THE WEISS EDITION

וַיֵּצֵא

Vayeitzei



Don't Let It Go to Your Head

Make the Time to Build a Home

How Yaakov Made His Fortune

The Rest of the Story

Light points

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ON THE
WEEKLY TORAH PORTION

Lightpoints

לזכרון ולעילוי נשמת

הרה"ח הרה"ת הרה"ג ישעיהו זושא

ב"ר אברהם דוד ע"ה ווילהעלם

נלב"ע ביום ד' שבט התשפ"ב

תנצב"ה

לעילוי נשמת

הרה"ת **מנחם מענדל**

ב"ר **מאיר** ע"ה

איטקין

נלב"ע ביום י"א כסלו ה'תשע"ז

תנצב"ה

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נדפס ע"י בני משפחתו שיחיו

ויצא
Vayeitzei

28:11 | כח:יא

וַיִּקַּח מֵאַבְנֵי הַמָּקוֹם וַיָּשֶׂם מְרַאֲשֹׁתָיו

He took some of the stones of that place,
and placed [them] at his head.

Don't Let It Go to Your Head

On his journey to Charan, Yaakov stopped for the night. Before going to sleep, he gathered some stones and arranged them around his head. Rashi explains: "He arranged them like a gutter pipe around his head, because he feared the wild beasts."[1]

If Yaakov wanted to protect himself through natural means rather than relying on a miracle, why did he erect the stone barrier only around his head? On the other hand, if the reason he did not build a blockade around the rest of his body was because he trusted that G-d would protect him, why did he take extra measures to guard his head?

1. Bereishis 28:11.

Clearly, Yaakov's placing the stones around his head to ward off intruders must hold deeper significance.

Yaakov was about to enter a new stage of life. Until now, the Torah tells us, Yaakov was "an innocent man who dwelled in tents"[2]—a reference to his extended studies in the "tents of Shem and Eiver,"[3] the centers of Torah study at that time. Now, on the cusp of marriage, Yaakov would be entering the workforce, living in Charan and working with the sly Lavan. He realized that the journey to Charan alone already exposed him to "wild animals," an allusion to the spiritual dangers that even the lead-up to his impending transition could pose. At this critical point, says the Torah, Yaakov protected his head.

In doing so, Yaakov demonstrated that to ensure our commitment to Torah values, even when we are engrossed in earning a living, our *heads* must be guarded. In the words of Tehillim, "If you eat the toil of *your hands*, you are praiseworthy, and it is good for you."[4] Invest and preoccupy only your hands—your physical energy—in your toil and labor; save your head and heart for the study of Torah and for passionate prayer.

As long you keep your head safe, taught Yaakov, and reserve your higher faculties for your relationship with G-d, then your integrity and sense of direction will stay secure even when your body goes to work.

—Likkutei Sichos, vol. 1, pp. 61–62

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2. Bereishis 25:27.

3. Rashi ad loc.

4. Tehillim 128:2.

30:20 | ל:כ

וַתֹּאמֶר לֵאָה... הַפַּעַם יִזְבְּלֵנִי אִישִׁי כִּי יָלַדְתִּי
לוֹ שִׁשָּׁה בָנִים וַתִּקְרָא אֶת שְׁמוֹ זְבֻלוּן

Leah said... "Now my husband will reside with me, for I have borne him six sons," so she named him Zevulun.

Make the Time to Build a Home

Yaakov and his son Zevulun represent opposite ends of the Torah-study spectrum. Yaakov is called "an innocent man who dwelled in tents,"[5] a reference to his extended studies in the "tents of Shem and Eiver,"[6] the centers of Torah study of his time. Zevulun, on the other hand, arranged with his brother Yissachar that "Zevulun will dwell at the seashore, and go out in ships to trade and make profit. They will thereby provide food for the tribe of Yissachar, who will sit and occupy themselves with the study of Torah."[7]

We find, however, that upon the birth of Zevulun his mother said, "From now on, his [Yaakov's] principal residence *(zevul)* will be only with me."[8] Meaning, in spiritual terms, that Torah study—represented by Yaakov—finds its "permanent home" specifically in the company of Zevulun, the person preoccupied with business and worldly affairs.

Practically, this means that the strength and endurance of the Jewish people's dedication to G-d and His Torah is

5. Bereishis 25:27.
6. Rashi ad loc.
7. Rashi, Devarim 33:18.
8. Bereishis 30:20; see Rashi ad loc.

revealed when a Jew sets aside time for Torah study *despite* his engagement with the world—more so than in the diligent study of those who do not engage at all with the outside world.

It was therefore specifically upon the arrival of the worldly Zevulun that his mother's tent became the permanent and principal residence of Yaakov, who represents Torah study, because the (limited) Torah study of the worldly Zevulun is imbued with a tenacity and "permanence" that the Torah study of others does not have.

—Likkutei Sichos, vol. 30, pp. 137–140

31:6 | לא:ו

וְאַתֶּנָּה יְדַעְתֶּן כִּי בְּכָל כֹּחִי עָבַדְתִּי אֶת אֲבִיכֶן

And you well know that I served your father with all my might.

How Yaakov Made His Fortune

The Rambam's Mishneh Torah is dedicated strictly to documenting the Torah's laws, and does not typically discuss the Divine reward promised to us for the observance of specific commandments.

The Rambam makes an exception when describing the extent to which an employee must invest himself in his job. In the Rambam's words:

> He [the employee] is obligated to put all his energy into his work, as the righteous Yaakov said: "I served your father with all my might." Therefore he received reward for this even in this world, as is written,[9] "The man became prodigiously wealthy."[10]

The Rambam's uncharacteristic elaboration of Yaakov's reward for his faultless work ethic indicates that this detail contributes to our understanding of the employee's obligations in Jewish law.

Prior to this law, the Rambam writes: "The employee is cautioned not to steal from the labor that is due his employer by neglecting his work slightly here and there, spending the

9. Bereishis 30:43.

10. Mishneh Torah, Hil. Sechirus 13:7.

entire day in deceit." This law is obviously a financial obligation from the employee to his employer.

In contrast, the Rambam's next statement, requiring a person to invest all his energy into the job (besides for fully utilizing his time and doing the job properly), would seem to be a matter of good faith, an ethical ideal "between you and G-d," more than a duty between employee and employer.

The Rambam dismisses this notion with his description of Yaakov's reward. His words emphasize that Yaakov was not only Divinely rewarded as one would be for any other mitzvah, but that the reward for his sincere effort was evident even in the compensation he received from his *employer*: though Lavan had hoped to deceive Yaakov, through Divine intervention the wages he was ultimately forced to pay accurately reflected Yaakov's hard work, making Yaakov an exceedingly wealthy man. The fact that Yaakov's *devotion* to his job was Divinely rewarded within the compensation he received from his *employer* underscores that putting your fullest effort into your job is not merely a matter of good faith; it is the *financial* duty of the employee to his employer, and therefore duly rewarded by G-d in the most direct and natural manner.

—Likkutei Sichos, vol. 25, pp. 141–144

31:22-23 | לא:כב-כג

וַיֻּגַּד לְלָבָן בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי כִּי בָרַח יַעֲקֹב: וַיִּקַּח אֶת אֶחָיו עִמּוֹ וַיִּרְדֹּף אַחֲרָיו דֶּרֶךְ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים

On the third day, Lavan was informed that Yaakov had fled. He took along his kinsmen and pursued him for the distance of a seven-day journey.

The Rest of the Story

The Baal Shem Tov taught that if a Jew is standing in prayer and someone tries to harass him and disturb him from praying, he should not be disheartened, for the disturbance itself must have a G-dly purpose. Namely, its purpose is to motivate him to delve even more fervently into the prayers he is reciting, to the point that he cannot even hear the disturbance.[11]

The underlying principle behind this idea is that, in truth, what prompted this disturbance is the harasser's spiritual source, which genuinely seeks to contribute to the realm of *kedushah*, holiness. The negative form that this drive assumes, i.e., a disturbance to a Jew's prayers, is only because the *medium* through which this energy is channeled into the physical world is unholy. At its core, however, this disturbance is purely a means of adding depth and passion to the Jew's communion with G-d.

In a similar vein, the Maggid of Mezeritch explained why Lavan chased after Yaakov and his family when they left Charan. The goal of Yaakov's stay with Lavan had been to extract the spiritual "sparks of holiness" that were hidden there, and

11. See Tanya, Iggeres Hakodesh 25.

to restore them to their rightful place—their G-dly purpose. When Yaakov left, however, there were still some holy sparks left behind. Lavan was therefore compelled to pursue Yaakov, in order to cause those sparks to be restored. Those restored sparks are the holy letters in the Torah that tell the story of Lavan's chase of Yaakov and their encounter.[12]

In light of this explanation, the story of Lavan chasing after Yaakov teaches us the perspective with which we must approach any difficulties we encounter in our efforts to do G-d's bidding. Instead of allowing an obstacle to weaken our resolve, we must recognize that even a disturbance can be a catalyst for bringing about greater *kedushah* in this world. By carrying on with our efforts unabated, we will reveal that, at its core, a challenge is only a means of generating greater motivation and resolve in our service of G-d.

—Likkutei Sichos, vol. 1, pp. 80–81

12. See Or Hatorah, Hosafos 5.

לזכות

החתן הרה"ת **יהושע**

והכלה מרת **חנה** שיחיו

גרינבערג

לרגל נישואיהם בשעטו"מ

ביום ז' כסלו ה'תשפ"ז

יה"ר שיזכו לבנות בית נאמן בישראל

על יסודי התורה והמצוה

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נתרם ע"י הוריהם

הרה"ת **מנחם מענדל** וזוגתו מרת **ליבא** שיחיו **גרינבערג**

לעילוי נשמת

מרת רחל ב"ר אברהם (מאייאר) ע"ה

פינסאן

נלב"ע ביום י"ב כסלו ה'תשע"ב

תנצב"ה

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נדפס ע"י בני משפחתה



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