakov's rights will become indisputable.

Yaakov was more afraid of the second option as he was afraid of not being worthy of getting the blessings. He questioned whether he was the right person 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, according to the Rashbam, was to stop Yaakov from running away. They wrestled all night and Yaakov almost managed to take flight. To hold him back, the angel wrenched Yaakov's hip at its socket.

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 the challenges. This blessing, this name ultimately became our name, the name of our homeland, of our nation, the name of the Jewish people. ישראל.



RABBI YEHONATAN SALEM

G-D'S MUNIFICENCE TOWARDS MAN

This week's Parasha relates to Yaakov Avinu's confrontation with his brother Esav, and the prelude to this historic meeting. Yaakov was very worried, since he knew that Esav was waiting to take revenge for receiving "his" blessings from their father

Yitzchak. Eventually though, when they finally met up, Esav's feelings of mercy were aroused, and he kissed Yaakov and wept on him. Then, the verse (Vayishlach 33:5) states that Esav noticed Yaakov's wives and children. Astounded, he asked: "What are all these people to you?" to which Yaakov answered: "They are who G-d has graced your servant." By his choice of words, Yaakov Avinu was teaching us a great lesson: A man's wife and children are not

given to him because he rightfully deserves it, but rather, his wife and children are presents, given out of G-d's graciousness. Similarly, we find concerning Moshe Rabenu who stayed on Mount Sinai for forty days, in order to learn the Torah. Even within this time frame, it was impossible for him, with his limited human intellect, to fully grasp the divine will as defined in the Torah. Therefore, the verse states that at the end of this period G-d graced Moshe with the

understanding of the Torah as a present, in the same way as a bride is given to her groom.

Essentially, a man's wife is a gift to him that he does not deserve in his own right. When a man appreciates this fact, he will learn to cherish his wife, love her, take care of her, and take pride in her being associated with him. A person who humbles himself and realises that really, he does not deserve anything, and all that he has is by the graciousness of G-d, he will not find it difficult telling his wife that "she is the best present he has ever received."

Furthermore, G-d in His munificence, besides giving men their wives as a gift,

also prepares the spouses in their formative years so that they should be compatible to each other.

The Medrash relates how Rabi Yosi Bar Chalafta once told an aristocratic Roman lady that G-d, having finished creating the world, now involves Himself with making shidduchim – matching up couples. The Roman lady did not understand what was so difficult about doing that, and why it was necessary for G-d to be involved in it. She was convinced that she could do the job just as well. She took a thousand male servants and a thousand female servants and paired them up as spouses. The next day, however, a lot of them came to her with

broken bones and other injuries, complaining about their incompatibility with their partners. She then understood that there was more to matching up couples successfully. G-d arranges that every girl is born specifically to her parents, within her family set-up, her education, and has her unique trials and tribulations. These are "tailor-made" for her to become a suitable helping-hand for her future husband. Who could have designed such a perfect gift, if not G-d Himself! This is the Divine present with which every married man is endowed. The more we appreciate that our wives are a present to us, granted by the graciousness of G-d, we will come to expect less from them and to appreciate them as they are.



HALACHOT BY RABBI ELI MANSOUR

UNTIL WHEN MAY A WOMAN LIGHT SHABBAT CANDLES ON FRIDAY AFTERNOON?

The Mishna in Masechet Shabbat establishes that one may not light the Shabbat candles on Friday afternoon at the time when it is uncertain whether or not night has begun. The period of Ben Hashemashot, which begins at sunset and extends for approximately 15 minutes, has not been identified by Halacha as day or night; during this period, we are unsure whether the Halachic day has ended. The Mishna therefore rules that if a woman did not light the Shabbat candles before sundown, she may not light them during Ben Hashemashot, since Shabbat may have already begun, in which case it is already forbidden to light candles.

Moreover, if a woman had not lit the Shabbat candles and she looks at her watch and sees that there are only two or three minutes left until sundown, she should not light the Shabbat candles. She must be concerned that her watch may not be precisely accurate, and that the sun has already set. Therefore, although the published time for candle lighting is 18 minutes before sundown, one is not permitted to light candles 16 or 17 minutes after the published time. Once 15 minutes or so after the time have passed, a woman should not light the Shabbat candles, given the possibility that the time on her watch is not precise.

If a woman did not light Shabbat candles on Friday afternoon before the final time, and she also did not leave any lights on in the home, she may ask a gentile to turn on the lights in the home, so long as she is still within the period of Ben Hashemashot. During this period, Halacha allows asking a

gentile to perform activity forbidden for a Jew to perform on Shabbat, if this is necessary for the purpose of a Mitzvah. Therefore, within 15 minutes or so after sundown, a woman may ask a gentile to turn on the lights in the home if otherwise the house would be completely dark on Shabbat. If, however, there are lights on, but the woman did not light the Shabbat candles, she may not ask a gentile to light the candles for her. Since there is already light in the home, and the Shabbat candles are not needed for light, she may not ask a gentile to light the candles.

Summary: A woman who did not light the Shabbat candles at the preferred time (18 minutes before sundown) may light afterward, until two or three minutes before sundown. If she did not light until that point, she should not light. If there are no lights on in the home, she may ask a gentile to turn on the lights in the home, provided that 15 minutes have not passed since sundown.



WEEKLY PARSHA OVERVIEW

Parshat Vayishlach

Returning home, Yaakov sends angelic messengers to appease his brother Esav. The messengers return, telling Yaakov that Esav is approaching with an army of 400. Yaakov takes the strategic precautions of dividing the camps, praying for assistance, and sending tribute to mollify Esav.

That night, Yaakov is left alone and wrestles with the angel of Esav. Yaakov emerges victorious but is left with an injured sinew in his thigh (which is the reason that it is forbidden to eat the sciatic nerve of a kosher animal). The angel tells him that his name in the future will be Yisrael, signifying that he has prevailed against man

(Lavan) and the supernatural (the angel). Yaakov and Esav meet and are reconciled, but Yaakov, still fearful of his brother, rejects Esav's offer that they should dwell together. Shechem, a Caananite prince, abducts and violates Dina, Yaakov's daughter. In return for Dina's hand in marriage, the prince and his father suggest that Yaakov and his family intermarry and enjoy the fruits of Caananite prosperity. Yaakov's sons' trick Shechem and his father by feigning agreement. However, they stipulate that all the males of the city must undergo brit milah. Shimon and Levi, two of Dina's brothers, enter the town and execute all the males who were weakened by the circumcision. This action is justified by the

city's tacit complicity in the abduction of their sister.

G-d commands Yaakov to go to Beit-El and build an altar. His mother Rivka's nurse, Devorah, dies and is buried below Beit-El. G-d appears again to Yaakov, blesses him, and changes his name to Yisrael. While traveling, Rachel goes into labour and gives birth to Binyamin, the twelfth of the tribes of Israel. She dies in childbirth and is buried on the Beit Lechem Road. Yaakov builds a monument to her. Yitzchak passes away at the age of 180 and is buried by his sons. The Torah portion concludes by listing Esav's descendants.

Rabbi Sinclair, Seasonsofthemoon.com

KIDS zone

QUIZ TIME!

- 1** In what three ways did Yaakov prepare for his encounter with Esav?
32:9 - He sent gifts, he prayed, and he prepared for war.
- 2** 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.
- 3** What was the angel forced to do before Yaakov agreed to release him?
32:27 - Admit that the blessings given by Vitzhak rightfully belong to Yaakov.

- 4** Why did Esav embrace Yaakov?
33:4 - His pity was aroused when he saw Yaakov bowing to him so many times.
- 5** Why does the Torah refer to Dina as the "daughter of Leah" and not the "daughter of Yaakov?"
34:1 - Because she was outgoing like her mother, Leah.
- 6** What does the name Binyamin mean? Why did Yaakov call him that?
35:18 - Ben-Yemin means "Son of the South" He was the only son born in the land of Israel, which is south of Aram Naharaim.
- 7** How old was Yaakov when Yosef was sold?
35:29 - One hundred and eight.
- 8** Which three categories of people have their sins pardoned?
36:3 - One who converts to Judaism, one who is elevated to a position of leadership, and one who marries.



And Yaakov said, "... I have everything ..."
(Bereishis 33:10-11)



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SNEAK PEEK INTO DECEMBER

SUNDAYS	10am Bat Mitzvah Program	5:45pm Chazanut Program Boys
	10am Girls Leadership Program	
MONDAYS	10am Yoga with Talia	7pm Girls Learning Program 6th Form
	11am Caffeine For The Soul	7pm Girls Learning Program
TUESDAYS	1pm UCL 1-2-1 Boys Learning Program	8pm Young Professionals Girls Shiur
	1pm Business Lunch & Learn	
WEDNESDAYS	10am Mother & Baby Program	8pm Lads Chavruta
	1pm Girls Lunch & Learn Immanuel College	
THURSDAYS	4:30pm After School Boys Program	
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