

# THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



PARSHAT VAYEITZEI

London's Leading Young Professionals Platform and Jewish Communal Centre



**RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL**  
TAL Founder & Director

## THE BENEFITS OF YESHIVA!

Embarking on a journey, diving into a Yeshiva experience is a remarkable step towards personal growth and spiritual enrichment. Beyond the academic realm, Yeshiva offers a nurturing environment where youth mature, cultivating not just knowledge but character. The study of Torah becomes a guiding light, offering timeless wisdom and principles to navigate life's myriad challenges. Establishing this foundation early on equips them with a profound understanding of ethics, resilience, and a sense of purpose, vital for their future endeavours. Yeshiva isn't just about education; it's a transformative experience that shapes individuals for a fulfilling and meaningful life ahead. We find the first Yeshiva mentioned by our sages as the Yeshiva of Shem and Ever.

The Midrash refers to the influence of Shem and Ever on numerous occasions. Each time, Shem and Ever appear as the spiritual guides of the forefathers and mothers. Malki-Tsedek, the Kohen (priest) who blesses Avraham, is in fact identified as Shem (Bereishit Rabbah 44:7).

After the Akeida, Yitzchak seemingly disappears from the scene. He is not mentioned in the burial of his mother, Sarah. The Midrash (Bereishit Rabba 56:11) explains his absence; Avraham sent him to learn in the Yeshiva of Shem and Ever.

When Rivka was pregnant "the children struggled in her womb" (Bereishit 25:22). To understand this abnormal occur-

rence, she "went to inquire of G-d and G-d answered her" (25:23). The Midrash here explains that she went to the Yeshiva or Beit Hamidrash of Shem and Ever. It was there that they were able to explain the meaning of her pregnancy.

The Midrash (Rabbah 45:10, 48:20) similarly states that conversations that Sarah and Hagar had with G-d took place through the mediation of Shem.

However, Shem and Ever are not merely intermediaries between man and G-d; the Midrash explains that they were people of justice as well. In Bereishit Rabbah (67:8) we read that Eisav feared killing Yaakov because he knew Shem and Ever would judge him for this sin.

Rashi, quoting the Gemara, says that Yaakov also studied at the Yeshivah of Shem and Ever for fourteen years before he came to the house of Lavan (Megillah 17a). The Midrash teaches that Yaakov taught everything he had learned from Shem and Ever to his son, Yosef (Bereishit Rabbah 84:8).

In addition, Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah (6:2) states that one who studies Torah in this world will be brought to the Beit Midrash of Shem, Ever, Avraham, Yitzchak, Moshe, and Aharon in the world to come.

What was studied in this Yeshiva?

The richness of Divine wisdom and moral guidance predates the giving of the Torah at Sinai.

An illuminating example is found in the directive given to Noach, instructing him to bring seven of each kosher-type animal and two of every non-kosher animal into the ark (Bereishit 7:2). This illustrates a deep understanding of the concept of 'Kosher' centuries before the formal revelation at Sinai. Following the

This week's Parasha sheet is dedicated in loving memory of

*Dina bat Perach*  
by her daughter  
Shiri Elias

12TH KISLEV 5784

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15:46pm

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16:52pm

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- 8.45am
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*Shabbat Shalom*



**DVAR TORAH**  
The Benefits of Yeshiva!  
By Rabbi Jonathan Tawil



**DVAR TORAH**  
Parshat Vayeitzei  
By Rabbi David Baadani



**DVAR TORAH**  
Parshat Vayeitzei  
By Rabbi Danny Fisher



**HALACHOT**  
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**KIDS ZONE**  
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flood, Noah and his descendants were further commanded not to consume a limb from a living animal (9:4), forming part of the seven 'Noachide Laws' that include prohibitions against stealing, killing, and idol worship, among others.

Analogous to the existence of Yeshivot today, where the wisdom received at Sinai is studied, it is plausible that throughout history, academies existed for the study of the seven Noachide laws and the prophetic wisdom of the time.

It is this wisdom that was sought after by our forefathers.

But there is an extra dimension here specifically with Shem and Ever.

Shem is identified as "the father of all the children of Ever".

Now Ever was Shem's great grandson. That means Shem was known as the father of his great-great grandchildren. That's a wonderful statement. To be known as a person who was able to transmit tradition and G-d's wisdom down so many generations.

Hence, the Patriarchs purposefully directed their children to this institution. While they highly esteemed the Torah's teachings, they recognized the unbroken lineage of spirituality and tradition preserved at the Yeshiva of Shem and Ever – an invaluable heritage they wished their children to inherit.

In our Parasha, Yaakov embarks on a

deliberate journey to this yeshiva, seeking to acquire the essential skills. His goals were twofold: to adeptly pass on G-d's service to his descendants and to navigate through challenging encounters, like those with cunning figures such as Lavan, all while upholding the Torah's principles amidst adversity.

Our forefathers, whilst born in homes of great people, were not born heroes. They were not born with deep strength and conviction; rather, the forefathers worked hard to develop their faith. They went to seek advice from those who knew more than they. They spent time contemplating G-d and life's meaning.

The Talmud tells us that wherever the Jewish people lived, our ancestors established Yeshivot to help them remain rooted in the teachings of tradition while navigating the tricky situations of the present (Yoma, 28b).

Even if a person has a solid religious tradition from home, as a young person seeks to build his independent life (Yaakov is leaving home and setting up his own family) they need to develop an independent, personal religious direction. And that involves seeking other great teachers.

Our parents start us off, create the environment, but then we gain by building on that wisdom and

experience by exploring fresh and different religious environments steeped in Jewish history and wisdom.

A Yeshiva serves as a hub for truth-seeking, where we engage in profound exploration of G-d's Torah alongside a Chavruta, our learning partner. Our primary focus on studying Torah stems from its divine command. Once we embrace this directive, we uncover additional benefits. Through Torah study, we glean insights on addressing life's fundamental queries: Why do we exist? What defines our values? How should we navigate our limited time on this earth? Torah becomes a guidebook illuminating these existential questions, enriching our understanding of life's purpose and guiding our choices.

In the echoes of Yaakov's journey, we find a timeless lesson—before facing the challenges of exile, fortify your spiritual core. The Yeshiva of Shem and Ever, a beacon of spiritual strength, guided Yaakov through the tumult of life outside the familiar tents. It enabled him to be a forefather who could pass on his wisdom and study to his children. In our own journeys, let us heed this powerful message: the Torah is our anchor, our source of strength, preparing us and our descendants to face the exiles of our lives with fortitude and resilience.



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

## PARSHAT VAYEITZEI

At the end of our Parasha we read that after 20 years of living together with his father-in-law, Lavan, Yaakov has finally decided to leave Haran and go back to Eretz Yisrael. When he leaves, Rachel takes along Lavan's idols. Lavan is upset with that and goes running after Yaakov, he catches up with him and says, 'I think you have something that belongs to me with you'. Yaakov allows Lavan to look and see if he finds anything that belongs to him. Lavan went around

from one tent to another but couldn't find anything.

At that point it says וַיַּחַר לְיַעֲקֹב וַיִּדְבֹּר בְּלָבָן. Yaakov gets angry at Lavan, but then the Torah says something very interesting; the word for speaking harshly is וידבר and for speaking softly we use the word ויאמר. Here we see וַיַּעֲקֹב וַיִּשָּׁאֵל לָבָן. Yaakov says nicely to Lavan: "What is my crime, what is my guilt that you should pursue me?"

We see here an amazing idea; even when Yaakov seems to get angry, he still spoke properly. He didn't yell, he didn't scream, rather he spoke his

feelings out nicely and in a soft manner.

When a person gets angry, it's not reason enough to lose themselves or to let go and say or do whatever they want to justify their anger.

Our forefather Yaakov teaches us that it is best to approach anger in a healthy and productive way. It is important to be proactive and to express your feelings softly, letting others know what is disturbing you in a way they will be able to hear and understand you. You might lose your temper but don't lose your humanity.





## RABBI DANNY FISHER

### Director - TAL Boys After School Programs

#### PARSHAT VAYEITZEI

In this week פרשה we find יעקב אבינו running away from עשו, fearing for his life.

The פסוק tells us "רש"י" indicates that only at that place once יעקב had arrived did he finally rest. Years earlier when he had left יצחק house and learnt in שם ועבר for 14 years he had not rested. It was only now that he allowed himself to sleep.

עשו was the grandson of יצחק, the great grandson of יצחק and was brought up in the home of עשו. יצחק instructed אליפז to go and find יעקב and kill him. Once אליפז found him he had a dilemma, on the one hand he had to have אב כיבוד and listen to עשו, on the other hand he didn't want to

kill יעקב. The solution יעקב told him, is to take all my possessions and money as someone who has no money is considered dead.

Rav Shama Zahn asks, why is it only now that אליפז finds יעקב. Didn't עשו realise that all these years earlier, יעקב would be learning in Yeshiva, why not go search for him in Yeshiva?

Rav Shama Zahn shares a story, about a certain person who was recently appointed as a Rav. Someone knocked on his door and asked to speak to the Rav. He was told the Rav can't come to the door, since he is busy learning. The visitor couldn't understand why a Rav who has semicha would still be learning Torah.

In the same way, עשו didn't realise the difference Torah is in comparison to all

other subjects. It is not merely a subject to learn and once understood to stop. Rather it is our very life and purpose for existence; one must continue learning and strive to reach deeper levels and understanding of that which is being learnt. There is no end to learning Torah, but עשו didn't understand this. He wouldn't have imagined that יעקב אבינו would be in Yeshiva for 14 years. The purpose being to enrich himself, to plumb to the depths of Torah and be a changed person because of this.

This was the point that עשו missed hence he didn't send אליפז to search for him in Yeshiva, for he never thought he would still be there.

This Dvar Torah should be a Zechus for my Grandfather Avraham Ben Mordechai Zelig on his 18th Yahrzeit (7th Kislev)



## HALACHOT BY RABBI ELI MANSOUR

#### MUST THE BREAD BE ON THE TABLE DURING KIDDUSH?

It occasionally happens that when one returns home from the synagogue on Friday night, the Challot are still being warmed up, either in the oven or on the hotplate or "blech." Must the Challot be placed on the table for Kiddush, or may they be left to continue warming until one is ready to recite "Ha'mosi" over the Challa?

The Gemara in Masechet Pesachim (100) tells that Rabba Bar Rav Huna once visited the home of the Resh Galuta (Exilarch) on Friday night, and a table, with bread on it, was brought before him. Rabba placed a cloth over the table and recited Kiddush. The Gemara provides the Halachic background to Rabba's actions, citing a Berayta which states that the table should not be brought before a person until after Kiddush, and if it is brought, it should be covered for Kiddush. Tosafot (commentaries by Medieval French and German Talmudists) explain that in ancient times, people used small, individual tables, which were set with food and then brought to each person at the meal. The Gemara here instructs that a

person's table should not be brought to him until after Kiddush, and if it is, it should be covered for Kiddush. Tosafot then raises the question of how to reconcile the Gemara's ruling with a different passage in the Gemara which states that angels escort a person to his home on Friday night and grant him a blessing if they see his table set and his home in order. This would certainly imply that everything should already be set in place for the meal before Kiddush. Tosafot answer that the tables should be set before Kiddush, but they should not be brought to the people until afterward.

Regardless, Tosafot note that nowadays, when we sit around big tables, and quite obviously we do not have the table brought to us, the table should be set with the Challot before Kiddush. This is also the clear implication of the Arizal (Rav Yishak Luria of Safed, 1534-1572), in Sha'ar Ha'kavanot, where he describes the procedure one should follow upon returning from the synagogue on Friday night, and mentions that the Challot should be on the table even before Kiddush. This is, indeed, the prevalent custom, to place the Challot on the table, covered both on top and on bottom before Kiddush. (The coverings serve to commemorate the Manna which fell for Bnei Yisrael in the

wilderness, which had a protective layer of dew on top and on the bottom.)

It must be noted, however, that this is just a custom, and is certainly not indispensable for fulfilling the Mitzvah of Kiddush. Certainly, if, for whatever reason, the Challot were not on the table for Kiddush, the Mitzvah has been fulfilled. Furthermore, one does not have to delay Kiddush for this purpose. For example, if one attends a Sebet or is at a hotel, and the bread has not yet been brought to the table, one may recite Kiddush without the bread if he anticipates that by the time everybody finishes washing, the bread will be available. And if one would like to keep the bread warming, the best solution is to take two other Challot or rolls and place them on the table for Kiddush. There is no requirement to use for Ha'mosi the bread that had been on the table for Kiddush.

**Summary:** It is customary to have the Challa on the table already for Kiddush, but one should not delay the recitation of Kiddush while he waits for the bread (such as at a Sebet, or in a hotel). If one wants the Challot to continue warming during Kiddush, he may take other rolls or Challot and place them on the table for Kiddush.





## WEEKLY PARSHA OVERVIEW

### Parshat Vayeitzei

Fleeing from Esav, Yaakov leaves Be'er Sheva and sets out for Charan, the home of his mother's family. After a 14-year stint in the Torah Academy of Shem and Ever, he resumes his journey and comes to Mount Moriah, the place where his father Yitzchak was brought as an offering, and the future site of the Beit Hamikdash. He sleeps there and dreams of angels going up and down a ladder between Heaven and Earth. Hashem promises him the Land of Israel, that he will father a great nation and that he will enjoy Divine protection. Yaakov wakes and vows to build an altar there and tithe all that he will receive.

Then he travels to Charan and meets his cousin Rachel at the well. He arranges with her father, Lavan, to work seven years for her hand in marriage, but Lavan fools Yaakov, substituting Rachel's older sister, Leah. Yaakov commits himself to work another seven years to also marry Rachel. Leah bears four sons: Reuven, Shimon, Levi and Yehuda, the first Tribes of Israel. Rachel is barren, and in an attempt to give Yaakov children, she gives her handmaiden Bilhah to Yaakov as a wife. Bilhah bears Dan and Naftali. Leah also gives Yaakov her handmaiden Zilpah, who bears Gad and Asher. Leah then bears Yissaschar, Zevulun, and a daughter, Dina. Hashem finally

blesses Rachel with a son, Yosef.

Yaakov decides to leave Lavan, but Lavan, aware of the wealth Yaakov has made for him, is reluctant to let him go, and concludes a contract of employment with him. Lavan tries to swindle Yaakov, but Yaakov becomes extremely wealthy. Six years later, Yaakov, aware that Lavan has become dangerously resentful of his wealth, flees with his family. Lavan pursues them but is warned by Hashem not to harm them. Yaakov and Lavan agree to a covenant and Lavan returns home. Yaakov continues on his way to face his brother Esav.

Rabbi Sinclair, Seasonsofthemoon.com



1

On the night of his dream, Yaakov did something he hadn't done in 14 years. What?

28:11 - Sleep at night lying down.

2

Hashem compressed the entire Land of Israel underneath the sleeping Yaakov. What did this symbolize?

28:13 - That the Land would be easy for his descendants to conquer.

3

Why were Leah's eyes tender?

29:17 - She cried continually because she thought she was destined to marry Esav.

4

How old was Yaakov when he married?

29:21 - Eighty-four.

5

"Hashem remembered Rachel" (30:22). What did He remember?

30:22 - That Rachel gave Leah the "signs of recognition" that Yaakov had taught her, so that Leah wouldn't be embarrassed.

6








What does "Yosef" mean? Why was he named that?

30:24 - "Yosef" means "He will add." Rachel asked Hashem for another son in addition to Yosef.



"... and if He will give me bread to eat and clothes to wear ..." (Bereishis 28:20)

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