

# NCYI Youth Groups Parashas Vayeitzei

## Parsha Outline

### VaYetze

- Yaakov's ladder
- Yaakov meets Rachel
- Yaakov marries
- Birth of the eleven Tribes
- Yaakov's journey home

([http://www.headcoverings-by-devorah.com/HebEngTaNaKh\\_TorahSummary.htm](http://www.headcoverings-by-devorah.com/HebEngTaNaKh_TorahSummary.htm))

**Sefer Bereishit** is divided into twelve parashiyot (weekly readings). The first two parashiyot cover 1,948 years of history and twenty generations. The third and fourth parashiyot focus only on one hundred years of Avraham's life. The message is - what Avraham stood for is what Creation is all about - what Avraham represented is what concerns the Torah. The Torah therefore dwells on the lives of the forefathers.

The balance of Sefer Bereishit (eight week parashiyot) is devoted to following the course of Avraham's descendants - Yitzchak, Yaakov, and the Twelve Tribes - as they further develop the philosophy and approach to live of their ancestor, Avraham. The ideology developed by Avraham becomes the basis for a unique nation, the further evolution and progress of the nation is presented in the following sefer - Shemot.

*Sefer Bereishit* not only describes the origin of the Jewish people, but traces the origins of all peoples of mankind.

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## Parsha Summaries

Family Parshah

### Vayeitzei Roundup

Vayeitzei-And He Left

[http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/322878/jewish/Vayeitzei-Roundup.htm](http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/322878/jewish/Vayeitzei-Roundup.htm)

By [Chani Benjaminson](#)

Last week's parshah ended with Jacob running away from Beer Sheva where he lived with his parents and brother to Charan. On his way out of Israel Jacob stops to rest, he takes a number of stones and puts them in a semi-circle around his head as protection and goes to sleep. He dreams of a ladder on which he sees angels going up and other angels going down the ladder, these were the angels which G-d sent to protect him on his trip. G-d reveals Himself to Jacob and promises him that the land on which he is resting will be given to his descendants, his children and grandchildren and their grandchildren. When Jacob wakes up the stones had become one, he takes the stone and makes it into an altar as a sign that that place is a holy place.



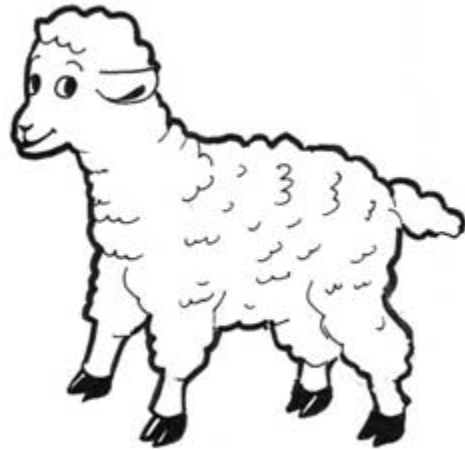
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Jacob arrives in Charan where he meets his cousin Rachel at a well; Rachel runs home to tell her father Laban that Jacob is in town, Jacob is welcomed by his uncle and begins to work for him as a shepherd. After a month Laban offers to pay him and Jacob says that his payment will be that he can marry Rachel. Laban says he can marry Rachel after working for him for seven years. But...when the wedding day finally comes, Laban deceives Jacob, and gives him his older daughter Leah in marriage. Jacob doesn't realize this until the morning after the wedding, and is very angry at Laban. Laban says that in his country one doesn't marry off the younger sister before the older one. (but off course he didn't tell that to Jacob before the wedding...). Jacob agrees to work another seven years for Laban and marries Rachel a week after his wedding to Leah, at the time one could marry more than one wife at a time.

Leah gives birth to seven children, Reuben, Shimon, Levi, Yehudah, Yissachar, Zebulun and Dina, a daughter. Rachel did not have children and was very sad because of that. She

gave her maid Bilhah as a wife to Jacob so that she should have children instead of her. Bilhah has two sons, Dan and Naphtali. Leah also gives her maid Zilpah as a wife to Jacob and she too has two sons, Gad and Asher. Finally Rachel gets pregnant and has a son, Joseph.

Fourteen years have passed since Jacob left his parents' home and he wants to return to Beer Sheva. However Laban convinces him to stay, he offers to pay him by giving him sheep so that Jacob can have a flock of his own. G-d blesses Jacob with his work, his flock becomes bigger and bigger, and Laban keeps on trying to cheat him out of his property. Another six years pass, when Laban goes away for a few days Jacob packs up his bags and together with his wives and children leaves Charan. When Laban finds out that Jacob left he runs after him, but G-d warns Laban not to hurt Jacob and so they make a peace pact at a place called Mount Gal-Ed and Jacob and his family travel back to the Holy Land and angels of G-d meet him there to accompany him back into the land.



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## Vayetztei Aliya Summary

[http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/590033/jewish/Aliya-Summary.htm](http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/590033/jewish/Aliya-Summary.htm)

**General Overview:** In this week's reading, *Vayetztei*, Jacob travels to his uncle Laban. En route he stops at the Temple Mount where G-d appears and assures him that he will return safely to the Land of Canaan. Jacob stays for twenty years in Charan before returning to Canaan. During his stay he shepherds Laban's sheep, and survives and prospers despite all his uncle's attempted deceptions. He marries Leah and Rachel, and the first eleven tribes are born.

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**First Aliyah:** Jacob left Be'er Sheva and headed towards Charan, to his uncle Laban's home. While traveling, Jacob encountered "the place" (Mount Moriah) and since the sun had set, he lay down to sleep. In a dream he saw a ladder reaching up to heaven with

angels ascending and descending its rungs. G-d appeared and informed him that He would bequeath the entire land to his descendants, and that He would safeguard him until he returned to Canaan. Jacob awoke, and now recognizing the holiness of the location, he erected a monument to G-d, named the location *Beth El* ("House of G-d"), and vowed to tithe all his belongings when G-d's promise of a safe return would be fulfilled.

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**Second Aliyah:** Jacob continued on his journey, and arrived at a well located on the outskirts of Charan. Upon seeing Rachel, Laban's younger daughter, arriving with her father's sheep, Jacob single-handedly rolled off the heavy rock that sat atop the well, and gave water to the flock. Rachel told her father about the new arrival, and Laban rushed out to greet Jacob. Jacob went to Laban's home, and after spending a month, Laban offered Jacob the job of tending to his herds, and asked Jacob what he wished in terms of wages.

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**Third Aliyah:** Laban had two daughters, the aforementioned Rachel, and her older sister Leah. Jacob loved Rachel and offered to serve Laban for seven years in exchange for her hand in marriage. Laban accepted the deal. After the seven years of service passed, Jacob asked Laban to make good on his word. Laban arranged a wedding feast, but switched daughters, giving Leah instead of Rachel. When Jacob protested, Laban offered to give Rachel too—in exchange for another seven years of service. One week later Jacob married Rachel, and began serving an additional seven years. Leah gave birth to four children – Reuben, Simon, Levi, and Judah – but Rachel remained barren. Rachel and Leah both gave their handmaids to Jacob as concubines. Rachel's maid, Bilhah, bore two children – Dan and Naftali – and Leah's maid also bore two children—Gad and Asher.

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**Fourth Aliyah:** One spring day, Reuben picked jasmine plants from the field, and brought them to his mother. Rachel asks Leah for some of them, and Leah agreed, provided that Rachel relinquishes her turn with Jacob that night. Leah gave birth to another two sons – Issachar and Zebulun – and one daughter—Dinah. Eventually, Rachel, too, gave birth to a son, whom she named Joseph. At that point, Jacob asked Laban for permission to take his wives and children and return to Canaan. In response, Laban pointed out that his divinations revealed that his great wealth and blessings were due to Jacob's presence in his home.

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**Fifth Aliyah:** "Specify your wages," Laban told Jacob. "And I will give it!" Jacob proposed that all the streaked and spotted sheep that would be born to Laban's sheep would constitute his payment. In return, Jacob would continue caring for Laban's flocks. Laban immediately removed all the existing spotted and streaked sheep from the herd and

put them under his sons' charge—thus differentiating between the current ones, which belonged to Laban, and the to-be-born ones, that would belong to Jacob. Jacob made striped poles for the strong and robust sheep to view while they were mating. As a result, the sheep gave birth to striped offspring, and Jacob became fabulously wealthy—despite Laban's deceptive practices, and his continual changing of the terms of Jacob's pay. After an additional six years of service, G-d commanded Jacob to return to Canaan. Jacob summoned his wives, who agreed that the time has arrived to leave.

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**Sixth Aliyah:** Seizing an opportunity when Laban was away, Jacob took his family and belongings and slipped away. Before departing, Rachel stole one of Laban's idols. Laban pursued them. On the night before he reached them, G-d warned Laban in a dream not to harm Jacob or his family. Laban reached Jacob on Mount Gilead and complained that he was deprived of the opportunity to bid them an appropriate farewell, and protested the theft of his idols. Jacob suggested that Laban search for his idol amongst his belongings, but Laban turned up empty-handed in his search.

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**Seventh Aliyah:** Laban and Jacob made a peace treaty and erected a stone monument to seal the pact. Laban returned to Charan, and Jacob continued on his way. When he entered Canaan, he was greeted by a delegation of welcoming angels.

## Overview

[http://ohr.edu/this\\_week/torah\\_weekly/4091](http://ohr.edu/this_week/torah_weekly/4091)

By Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

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. G-d promises him the Land of Israel, that he will found 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 in order 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 Yissachar, 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 G-d 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.

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## Parsha Songs

[The lyrics are supplied here. For the tunes, please click on the link]

[http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/573568/jewish/Parshah-Song.htm](http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/573568/jewish/Parshah-Song.htm)

**Lyrics:** By Cheryl Knobel and Rivkah Neuman

As Yaakov traveled the sun went down  
He fell asleep on the ground  
In his dream was a ladder so high  
With malochim climbing to the sky

Yaakov heard Hashem's voice  
For my bracha, you are the choice  
Yaakov traveled to charan  
He asked the shepherd, "where is Lavan?"

Rochel said, "Lavan is my father  
I'll take you to him it is no bother,"  
Yaakov stayed for twenty years  
For Lavan's sheep, Yaakov cared

Yaakov married Laya and Rochel  
Their children became the B'nei Yisroel  
Lavan tricked Yaakov, he didn't pay  
Hashem told Yaakov, "Go away!"

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## Parsha Questions & Answers

Selected from the following website:

<http://chinuch.org>

Questions By Rabbi Normie Lowenthal

שם

### פרשת השבוע

The "Pitgam Hashavuah" is...

"אל תהי נח לְכַעַס" אבות ב: י  
"Do not become angry easily"

Why did Yaakov leave home?

*Aisov promised to kill him.*

Where, and to whom was Yaakov going?

*He was going to חָרָן (Choron), to Lovon, his uncle.*

Who did Aisov send after Yaakov, and what did he do?

*His son, אֶלְיָזָר (Elifaz) chased after Yaakov and took all his money, since כָּמֹת הָשׁוּב (a poor person is like "dead"), so it was as if he "killed" Yaakov (fulfilling his father's wishes while keeping Yaakov alive).*

Where did Yaakov stop to rest, and what two miracles happened there?

*He stopped in לֹז (Luz) (where the Bais Hamikdosh would later be), and the sun set early (#1) so Yaakov would go to sleep there. He slept on many stones which became one (#2) under his head, and had a dream...*

What was Yaakov's dream?

*A סֻלָּם (ladder) was going up to שָׁמַיִם (heaven) with מַלְאָכִים (angels) ascending and descending. (Those going up had followed Yaakov in כְּנָעַן (Knaan) and those coming down would be with him outside כְּנָעַן.)*

What did Hashem say in the dream?

*His children would be many like sand, and would spread, and Hashem would clothe, feed and protect him.*

Where did Yaakov go to prepare himself before seeing Lovon?

*He went to learn in the Yeshiva of שַׁיִם וְעֵיבֶר (Shaim and Ayver) for 14 years.*

Where did Yaakov stop as he neared חֶרֶן (Choron)?

*A בְּאֵר (well) with a big rock covering it (requiring all the shepherds to gather and push it off together).*

What did Yaakov do when he saw Rochel, and why?

*He pushed the rock off the well single-handedly, and then cried when he met her, because he was penniless and he saw that he would not be buried with her.*

What was the name of Lovon's older daughter, and how is she described?

*Leah, "עֵינֶיהָ רְכוּת" - her eyes were tender and red from crying, since people said she would marry Aisov.*

How long did Yaakov work for Rochel?

*Seven years and then another seven years when Lovon "tricked" him and gave him Leah.*

What were the names of Yaakov's children?

*Leah gave birth to Reuvain, Shimon, Levi, Yehudah, Yissochor, Zevulon & Dina; Bilhoh, Rochel's maidservant, had Don & Naftoli; Zilpah, Leah's maidservant, had Gad & Asher; and Rochel had Yosef & Binyomin.*

What did Yaakov say should happen to the one who stole Lovon's תְּרָפִים (idols)?

*That person (Rochel) should die (so she died before they got to כְּנַעַן).*

Who met Yaakov on his way home?

*The מְלָאָכִים (angels) coming to be with him in כְּנַעַן, and those who followed him when he was out of כְּנַעַן.*

דְּבַר תּוֹרָה

"-וַיַּחלֶם וַיהוָה סֵלֶם מִצָּב אֶרְצָה וְרֹאשׁוֹ מִגִּיעַ שָׁמַיְמָה

ladder was set earthward and its top reached heavenward" (כח : יב )

The Baal HaTurim points out that the Gematria (numerical value) of the word סֵלֶם, ladder, is equal to that of the word קוֹל, voice, each being one hundred thirty.

From this we can learn an interesting symbolism: Just as the ladder in Yaakov's dream connected earth to heaven, allowing the angels to ascend and descend on it, so our voice is the vehicle which connects us to heaven, for our prayers ascend and are heard in heaven.

פרשת השבוע

שם

### Parsha Quiz

The "Pitgam Hashavuah" is...

"אל תהי נח לקעס" אבות ב:י  
"

1. Why did Yaakov leave home? Where, and to whom was Yaakov going?
2. Where did Yaakov stop to rest, and what two miracles happened there?
3. What was Yaakov's dream?
4. Where did Yaakov go to prepare himself before seeing Lovon and how long was he there?
5. What was the name of Lovon's older daughter, and how is she described?

*Extra Credit*

6. How long did Yaakov work for Rochel and then what happened?  
Hope you had a...

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## Parsha Stories

Family Parshah

### Vayeitzei Parshah Lesson

[http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/322885/jewish/Vayeitzei-Parshah-Lesson.htm](http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/322885/jewish/Vayeitzei-Parshah-Lesson.htm)

By Rebbetzin [Malka Touger](#)

Sam's family was moving out of town and his best friend, Judah, was helping take his

bags out to the car, he said: “I’m really sorry you’re leaving. It’s too bad you will no longer be living next door to us.”

“It was great living here in the city with you guys, Judah. I’ll miss you, but I don’t feel sorry, and you shouldn’t either,” said Sam.

“Don’t you wish you didn’t live so far away?” asked Judah.

“Actually, no,” replied Sam. “I feel that I have a mission to do in the new town that we will be in. I know that there I will find new ways to do good deeds and help others, like we always used to do together here.”

When Jacob left the city of Beer Sheba and traveled to Haran. He left Israel, where his righteous parents Isaac and Rebecca lived, and journeyed far away, to a country he had never seen before. He was going to live among people who were very different from him, in a place that did not have the holiness of Israel.

Jacob journeyed to Haran not just because he was running away from Esau. There is a more important reason!

Jacob journeyed to Haran because he had a job to carry out, and he was ready to do it. He was willing to move away from his home and to teach people about G-d. He would set a personal example of how a person should live and behave. Jacob went to Haran on a mission.

Actually, we are all on mission. Every individual comes to this world in a pure state. Why does a pure and flawless individual come onto this world, which is not so pure?

Because we all have a mission to perform. We have been sent on as an emissary to make this world a better place. So if you find yourself far from home and you feel lonely, you should know that you have a mission where you find yourself now. And that mission is to bring more goodness into this world.

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**LESSONS FROM THE PARSHA**

Parashas Vayetze

## Kol Mekadesh

**S**halom, kinderlach, I'm home!"

"Shalom Abba? It's great to see you! Did you go to the kennes (gathering) at the seminary?"

"I certainly did kinderlach."

"How was it, Abba?"

"Excellent, kinderlach. One of the Gedolei Yisrael spoke. He brought out many important points in chinuch (education). One of them was about singing zemiros (songs) at the Shabbos table."

"We love singing zemiros, Abba."

"That is wonderful. The Rav revealed a fact that will add so much to our zemiros, kinderlach. He said that when the Abba explains the zemer before it is sung, and then the family sings it together, this connects shomayim va'arets (heaven and earth) and causes Heaven to come down here to earth."

"That is astounding, Abba."

"I know. I am very excited about it, kinderlach. Let us try it this Shabbos with the first zemer of the evening, 'Kol Mekadesh'."

"Okay, Abba!"

Shabbos arrives. After kiddush and hamotzi, the family is ready to sing.

"Please explain the words of 'Kol Mekadesh' to us, Abba."

"I have been preparing for this, kinderlach. Here we go ... 'Whoever sanctifies the Shabbos as befits it ... protects it properly from desecration ... His reward is exceedingly great.' How do we fulfill the first stanza of this zemer? By learning the halachos of observing Shabbos properly; both the positive commandments of honoring and enjoying the Shabbos, and the negative commandments of not violating the melachos. We then carry out

what we have learned and we receive ..."

"Exceedingly great reward! What is the reward, Abba?"

**O**ur sages say that we are saved from the birth pangs of moshiach, the war of Gog and Magog, and the final day of judgment. Hashem will fulfill our wishes, forgive our sins, and distance us from all further sins. We are also blessed with wealth. The blessing comes on Shabbos itself (lechem mishna – a double portion of food) and spreads into the other days of the week."

"What a motivation to strengthen our Shabbos observance, Abba!"

"Yes, kinderlach. We continue ... 'Those who love Hashem ... On Shabbos rejoice and are glad.' The Netziv points out that although the mitzvah of happiness on Shabbos is not explicitly written in the Torah, it is included in the mitzvah of oneg (delighting in) Shabbos. 'Like receiving the gift of nachliel.' The Ohr HaChaim relates that nachliel is from the root 'nachalah' – inheritance. Hashem chose us among all of the nations to be

His inheritance – special for Him. An example of our special relationship is that He gave ‘menucha’ (the tranquility of Shabbos) to His beloved nation Yisrael.”

“What an expressions of love, Abba!”

**Y**es kinderlach, the zemer says that we bless Him for this. We are the descendants of Avraham, who sought out and recognized Hashem out of pure love. He is therefore called ‘Avraham ohavo’. We add on to Shabbos when it leaves and enters. The Medrash HaGadol (parashas Ki Sisa) relates that fear of violating Shabbos is the motivation for this. Our great love for Shabbos also prompts us to welcome it early and part with it as late as possible. Now, let us proceed to the next verse, kinderlach. Have you ever seen the kallah (bride) sitting in her special chair before the wedding?”

“Yes, Abba. She is surrounded by her loved ones.”

“Correct, kinderlach, The Shabbos is compared to a bride. She is situated in the middle of the week surrounded by the other six days. The three preceding days are for preparing for Shabbos, and the three following days glow with the spiritual light that the Shabbos casts into the week. Therefore, Shabbos is referred to as ‘A bride between her beloved ones.’”

“What a new way to appreciate the beauty of Shabbos, Abba.”

“Yes, kinderlach. Let us continue. ‘(We) pure ones inherit (the Shabbos) and sanctify the day with the words of Kiddush, “On the seventh day Hashem contemplated the work which He had done.”’ So too we refrain from melacha and use the free time to contemplate Hashem’s creation and strengthen our emunah (faith) in Him. “All of the descendants of Yaakov Avinu should honor the Shabbos (each one according to his abilities), and enjoy it.”

“How do we enjoy it, Abba?”

**B**y resting, being happy, and taking pleasure in delicious food and drink. Next, we ask from Hashem, ‘Gladden those who keep the Shabbos with the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash. They should glow with the light of Your face, be satisfied with the abundance of Your house, and drink from the stream of Your Eden.’ The Malbim relates that the stream of Eden is a parable to Hashem’s Torah, mitzvos, Shechina (Divine Presence), and prophecy.”

“What a gift!”

“Hashem’s generosity is endless. The next stanza contains many fundamental points. Hashem provides parnassa (livelihood) to those who do not work on Shabbos. There was a time when people felt they would lose money by resting on Shabbos. The zemer tells us that Hashem helps them. We then learn of a way to honor Shabbos even when we are walking! Take short strides, not like during the week. Now, let me ask you a question, kinderlach.

Can you give me a new reason why we eat three sumptuous meals on Shabbos?”

**I**n order to bless Hashem!”

“Excellent! That is exactly what the zemer says! And that brings us to the final stanza, kinderlach. It speaks about the great spiritual light that was present in the world during the six days of creation. That light was hidden after the sin of Adam HaRishon. However, we ask Hashem that the righteousness of those who observe Shabbos should blaze forth like that hidden light. Then we proclaim Hashem’s perfect love and eternal salvation

for His beloved nation, Klal Yisrael!"

"Abba, that was fantastic. We are so inspired. Let us all now sing Kol Mekadesh and bring Heaven down to earth!"

"With Hashem's help, kinderlach. 'Kol mekadesh shvii ...'"

*Kinderlach . . .*

*The zemiros are very special part of the Shabbos table. They are wonderful melodies that gladden the souls of those who sing them. The words are also very inspiring. We now see a new aspect of these holy songs. When explained properly and then sung, they can connect Heaven and earth! What an awesome spiritual power! What a magnificent spiritual pleasure! This Shabbos, kinderlach, enjoy your zemiros in a deeper way. Ask Abba to explain them. Then sing them and enjoy the connection of Heaven and earth.*

#### **Parasha Question:**

- Why did Yaakov refer to his sons as his brothers? (Rashi 31:46)
- How much faster did Lavan travel than Yaakov? (Rashi 31:23)
- How was Lavan blessed by Yaakov presence? (Rashi 30:27)

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## **Family Parsha Vayaytsay**

by [Nesanel Yoel Safran](#)

This article can also be read at: <http://www.aish.com/tp/pak/fp/70897772.html>

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**Vayetzei(Genesis 28:10-32:3)**

**God Is Very Close**

**From this week's Torah Portion**

Where is God? Everywhere! In this week's Torah portion (28:15), God tells Jacob that wherever he goes, God will be there watching over him. And He's with us too - all the time, and everywhere.

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## Story

*In our story, a kid discovers that some things are closer than we think.*

### CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

"Hey, who were you talking to?" Jan asked her friend, Rachel, as the two of them were walking home from school.

"What do you mean?" Rachel asked.

"I saw you just whispering something. Don't tell me you have one of those micro-mini-in-the-ear phones and you're having another conversation with someone more interesting, while talking with me!"

Rachel laughed. "No, I don't have a phone in my ear and besides, Jan, there's no person I could possibly know more interesting than you!"

"I happen to agree with you," Jan smiled. "So then what's up?"

"I was..." Rachel fumbled for the words "I was just having a little chat with God."

"No. Tell me, really," Jan persisted.

"That's really it," Rachel said. "Something was on my mind and I was just telling God about it."

"You mean you were praying?"

"I guess you could call it that, but like I said, it was more like ... chatting."

They stopped at a crosswalk for the light to turn.

"I'm sorry to tell you, but God's not someone you can just chat with," Jan insisted, sounding a little annoyed.

"Why not?"

"Because ... because we're not like in a synagogue or anything. You know, places where you're supposed to be able to send a message to God."

"What difference does that make?" Rachel asked. "God's everywhere."

"What do you mean by that?" Jan said, now definitely annoyed. "Isn't God supposed to be somewhere way up in the sky, like outer space or something?"

"Well, He is there also, but He's also just as much right here with us right now, and inside of us, too. God is *everywhere*."

By now, the girls were so wrapped up in their conversation that they weren't even paying attention to where they were walking.

"So how come I can't see Him?" Jan jostled.

"And the air, you *can* see?"

"Of course not. So what?"

"So I guess that means according to you there's no air here. Oh, no! Help! Get the oxygen masks!" Rachel pretended to yell in panic.

"Shhh!" Jan said, giggling. "You're going to attract attention from all the neighbors ... hey, wait," she said, suddenly concerned, "this isn't even our neighborhood! We are we?"

"Hey, you know, you're right," Rachel said "I think we're really lost."

"I don't like the looks of this place at all," Jan said, tensely, starting to shake. "Please God, help us find our way back to our own neighborhood!" she said.

Just then, a car drove up to them, slowed down and honked. "Hey, what are you girls doing way out here?" It was Mrs. Jacobs, their neighbor.

"We're kinda lost," Rachel said.

"Well both of you jump into my back seat. I'm on my way home right now."

"Wow!" Rachel said to Jan, sitting next to her in the back seat. "Why was I wasting all that time telling you something you already know?"

"What are you talking about?" Jan asked.

"The way you called out to God just now when we were lost. You knew He was right there and ready to listen, after all!"

Jan, her teary eyes glowing with gratitude, thought for a moment and then smiled. "Gee, I guess I did know it ... I just never knew I did."

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## Discussion Questions

### Ages 3-5

Q. How did Jan feel about God at first?

A. She felt that God was someone far away that you could only speak to from certain places.

Q. How did she feel in the end?

A. She realized that God was with her, and everywhere.

### Ages 6-9

Q. What life-lesson do you think Jan learned that day?

A. She'd thought of God as being something abstract and far away, but when she panicked and called out to Him, she realized that she knew deep down, it was just like her friend said - God was everywhere and right with her at every moment.

Q. Why do you think her attitude changed when she got scared?

A. Sometimes, we know things deep in our hearts, but somehow we forget about them and live our lives as if they weren't so. But when we're shocked into action by situations like Jan had, the things we know in our hearts come out and the real truth emerges.

### Ages 10 and Up

Q. Our sages say that 'the world is not God's place, rather God is the world's place.' What do you think that means?

A. God has always existed and is everywhere. The world (and the universe for that matter) are things He created 'inside' of Himself, so to speak. That means that God is the 'place' within which everyone and everything exists.

Q. In the famous '*Shema Yisrael*' prayer, we say that 'God is one.' Does this have anything to do with the theme of our story?

A. It has everything to do with it. When we say God is one - we don't just mean 'and not two, or three.' We are saying that everything in existence is really, at its deepest roots, a unified, infinite oneness. We call that oneness God. This is the essence of the '*Shema*' prayer and of monotheism.

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## **Vayetzei(Genesis 28:10-32:3)**

### **Working Together**

<http://www.aish.com/tp/pak/fp/48952171.html>

## **From this week's Torah Portion**

Nobody likes dealing with bullies, but sometimes there is no choice in the matter. In this week's Torah portion, Jacob had to contend with the bullying of Esau. When a person faces a bully, it's important to stand tall on the inside and not let the bully lessen our self-esteem.

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## **Story**

*In our story, some kids see how much better things operate when they cooperate.*

### **BRANCHING OUT**

The yearly family get-together at their grandparents' farm was one of the best parts of Jeremy's autumn. Even though they didn't really raise animals, except for a few chickens, or grow much stuff there anymore, it was still a blast being able to freely explore and run around instead of having to stay cooped up indoors all the time like back home in the city.

He and his big brother, Ken, were the exact same ages as their cousins, Danny and Matt, which worked out great for Jeremy, since he could have fun playing with Danny, and Matt kept Ken too busy to bother Jeremy.

The guys were hanging around, drinking in the delicious smells pouring out of Grandma's kitchen, waiting impatiently for her to finally call them in for dinner, when Jeremy got an idea.

"Hey, Danny, why don't we ride those two old bikes out to the old apple tree on the other side of the pond and munch some fresh-picked apples while we're waiting for dinner?"

"Great idea!" Danny agreed. They walked over to the bikes, but before they could get on them, they each felt a big push.

"You bet that was a great idea!" chuckled Jeremy's big brother, Ken. "Too bad it's *us* who are going to use it and not you. C'mon, Matt, let's go stock up on apples. If these squirts are lucky, maybe we'll save them one or two." With that, the pair rode off, laughing.

"Jerks!" Jeremy called out to their backs as they pedaled away. Without another choice, he and Danny started walking to the tree. But just as they got there, they were surprised to see Ken and Matt already back on their bike and leaving empty-handed.

"You guys just hiked for nothing," Ken grinned sourly. "Last winter's blizzard really did a job on that tree. Check it out. All the low branches got knocked off, which means all the apples are high and there's no way to climb. If we couldn't reach 'em, you pipsqueaks don't have a chance." And with that, he and Matt rode away.

"Okay, let's just go back," Danny sighed. "At least we'll be good and hungry for Grandma's turkey after all this exercise."

Jeremy was about to agree, when he got an idea...

When he and Danny got back to their grandparents' house, Kenny and Matt were still sitting outside, waiting for dinner.

"Hey, what took you guys so long?" Ken sneered, "I was afraid maybe you passed out from hunger, like I'm about to do, too. Grandma sure is a great cook, but she sure is slow."

Jeremy and Danny looked at each other and giggled.

"Should we show 'em, Jer?" Danny smiled.

"Why not?" Jeremy said and, unrolling his shirt, let about a half dozen juicy, red apples roll out. "Actually we're kinda full now, but if you guys want you can each have *one*."

"I don't believe it!" Ken sputtered "How did you ever get to the apples? Matt and I couldn't and each of us is much taller than either of you!"

"Maybe," Jeremy grinned "But you're not taller than *both* of us put together. We just teamed up and stood on each other's shoulders next to the tree. Then the apples were in easy reach!"

The older boys shook their heads. "Why didn't we think of that, Matt?"

"I guess each of us was just thinkin' about ourselves. Maybe all it takes is a little teamwork to make big jobs smaller ...and make small people bigger."

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## Discussion Questions

Ages 3-5

Q. How did the kids feel at first when the apples were too high to reach?

A. They felt like there was nothing to do but give up.

Q. How did they feel in the end?

A. That by working together they could do something that was impossible to do alone.

### **Ages 6-9**

Q. What life-lesson do you think someone could learn from this story?

A. Although the younger kids weren't as tall as the older kids, when they teamed up and cooperated, they were able to do what even the bigger kids couldn't. Working together is a powerful key to success.

Q. Do you think a person can 'go it alone' in life without ever giving to or taking from others?

A. Almost all of living involves cooperating. Even the products we buy were made by other people. While it's fine to value independence, we should balance it with healthy cooperation.

### **Ages 10 and Up**

Q. How do you think the world would look if people truly agreed to freely cooperate and work together?

A. It would be a dream world - a heaven-on-earth. No one would lack anything and there would be plenty of everything to go around. God made the world abundant - it is only human greed that prevents it from appearing that way.

Q. Is that type of world attainable?

A. Human nature includes a component of self-interest and greed. As long as this exists, it is very unlikely that people will fully cooperate with each other. However, we can and should move toward that ideal. And, in fact, our tradition teaches that just such an ideal, selfless, God- and giving-centered world will eventually develop.

Published: Saturday, November 29, 2008

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