

Parshas Vayetzei | Kislev 4 - 10 | December 5 - 11

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Shabbos Zmanim

2024 Early Friday Mincha, 18 Main
12:12pm and every 15 minutes until 3:00pm

4:09 pm Candle lighting	4:19 pm Mincha in tent κ	4:19 pm Chabad Mincha	4:27 pm Shkiya
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SHABBOS SHACHRIS MINYANIM:

6:15 am <small>Vasikin, followed by a Daf Yomi Shiur 20↑</small>	8:00 am Shachris 2 18 main	9:15 am Shachris 3 Tent κ	10:00 am Shachris 4 Bais Chabad 20↑	10:30 am Shachris 5 18 main
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2:00 pm Pirchei	4:10 pm Mincha followed by Shalosh Seudos	4:27 pm Shkiya	5:07 pm Maariv 1	5:12 pm Maariv 2
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Late Maariv Motzei Shabbos Every 15 Minutes!
5:45 pm and every 15 minutes until 8:15pm | 18 Main

Weekday Zmanim

Zmanim for the week of December 8-14

Shacharis — 20 min. before Neitz
Mincha & Maariv — 12 min. before Plag and more (see posted times)

	Neitz	Shma Magen Avraham	Shma Gra	Tefila Gra	Chatzos	Plag	Shkiya
Sunday	7:10am	8:44am	9:28am	10:15am	11:48am	3:29pm	4:27pm
Monday	7:11am	8:45am	9:29am	10:15am	11:48am	3:29pm	4:27pm
Tuesday	7:11am	8:45am	9:30am	10:16am	11:49am	3:29pm	4:27pm
Wednesday	7:12am	8:46am	9:30am	10:17am	11:49am	3:29pm	4:27pm
Thursday	7:13am	8:46am	9:31am	10:17am	11:50am	3:29pm	4:27pm
Friday	7:14am	8:47am	9:31am	10:18am	11:50am	3:30pm	4:27pm
Shabbos	7:15am	8:48am	9:32am	10:18am	11:51am	3:30pm	4:28pm

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Rechavam and Yeravam

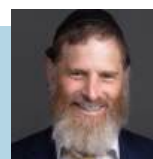
During the rule of Shlomo Hamelech, the nation reached the highest level of wisdom and wealth. Indeed, the streets of Jerusalem were made out of gold. He unified the world by taking a wife from every country. However, once a person reaches perfection, the only place to go is down. and that is what took place after the death of Shlomo Hamelech.

Following the death of Shlomo Hamelech, the kingdom was divided between his son Rechavam and Yeravam ben Nivat from the tribe of Ephrayim. Yeravam was a man of extraordinary potential who had it within his power to join with Rechavam, unite the two kingdoms, and bring Mashiach. Instead, he acted in a way that earned him the title *chotay u'machati* - one who sins and causes others to sin. This is why Chazal included him among those individuals who have lost their portion in *olam habah* – the World to Come. His greatest sin was erecting two golden calves, one in the north of Israel and one in the south of Israel, where the people were encouraged to serve the idols rather than go to the *Bais Hamikdash*. The prophet cried out against this terrible defection from Hashem and prophesied the destruction and exile of the 10 Tribes that followed Yeravam and the tribe of Ephrayim.

Dovid Hamelech had previously designated the Milo area outside Yerushalayim as a communal plaza for the masses of Jewish people who visited Yerushalayim during the festivals. Shlomo Hamelech, however, opted to use this area as living quarters for his new bride, the daughter of Pharaoh. The Jewish people were infuriated by this outrageous act of authority, but lacked the courage to respond to it. Yeravam took the initiative and displayed his religious zeal and publicly denounced the king for his behavior. Hashem rewarded Yeravam for his courageous act in defense of Hashem's honor, and elevated Yeravam to the highest position of authority.

However, *Chazal* add that Yeravam was also severely punished because he publicly shamed the king (*Sanhedrin 101b*). The Maharsha explains that the Sages sought to understand Yeravam's devastating end. They question that since Yeravam performed such a meritorious act, as is evidenced by his appointment over Israel, how could such zeal result in the horrible sins and subsequent exile? If Hashem truly appreciated Yeravam's devotion, how could it develop so quickly into a rampant campaign of idolatry? The Maharsha explains that although Yeravam's intentions were proper, they were accompanied by arrogance. True, Shlomo Hamelech deserved to be reprimanded, but this did not justify public shame and embarrassment. The Sages reveal that had Yeravam been truly sensitive to the king's honor and authority, he never would have acted in this manner. Although he acted out of religious zeal, he was self-absorbed in piety, and he ignored the king's honor and due respect. This imperfection ultimately led Yeravam to total corruption, and caused him to forfeit his portion in the world to come.

In our world, one of the greatest challenges in *chinuch* is that the educator does not live up to the very same standards that he imposes upon his students. "Do as I say, and not as I do" is the silent message many students are receiving. How often is there hurt and alienation in a family all in the name of Hashem? Hashem does not want aggression and fighting, certainly not in His name. If a person wants to defend Hashem's honor, Hashem does not want them to shame someone as a by-product of this defense. I don't know how we will take on the future challenges when Mashiach comes, but if we can remove our own personal arrogance, then we will be one step ahead.



A Thought for Kislev

by Rabbi Daniel Coren

As we have entered the month of Kislev, I would like to share an idea, or rather a theme, that the Jewish people have gone through for hundreds of years, both as a nation and as individuals. The theme is based on a *passuk* *כי אשב בחושך ה' אור לי* "When I sit in darkness, Hashem is my light." Rav Chaim Shmulevitz z"l beautifully relates this *passuk* to a story in the *Midrash* regarding *יוסף משיטא* who *Chazal* refers to as a Jewish traitor, but yet an inspiration to the Jewish people too. How is this so?

When the enemies reached the *Bais Hamikdash*, they were afraid to enter the *haichal*. They told someone named Yosef, who was present at the time, "If you go in, you can keep whatever you find." Yosef took the offer and entered the *heichal*, and came out with the *Menorah*. The non-Jews said "That's too holy for a simple person to privately own" so they told him to go in again and keep whatever he wants. This time Yosef said "I will not." Because of this refusal, the non-Jewish dragged him with a donkey that can inflict harsh pain upon him. As he was in pain he screamed "Woe to me, that I angered my Creator." This Yosef reached a very high spiritual level; he wasn't complaining about his pain, but rather he was upset that he angered his Creator. What happen to Yosef? Rav Chaim explains that Yosef realized how low he fell spiritually; even the non-Jews had more spiritual sensitivity. This caused a great transformation in him and he refused no matter what to enter the *heichal* again. The darkness is what gave him the light of clarity.

In *Parshas Vayetze*, Yaakov Avinu enters the darkness of *galus*. The Bobver Rebbe z"l has a beautiful discussion regarding the travels of Yaakov, and how he instilled an eternal light in the darkness of night that will stay with the Jewish people until the full light of the *geulah* will arrive.

The *Yevanim* represent the ultimate darkness, because they acted fully against the light of Torah. Hence, this a month of incredible opportunity to find the deep light of the Torah, each person on their own level.

May we see the full light emanating from *Tziyon*, *bimhera beyameinu*.





Rabbi YY Jacobson

The Path to Marriage

Like all of the stories in the Torah, these stories too contain psychological and spiritual symbolism, allowing them to become a timeless tale that may assist us in our own efforts to find a spouse and maintain a meaningful relationship with that person.

A well, unlike other pools of water, contains opposite components. On one hand, the well is of no value without human effort and toil. Unlike the readily exposed rain or ocean water, we must dig hard, and sometimes deep, to uncover the spring of water hidden below the crust of the earth. On the other hand, we human beings do not create, generate or even enhance the flow of water of the well; our efforts merely expose that which already exists fully, prior to our labor.

This is the Torah approach to marriage as well. We do not create our personal wellspring of love. Through our efforts we merely expose a relationship that has already been welded by G-d prior to our birth. The connection is there beforehand; the flow of water-energy from your soul to your future spouse's soul is already in existence. It may, however, be completely concealed, and the human job is to search, dig and expose that inner source of water. We must search and "dig" for our spouse; but when we do find him/her, we ought to know that we have discovered a relationship that was in existence even before we met.

When Conflict Emerges

And just as we cannot create a well, neither can we destroy it. We can stuff it, obstruct it or divert its flow, but we cannot annihilate it. The three spiritual giants who became engaged at wells also taught us this message about relationships. When you experience a conflict with your spouse or you simply become aware of strong differences that drive you worlds apart, do not conclude that the relationship is dead.

A married couple must remember that, in most cases, their connection is essential and innate. The split between them is an aberration of their true condition, because it is G-d who created the connection between wife and husband, designing them as "two halves of one soul." The bond between a wife and husband, in other words, is an inherent condition, not an acquired one. It is sown into the very fabric of both of their souls. Your relationship is not subject to destruction.

Yet this preexisting oneness between each husband and wife may lay buried beneath lots of sand and gravel, and each of us needs to be committed to take a shovel in our hands and bring to the surface the inner wellspring of love that binds us to our partner in life. Our fathers encountered their wives by wells to teach us the most effective therapy of all when conflict might emerge — "well therapy:" the unwavering conviction that the relationship is etched into our very souls. Our labor is only to expose and enhance a preexisting bond and oneness.

Hard Work

The marriages of Yitzchok, Yaakov and Moshe came about particularly through much sweat and toil. Yaakov, as this week's portion tells the story, labored 14 years for Rachel; Yitzchok needed to send his father's servant to another country, Mesopotamia, loaded with a ton of wealth to search for a bride. Even after the

servant found Rivkah, he needed to work hard to persuade her family to let her go. Finally, Moshe battled with the shepherds of Midian for the sake of his bride, Tziporah.

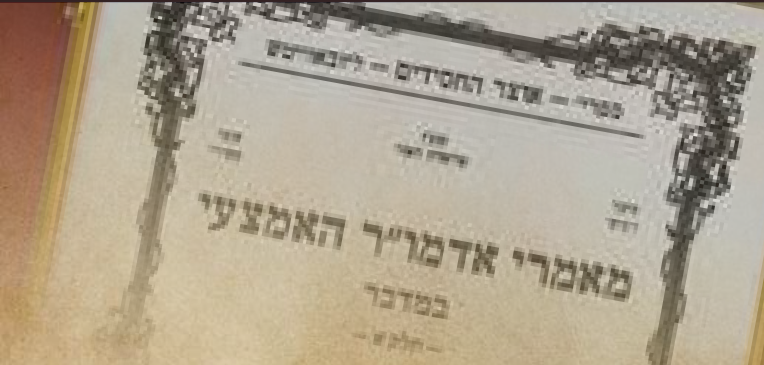
Since they labored so hard to find their spouse, I might have thought that they believed their marriage to be a consequence of their tremendous efforts alone? Thus the Torah informs us that precisely these three men found their women at wells of water. This symbolized their own attitude towards finding a spouse: The relationship, just like a well, is a preexisting reality. But since it is hidden beneath the surface of the earth, each person is called upon to do his or her part in digging, in order to expose and maintain the inherent relationship between the husband and the wife.

Womens Shiur **Tuesday** 9:30am (18 Main)
Chassidus Shiur **Monday & Thursday** 7:45am (18 Main)
Shabbos: Friday Night – before Barchu (20 Upstairs)
Morning 8:40 (20 Upstairs) | After Davening 12:00pm (20 Upstairs)
Please Note: Rabbi Jacobson's Shabbos morning shiur will now begin at 8:40 am, followed by the Minyan at 10:00 am.

The Mittler Rebbe

the Second Rebbe of Chabad

9 Kislev: Birthday and Yahrzeit
10 Kislev: Chag Hageulah



Rabbi Dov Ber of Lubavitch (1773-1827)

Rabbi Dov Ber was a prolific author who published many scholarly books during the course of his lifetime, including Toras Chaim, Imrei Bina, and Peirush Hamilos. Rabbi Dov Ber constantly advocated for better conditions for Russian Jewry, and successfully petitioned the Czar of his time to allow Jews to settle in Ukraine.

It was Rabbi Dov Ber who famously said, "When two people discuss a subject in avoda and they study together, there are two Divine souls against one natural soul."

The Menorahs of Chanukah and the Beis Hamikdash

~Night Kollel~ ~Kollel Boker~



by Rabbi Nachum Scheiner, Night Kollel & Morning Kollel

As we begin to prepare for the wonderful yom tov of Chanukah, I would like to discuss many similarities that we find between the *menorah* of Chanukah and the *menorah* in the *Beis Hamikdash*.

Deriving benefit – There is a Halachah that one may not benefit from the light of the Chanukah menorah. Rashi explains that this is in order to make it clear that it is for the mitzvah. However, the Ran explains that since our lighting is as a remembrance of the menorah in the Beis Hamikdash, it should be similar to the menorah in the Beis Hamikdash, from which it was prohibited to derive any benefit.

The *Minchas Shlomo* explains with this notion the text of “*haneiros halalu*,” recited after candle lighting: “*haneiros halalu kodesh heim*,” these candles are “holy.” These words seem to contradict the *Gemara* in Shabbos that asserts that there is no intrinsic *kedushah* in the Chanukah lights. Based on the Ran, he says that the intention is that although they are not halachically holy,” they are given certain regulations as if they are “holy.”

Similarly, we find that any oil that is leftover may not be used for other purposes. This does not seem to be consistent with the normal rules and regulations of *tashmishi mitzvah* - articles that are used for a *mitzvah*. In general, once a *mitzvah* is finished, the article may be used for other purposes. Why is this *mitzvah* different? Once again, the *Me’iri* explains that this is to equate it with the oil of the *menorah* in the *Beis Hamikdash*, that one was not allowed to derive any benefit from.

Burning the leftover oil – In general, when something is *asur b’haanahah* (there is a prohibition to derive any benefit from it), there is sometimes a requirement to have it burned, and sometimes it is sufficient to have it buried. In regards to the leftover oil, either one should have been fine. However, the *Halachah* dictates that we have it burned. Rav Elyashiv explains that this is because we do with the leftover oil what they did with the leftover oil and wicks in the *Beis Hamikdash*, which were burned.

Reusing the wicks – The *Shulchan Aruch* allows reusing the wicks, as the *Mishna Berura* explains, because it is easier to use wicks that were already used. However, the *Kaf Hachaim* states that it is preferable to use new wicks every night. He explains that this is to highlight the new miracle that occurred each night. He also mentions another reason that our *menorah* should be similar to the *menorah* in the *Beis Hamikdash*, that they cleaned out and used new wicks every night.

The fire should burn steadily – Similarly, the *Panim Yafos* points out that the wicks used for the *menorah* in the *Beis Hamikdash* were not allowed to be too thick or thin, in order to ensure that fire burns steadily. He then adds that the same should apply to the wicks of the Chanukah *menorah* in order to ensure that the fire burns steadily, just as was required of the wicks in the *Beis*

Hamikdash.

The fire should catch on fully before removing the candle – The *Biur Halachah* (*Siman 673*) points out that since the *menorah* should be like the *menorah* in *Beis Hamikdash*, one should wait until the flame catches onto most of the wick sticking out before removing the candle.

Minchah before the candle lighting – The *Shaarei Teshuva* writes that preferably, one should daven *Mincha* on Friday prior to lighting the *menorah*. This is because our candle lighting is similar to the lighting of the *menorah* in the *Beis Hamikdash*, which was after the *korban tamid shel bein ha’arba’im*, that corresponds to our *Mincha* prayer.

Rabbi Scheiner

KOLLEL BOKER | 7:00-8:00am

- Chavrusa learning - Gemara
- Currently: מסכת מועד קטן
- Friday - Shuirim Beinyonei Dyoma and relevant topics

NIGHT KOLLEL | 8:15-9:45pm

- Chavrusa learning - Halacha
- Currently: הלכות קריאת התורה

SHIURIM BY ROSH KOLLEL & FEATURED GUEST SPEAKERS

- Daf Yomi | 8:45-9:45pm
- Mishna Yomis | 8:45-9:00pm
- ZERA SHIMSHON SHIUR | 8:15-9:00pm Thursday Nights

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The Rizhiner's daughter once sighed, and her father admonished her: "When you sigh, Hashem says, 'You think this is bad? I will show you what's bad.' And when a person is happy, Hashem replies, 'You think your life is good? I will show you what is good.'"

Rabbi Nachum Scheiner

מוהל מומחה

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Blinded by the Money

Rabbi Tzvi Abramoff / Kinder Torah

“Yaakov is coming.”

“Yaakov? Yaakov? My sister’s son? Her husband’s family is rich! When Eliezer, the servant of Avraham came looking for a wife for Yitzchak, he brought ten camels laden with riches along with him. I was so excited that I jumped in front of my father to meet him. I love money. Where is my nephew Yaakov?”

“And it was, when Lavan heard the news of Yaakov, his sister’s son, he ran toward him.” (Bereshis 29:13). Rashi explains that Lavan ran to meet Yaakov because he thought that he had brought expensive gifts with him.

“Where are Yaakov’s riches? He did not bring any camels. Perhaps there is gold hidden under his clothes.”

“He embraced him” (Bereshis 29:13). “I don’t feel any gold on his body.”

“He kissed him” (Bereshis 29:13). “I don’t see any pearls hidden in his mouth. Where is his money????”

“And took him to his house” (Bereshis 29:13).

And so the relationship between Yaakov and Lavan began. When Yaakov arrived in Lavan’s house, both were poor men. The presence of the Tzaddik Yaakov in the home of Lavan, brought the blessings of prosperity. Lavan fathered sons, and his flocks began to grow and grow.

“Yaakov, you are a good worker, however, I must change your wages. You will have to get by with a little less money. I hope that it does not inconvenience you too much.” Lavan failed to realize that his newfound wealth came from Yaakov. Instead he tried to swindle Yaakov by reducing

his wages 100 times.

Yaakov also prospered. He had eleven sons and one daughter. The time had come for him to establish his own home. “Please let me go to my place and my land. Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served you” (Bereshis 30:25-26).

And so, they agreed that Yaakov would receive the spotted and speckled sheep and goats as his wage. Yaakov separated his sheep from Lavan’s flocks. Then a great miracle happened. Yaakov’s flocks multiplied and increased greatly, and he became a very wealthy man. How did Lavan and his sons react to Yaakov’s prosperity? “Yaakov has taken all that belonged to our father” (Bereshis 31:1). “The daughters are my daughters, the children are my children, the flock is my flock, and all that you see is mine” (Bereshis 31:43).

Lavan was obsessed with money. He was so jealous that he could not take pleasure in Yaakov’s success. Instead, he tried to grab everything he could under the pretense that it was all his. He refused to see the Divine Hand, guiding prosperity his way.

Gashmius (materialism) has a very strong effect upon us. It can blind us. The clearest and simplest truths in life can become cloudy when money is involved. The last verse of the haftorah states, “For the ways of Hashem are straight; the righteous walk in them, and sinners will stumble over them” (Hoshea 14:10). Yaakov and Lavan both experienced open miracles. Yaakov thanked and praised Hashem. Lavan stumbled in a muck of greed and jealousy. He was blinded by the money.



THE REBBE MAHARASH and THE LOST SOUL

Rabbi Menachem Posner

Night was approaching as the carriage pulled up in front of the Alexander Hotel, one of Paris’s most luxurious establishments. Out of the carriage stepped the Rebbe Maharash, the fourth Chabad rebbe, followed by two attendants and two companions.

Walking into the hotel lobby with an air of confidence, he approached the reception desk and, in fluent French, asked for the best suite available on the casino floor. The clerk was taken aback; the suite was very expensive and usually reserved for nobility. But the Rebbe Maharash did not flinch at the exorbitant price, and was soon escorted to his rooms by a bellboy. He instructed his attendants, R. Leivik and R. Pinchas Leib, to stay with him in the hotel, while his two companions, R. Monye Monensohn and R. Yeshaya Berlin, both men of means, went to a cheaper hotel nearby.

The Rebbe Maharash settled in. The suite was spacious and elegantly outfitted, with fine furniture and valuable paintings. But the Rebbe was not there for the luxurious decor. He had come to Paris to find and save a lost soul, a young Jewish man who had fallen so far into the clutches of gambling and drinking that he had long forgotten his heritage.

After several hours, the Rebbe got up and left his room. He walked along the corridor until he reached the casino. He scanned the room with his piercing eyes, until he spotted the young man at a table, where he was playing dice. He had a glass of wine in front of him, which he sipped from time to time.

The Rebbe Maharash walked towards him, ignoring the curious glances of the other gamblers. He reached his table, and placed his hand gently on his shoulder. The young man looked up at him with surprise and annoyance.

“Who are you?” he asked.

The Rebbe Maharash smiled warmly at him, and said: “Young man!

One is not allowed to drink non-kosher wine!”

The young man blinked in confusion. He did not understand what the Rebbe Maharash meant. “What are you talking about?” he asked. “Such wine dulls the sensitivity of the mind and the heart. Be a Jew!” the Rebbe Maharash continued.

The young man felt a strange sensation in his chest, as if something was stirring inside him. He recognized the Rebbe’s words as coming from his own tradition, which he had abandoned long ago. The Rebbe Maharash then bade the man good night and left the casino, his eyes blazing with passion and excitement. Exhausted and exhilarated, the Rebbe sat down on a chair in the corridor, not realizing that it was a chair on which one would be carried from one floor to the next (there were no elevators in those days). Only after he was already being carried up to the next floor, did the Rebbe realize and inform the porters that his room was on the same floor as the casino and that he could be brought back down. Some time later, the young man came looking for the Rebbe. The two remained closeted for many hours together. What words they exchanged are not known, but the young man emerged from that meeting a new man. The very next morning, the Rebbe left Paris.

His mission had been accomplished. And the young man? He embraced his Jewish identity, began living as a Jew, and became the father of the well-regarded Klein family of France, known for their Orthodoxy and piety.

Listen to Hashem – It's What's Best for You

הלא נכריות נחשבנו לו כי מכרנו ויאכל גם אכול את כספנו 31:15

“Are we not considered by him as strangers? For he has sold us and even totally consumed our money.” Yaakov Avinu wanted to convince Rochel and Leah to leave the house of their father, Lavan. Yaakov Avinu told his wives, Rochel and Leah, that Hakodosh Boruch Hu told him to return to the house of his parents. Additionally, there is nothing here, by Lavan, to stay for. Rochel and Leah respond that they are strangers at Lavan's house and they will listen to the word of Hashem. It sounds as if *chas v'sholom* Rochel and Leah were only going to listen to Hashem because it worked out anyway. Wouldn't a more appropriate response have been to say that they will listen to Hashem's command – and it doesn't matter what the ramifications of listening would be?

In truth, every *mitzvah* that we are to perform is not really a great test for us, for it is really easy for us to perform every *mitzvah*. The real truth is that there is never any loss when one performs the *mitzvos* of the Torah.

One who has true *emunah* in Hakodosh Boruch Hu knows that he will absolutely not lose anything by performing a *mitzvah*. Although there is a façade the *yetzer hara* creates that makes it look like one will be losing by performing *Mitzvos* – in truth, it is nothing more than a façade, and nothing is lost. Leah and Rochel were saying that they had full *emunah* in Hakodosh Boruch Hu, and thus knew that no matter what it may have looked like, in truth they would lose

nothing by following the command of Hashem. (קול רם)

Certainly, they would have listened to the command of Hakodosh Boruch Hu, even if in theory they would deem their listening to be harmful to them. However, that is the point the Torah is teaching us that they never thought that the word of Hakodosh Boruch Hu could be harmful to them. If one has the attitude that it is difficult to listen and heed the command of Hashem for he is giving up much by doing so, then every time, it is a struggle to listen. It becomes even more of a struggle for the children – as they see their parents struggle with it – even if the parents are successful, they think it's too hard and turn away from it.

We must instill within ourselves and our children complete *emunah* in Hakodosh Boruch Hu – and if it is a command of Hashem – it is so easy for us to do – for it is truly good for us. Yaakov and his family were by Lavan for many years, which generally has a detrimental effect upon people to live in such a toxic environment. Nonetheless, Yaakov and his family had complete *emunah* in Hakodosh Boruch Hu. Hakodosh Boruch Hu told them to leave – and it was easy for them to leave. They said they are leaving nothing behind, for all that Hakodosh Boruch Hu does is for good, and one does not lack anything due to following *Ratzon Hashem*. May we be *zoche* to live our lives in this manner – to always be excited to do *ratzon Hashem*, in all situations and in all circumstances, because it is good for us, and doing so will never cause us any harm.

Making a Difference

"ויצא יעקב מבאר שבע וילך חרנה" (בראשית כ"ח, י')

“And our forefather Jacob left Beer Sheva, to go towards Charan”

The words of Rashi from grade school ring in our ears:

“When a *tzaddik* leaves a town, its shine diminishes, its beauty lessens, and its wonder ceases.”

We are all designed for greatness, but how many of us fulfill our destiny? Somewhere along the way we lose the fascination we had as a child. Maybe it's our own inner voice, maybe it's the voice of others- but we learn, unfortunately, to give up on our dreams at some point. Settling for the safe, sure and predictable – we take jobs or open businesses that will bring our families all they need to live comfortably, but at what cost?

Each one of us has in our spiritual DNA, the strength to save a city, if we would only learn to be concerned for others as well as ourselves, to think globally as well as domestically. A nation of leaders – our talents, creative and otherwise, should never be wasted. If we allow the “*tzaddik*” in our soul to diminish, if we allow our dreams of creativity (emulating our Creator), to fall by the wayside, we will have forsaken the very power that G-d Himself has invested in us to change the world. Remember, one who saves even one soul (his own) is as if he has saved an entire world.

As we get older, our yearning to be more creative could get stronger – but we must reach for the golden ring with confidence. The road to self-actualization may be bumpy, but it is the only one with complete satisfaction-

Dealing with the Lavan (challenges) in Our Lives

All this positive talk is fine and good when things are going well, but sometimes life takes a turn, leaving us to deal with a problem that we never, ever anticipated. It is then that we realize that the greatness in our souls manifests itself, when we rise to a challenge. Perhaps this is why the word for challenge in our holy language is *Nisayon*- (lit. *something that is raised*).

RABBI BEN ZION SNEH



Often, we face not an ordinary challenge, but one that to our eyes seems insurmountable. Remember, to the Master of the World, (who knows all that is destined to happen to us until the end of time) - it is a custom-made challenge. We climb the steps to greatness by rising to challenges with a positive attitude, as little anger as possible and the understanding that the challenge itself is what we need to achieve greatness and eternity.

Yaakov Avinu set out for Charan, but ended up spending 14 years in the Beis Medrash of Shem and Ever. Despite his well-intentioned plans, Hashem led him where he needed to be.

R' Chaim Volozhiner, the author of the *Nefesh Hachaim*, and the closest student of the Vilna Gaon, tells us that if we wish to unblock ourselves, change our “luck” so to speak and realign ourselves with our destiny, we must internalize the words “*ein od milvado*”- there is absolutely no one but You Hashem who determines our future.

Once we make peace with the fact that what we have is what was meant for us, disappointment and jealousy will fall away. We will then have successfully cleared a path for our *tefilos* to achieve miracles.

Ein od oelavado - more than just words.

There is truly no one besides Hashem who can help us. If we believe this, then there is only one thing left to do. Cry directly to Him to answer all our pleas. Whatever comes from Above is for the best. As the saying goes – “it's all good.” We may have said it hundreds of times, but we must now *feel* it.

One way to actualize this is to pray to Hashem for help in *every little thing we do*, even hundreds of times a day, if necessary. In this month of Kislev (lit. the covering of the heart), if we open our hearts to Hashem, inviting Him into our lives, then he will open His heart, as it were, to us and hear our prayers. May this month bring miraculous *yeshuos*, large and small, for our families, our communities, and all of Klal Yisroel!

Good Shabbos!

Written by R' Avrohom Hillel Reich based on a lesson and story by Harav Ben Tziyon Sneh Shlita

A FORTUNATE CHAIN OF EVENTS

Rabbi Rafi Wolfe

וידרף אחריו דרך שבעת ימים וגו' וישג לבן את-יעקב וגו'

[Lavan] chased after [Yaakov] a seven-day journey...and Lavan caught up to Yaakov...

After Yaakov was scammed and abused by his uncle Lavan for over twenty years, he decided to flee with his family back to his homeland. Instead of informing his uncle of their departure, he decided to leave without notice. He was a six-day distance from Lavan before the latter realized what had happened. Lavan chased after Yaakov on the seventh day, and on that very day managed to catch up with him. This is seemingly miraculous. How did Lavan travel so far in one day, something which took Yaakov much longer? This tells us that a miracle happened, and the Earth contracted so that Lavan would catch up to Yaakov. Why didn't this same miracle happen for Yaakov, so that he would arrive home before Lavan could catch up? Also, why would such a miracle be performed for Lavan, whose intention was to kill Yaakov?

What happened after Lavan caught up to Yaakov? Hashem kept his promise, and Lavan wasn't able to harm Yaakov. However, a dispute ensued. Lavan's precious idols were missing, and he suspected Yaakov of stealing them. Insulted at such an accusation, Yaakov cursed that whoever had the missing idols would die. Yaakov was unaware that his wife Rachel was actually the perpetrator. Unfortunately, Yaakov's curse came true. As they continued their journey to the land of Israel, Rachel went into labor. She died while delivering her son Binyamin. Because of Yaakov's curse, she died before her time just as they had entered the land of Israel. Yaakov buried her where she died. Why didn't he bury her in his future burial plot, along with his forefathers and foremothers?

The answer is found in a *Midrash*, which describes the emotional scene which occurred in the Heavens and on Earth when the Jews were exiled by the Babylonians. Thousands were brutally slaughtered; many were sold as slaves. The rest were sent to wander aimlessly without a home. Yirmiyahu, the leading prophet at the time, was called upon by Hashem to summon, in Heaven, the *Avos*, the forefathers, as well as Moshe, to see if they could overturn this harsh decree. Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov all pleaded the case for the Jews, but to no avail. They wept bitterly at the hopeless situation of their descendants. Moshe, their great leader, also tried and wept in vain. Suddenly, the foremother Rachel made a case for the Jews. She too, wept greatly for their vindication. Hashem responded to her by saying that her tears were not in vain. There was great merit for her efforts, and Hashem declared that the Jews would one day return to their homeland.

This is why Yaakov buried Rachel where she died. He saw that one day his future descendants would be exiled, and they would walk by her grave. As they walked by, Rachel would pray and weep for their redemption, and be answered. What caused Rachel to die early in the first place? Yaakov's unintentional curse that she should die. What was it that caused Yaakov to unintentionally curse his wife? Lavan catching up to Yaakov's family. We see from here that Hashem's miracle of the Earth contracting for Lavan

was the catalyst for the future redemption. Although at the time it seemed hopeless, that Lavan's agility would cause him to kill Yaakov and his whole family, they left unscathed. Lavan's argument with Yaakov did however lead to Rachel's untimely death. While this was a personal tragedy, it wasn't a meaningless one. It was to pave the way for the future redemption of Yaakov's children from their exile. It was to allow Rachel to cry for her children.

This is a lesson that we can take with us throughout our lives. Hashem is behind the scenes in everything that happens to us. He sometimes causes events which on the surface appear to be unfair. They may even be tragic. We see from Lavan that they can even sometimes occur through a miracle. However, they are not without purpose. There's an end-goal in mind. Everything that Hashem does is for the good. We just may not see the big picture yet.

Based on a devar Torah heard from Rabbi Frand at Ner Yisroel.

UFARATZTA



B'ROCHEL BITCHA HAK'TANAH Vayetzai 29,18 DON'T LIMIT YOUR OPTIONS

I received your letter in which you write that you have set your mind on the kind of person you would like to marry but find it difficult to meet such a person.

In matters of a *Shidduch* it is no good limiting yourself or limiting Hashem's help to a particular and narrow objective. I therefore do not think that you should limit yourself as to consider only a Rabbi or a professional man as the only possible partner for you.

Another point is that it is necessary to do something in a natural and suitable way to meet a suitable party, while, at the same time having full faith in the Almighty that He will send His blessing. The stronger such faith will be, the quicker one will see the realization of it. Besides, a person who has faith and optimism is a more cheerful and a more successful person than one who is discouraged and pessimistic.

Enlist the help of your friends in this matter, and have complete faith in the Creator and Master of the world, Who takes care of everything and everybody, that he will also take care of you. May Hashem fill your heart's desire, in a way that is best for you, materially and spiritually.

==== *Rebbe Responsa*

Tes Kislev: The Mitteler Rebbe's Yom Holedes, 5534 / 1773 and Yom Hilula, 5588 / 1827. The Mitteler Rebbe is the eldest son of the Baal HaTanya. He took over the leadership of Chabad from his father.

Yud Kislev, 5587 / 1826 is the day when the Mitteler Rebbe, Admur DovBer, was freed from prison.

just so you should know...



Abarbanel on the Parsha

Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett

Although it is a minority opinion among the commentators, Abarbanel clearly holds that Leah was hated by Yaakov as a result of her having deceived him on the wedding night. Abarbanel supports this contention with his analysis of the language and circumstances of the births, and the naming of her first three sons.

The Abarbanel states that Leah, like Rachel, was initially barren, and required an act of Divine Providence in order to conceive. Seeing that she was hated by her husband, however, G-d "opened her womb" immediately in order to bring her closer to Yaakov. (The fact that all of the sons of Yaakov were conceived as a result of Divine Intervention is an indication that the formative stage of the creation of the Jewish nation should not be viewed as a natural historical development, but rather as a result of G-d's direct intervention in the historical process to bring about His chosen nation – an intervention which continues throughout Jewish history.)

Abarbanel explains that hatred is expressed in three ways: actions, speech, and inner thoughts. With the birth of each of her first three sons, Leah hoped that another dimension of Yaakov's hatred toward her would disappear. His hateful actions were exemplified by his unwillingness to have regular intimate relations with her. As a result, she named her first son Reuven, the root of which is 'to see'. This is as the verse states, "Because G-d has *seen* my humiliation." She hoped that his actions will change, since she has fulfilled the purpose of marriage by providing Yaakov with offspring. However, Yaakov continued to speak to her with anger and reproach. As a result, she named her second son Shimon, a reference to the word '*shema*' or 'hear'. As the verse states, "And she conceived again and bore a son and declared, 'Because G-d has *heard* that I am hated, He has given me this one also'." Even though Yaakov's actions did not betray his hatred, the hateful words remained and G-d heard those words. She hoped that her second son would erase this second dimension of his hatred.

She named her third son Levi, rooted in the concept of loving attachment. The Torah states, "*This time* my husband will become attached to me, for I have borne him three sons; therefore, he called his name Levi." She hoped that the third dimension of hatred, the dimension of inner thoughts, would be erased as well, thus allowing Yaakov to feel a true attachment to her. Leah also realized that the elimination of hatred does not automatically result in a feeling of love, as she says "This time my husband will become attached to me." She emphasized the importance of this third child, whom she hoped will both erase the hatred and replace it with love.

The specific mention of three sons is another reason for Yaakov to change his attitude toward her. His grandfather Avraham had two sons from two wives; his father Yitzchak had two sons from one wife. He has surpassed them both with three sons from one wife. Finally, the Abarbanel demonstrates that Leah's hopes were fulfilled. Reuven and Shimon were named by her, but Levi was named by Yaakov, a clear indication that he agreed to a loving attachment as a result of the joy that she brought him.

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Tips for the Jewish Home

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman

On the Shabbos of *parashas Vayetzei*, Rebbe Mordechai of Lechovitz *zy'a* informed his *chassidim*, "This Shabbos, I will not teach you Torah. I know that you are waiting to hear about *shalom bayis*, but this week, I don't have to teach you because whatever you need to know, you can find in the *parasha*." Those weren't his exact words, but this was his intention. He wouldn't teach Torah on Shabbos *Parashas Vayetzei* because any lesson his *chassidim* needed to hear would be found in the *parasha*. Therefore, we begin this week with practical ideas gleaned from the *parasha* that each person can utilize in his home.

In many relationships, there is a stronger figure and a weaker one. For example, parents and children, a teacher and a student, a boss with his workers, and often a husband with his wife or visa-versa. The stronger figure might have the ability to enforce his way and opinion over the other, and the weaker party is forced to oblige, but as we will see, it isn't wise to do anything with force. Instead, the stronger one should convince the weaker party to see things as he does. We learn this concept from this week's *parasha*.

Hashem told Yaakov Avinu that he must leave Lavan's house and return to *Eretz Canaan*, as it states (31:3), "Hashem said to Yaakov, 'Return to the land of your forefathers and your birthplace, and I will be with you.'" Yaakov could have forced Rachel and Leah to return with him, or he could have simply told Rachel and Leah what Hashem said, and then for sure, they would have nothing to say. But in ten *pesukim*, Yaakov explained to Rachel and Leah that it was in their best interest to leave their father's home. He told them that their father hates him and wants to harm him and that he has tricked him one hundred times. Then, when Yaakov told them what Hashem commanded him, they wholeheartedly left their father's home. They said (31:14, 15) "Do we still have a share or an inheritance in our father's house? Are we not considered by him as strangers, for he sold us and also consumed our money?"

Rashi explains that they said, "Even at a time when people usually give a dowry to their daughters, viz. at the time of marriage, he behaved toward us as [one behaves toward] strangers, for he sold us to you (for you served him fourteen years for us, and he gave us to you only) as wages for labor... He also ate our money because he would withhold your wages." They agreed to leave with Yaakov and go to *Eretz Canaan*.

The *Shlah HaKadosh* (*Vayetzei* 44) explains, "When one wants something from his family, it isn't proper to force them – even when he rules over them. Instead, he should persuade them – as best as he can – until they agree with him and want the same as he wants. It's better when they are encouraged to see things as he does rather than to force them to obey. See how many words Yaakov *Avinu* used to convince Rachel and Leah to agree to his request with a happy heart, even after *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* commanded him to do so.

Yaakov's Character

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z"l



What kind of man was Yaakov? This question resonates throughout his story in the Torah. Though initially described as an *ish tam*, a simple, straightforward man, Yaakov's actions seem to undermine this narrative. He not only strategically barter for Eisav's birthright, he also gains Yitzchak's blessing by exploiting his blindness. These episodes, troubling in nature, can be solved through the Midrashim which portray Yaakov as all-good and Eisav as all-bad. This interpretation simplifies our perspective.

Alternatively, one might argue that Yaakov's actions are justified, due to the prophecy his mother had received that marked him as the *bachor*, the 'chosen' son. Yet the text remains unsettling. Indeed, both Yitzchak and Eisav accuse Yaakov of deceit, a charge unique among our biblical heroes. It seems almost like just retribution for his trickery then, when Lavan in turn tricks Yaakov, substituting Leah for Rachel on Yaakov's wedding night.

But Yaakov's subsequent actions in Lavan's household further complicate his character. He strikes a deal for streaked and spotted animals, perhaps using his experience and understanding of farming to increase his wealth significantly. Despite their own success, Lavan and his sons feel cheated. Yaakov is then advised by God to flee, mirroring his earlier escape from Eisav. Which brings us back to our question: What kind of man was Yaakov, and what story is the Torah telling through his life?

Perhaps we should view Yaakov as a figure who responds to oppression and attempts to dehumanize him by using his wits. Perhaps he is like the oppressed characters in folklore like "Br'er Rabbit", who use their intelligence to subvert unjust hierarchies and seize opportunities to right the wrongs around them.

Throughout his life - even since birth - Yaakov seems to live in Eisav's shadow. Eisav is the athletic hunter, the biblical era's sporting star, who captures the love and attention of his father while Yaakov wallows in the tents. Later in life, Lavan attempts to exploit and blackmail Yaakov in his time of need - when he is at his most vulnerable. In each of these cases, when Yaakov comes out ahead, he's leveraging his quick-wittedness to turn the tables on these typical winners, casting their strengths into weaknesses, if only for a short time.

But then he wrestles with the angel and receives a new name: Yisrael. The names symbolize his struggle and victory over Divine and human challenges. This is when Yaakov's character fully emerges. As Yisrael, he faces challenges head-on, moving beyond small subterfuges.

His transformation from Yaakov to Yisrael mirrors an important thread throughout Jewish history: the determination to embody not only quick-wittedness and learnedness, but also moral courage and heroism.



Yaakov must become Yisrael. For he is not merely the quick-witted victor, but the hero of moral courage who stands tall in the eyes of humanity and God.

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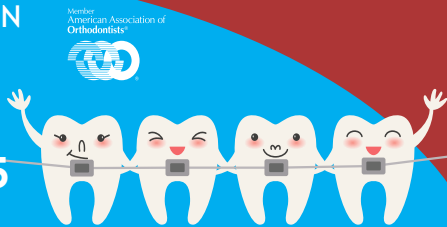
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A Halachic Thought *on* Vayeitzei

Rabbi Yisroel Reisman



As you know, Leah was expecting, and she was expecting a boy. At the same time, Rochel was expecting a girl. Rachel asked HKB"Y to switch things, since she wanted to have at least two *shevatim*, equal to the *shefachos*. Nowadays we have sonograms so a person can know the gender of the baby. People often ask, is it right to find out the gender of the baby when the baby is hidden? There are those who say, Hashem hid it, why are we trying to figure it out? I personally don't understand that. The same Hashem who hid it gave us the ability to have a sonogram and take a look and see what is going on. We don't say that if somebody has a stomach ache he shouldn't take an X-ray because Hashem hid it and you shouldn't see what is going on. Or you shouldn't take a CT scan because Hashem hid it. Why is this any different?

I want to tell you something fascinating. Besides the fact that it appears at least from the Maharsha that Leah knew what gender her child would be, there is a *Teshuvos* Rav Akiva Eiger, *siman tzaddik tes*. He has there a specific *shaila* that has to do with an *Even Ha'ezer inyan*. What the *shaila* is, is not *noge'a* to us. What is *noge'a* is that he writes that a woman who was expecting went to an expert and brought her urine and R. Akiva Eiger cites the urine testing

in regards to the baby's gender. The expert said that yes, she is expecting, and she is in her third month of pregnancy, and she will have a son. That is what happened. It is difficult to know how they were able to test urine and be able to come to this conclusion. But Rav Akiva Eiger doesn't say it as a *chiddush* or a *peleh*, it is part of the *eidus* of a woman about her pregnancy. *Halo davar hu!* We see *b'feirush* from this Rav Akiva Eiger that it was acceptable to know the gender of the child. It seems that it was something that people routinely did.

Derech agav, the Chazon Ish writes in *Emunah Uvitachon* that society today thinks that previous generations were backward and ignorant. The Chazon Ish writes that this is not so. They knew a lot. There are things previous generations knew that we do not know, specifically regarding medicine. Therefore, it should be no *chiddush* that there were things that might have been known – not *davka* to Rav Akiva Eiger personally, it is not talking about his knowledge – to an expert in previous generations; a person who was able to test urine to predict the outcome of a pregnancy. Such a thing existed, and *derech agav* we see that knowing the gender of a child ahead of time is perfectly okay.

If You Validate It, It Is No Dream

Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein

Yaakov awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely Hashem is present in this place, and I did not know!"

"Surely" seems like the wrong word. Yaakov wakes up after a phenomenal prophetic dream, and expresses his wonder about this special, holy place. What he should have said is "Wow!" In biblical Hebrew, we can get pretty close to that. The word "behold!" conveys the same sense of surprise mixed with awe. (This word is no stranger to our *parshah*. In the verses that precede ours, the word *hinei* is used multiple times.)

Surely - *achein* - means something very different. It implies that several alternatives can be considered, with the speaker concluding that one of them alone can be shown – indeed, surely – to be the correct choice. But why would Yaakov use "surely" instead of "behold" in our *pasuk*?

Yaakov may have been less of a dreamer than we suppose. He realized that not all dreams are cut from the same cloth. Some are nothing more than ordinary brain maintenance. As the *gemara* tells us, people think about certain things by day, and then dream about them at night. Only some dreams communicate messages from the upper worlds. Even those often contain "static" - extraneous elements that have no real meaning, or even false meaning.

Yaakov very much wanted to believe in the dream he remembered so vividly, and in the implications of all of its details. How was he going to assure himself that the dream in its entirety conveyed accurate impressions from beyond? The upshot of his nocturnal vision was that "Hashem was

standing over him." How could he be sure?

Yaakov arose from his dream and felt the *kedushah* of the place. He was gripped with awe and reverence, and realized that it was nothing less than Hashem's presence there that was working on his *neshamah*. Hashem was indeed standing over him; Yaakov had walked into His close proximity! He had been the source of the dream, nothing less.

Furthermore, Yaakov reasoned, his perception of the place's *kedushah* was abundantly clear at that moment. Why had he sensed none of it when he arrived, the afternoon before? He had davened that evening, using his trademark *tefilah* of *maariv*. How had he managed to spend time in focused prayer to Hashem, and not feel what he now sensed in the morning? Yaakov understood that Hashem had purposely withheld his comprehension of the *kedushah* of the place, just so he would be able to have that dream. Had he realized the *kedushah* of the place, it would have kept him up all night. Certainly he would not have treated the place cavalierly, and bedded down for the evening. Yaakov realized that he had been, as it were, set up to remain unaware of the *kedushah*, and therefore able to lay himself down to sleep.

In that sleep, he had his dream. In the morning, seized by the *kedushah* of the place, Yaakov was able thereby to demonstrate to himself that his dream was a genuine prophetic one. Surely, said Yaakov, surely the *Shechinah* is in this place, and it was the source of my dream.

Based on Be'er Mayim Chaim, Bereishis 28:16

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JOKES

The Vacation Trip

Chaim and Shoshana were planning a vacation down to sunny South Florida from Atlanta with their 2 kids.

They told the kids that they would soon be going to Miami. They explained that it would take two days to drive there and that they would stop at different neat places along the way. The kids were really excited.

A couple of days before they were to leave, six-year-Shlomie came up to Chaim and asked, "How many more days before we go to Your Ami?" Chaim almost died laughing.

Brain Food

A customer at Gene's Gourmet Grocery marveled at the proprietor's quick wit and intelligence.

"Tell me, Gene, what makes you so smart?"

"Fish heads," says Gene. "You eat enough of them, you'll be positively brilliant."

"You sell them here?" the customer asks.

"Only \$4 apiece," says Gene.

The customer buys three. A week later, he's back in the store complaining that the fish heads were disgusting and he isn't any smarter.

"You didn't eat enough," says Gene. The customer goes home with 20 more fish heads. Two weeks later, he's back and this time he's really angry.

"Hey, Gene," he says, "You're selling me fish heads for \$4 apiece when I just found out I can buy the whole fish for \$2. You're ripping me off!"

"You see?" says Gene. "You're smarter already."

Lawyer Joke

"Excuse me," a young fellow said to an older man, "I've just moved here and I wonder if this town has any criminal lawyers?"

"Well," replied the older man, "I have lived here all my life and all I can tell you is we are pretty sure we do, but no one has been able to prove it yet."

Fuzzy Math

A woman holding a baby walks into a drugstore and asks if she can use the store's baby scale.

"Sorry, ma'am," says the storekeeper. "Our baby scale is broken. But we can figure the baby's weight if we weigh mother and baby together on the adult scale, and then weigh the mother alone, and then subtract the mother's weight."

"Oh, that won't work," says the woman.

"Why not?" asks the storekeeper.

"Because I'm the baby's aunt, not his mother."

Happy Childhood

On admission to the nursing home where I worked, each new resident was interviewed by a social worker.

During one session, an alert, twinkling-eyed, 96-year-old man was asked, "Did you have a happy childhood?"

"So far, so good!" he replied.

Giving Birth

My niece, pregnant with her second child, was certain she wanted an epidural for pain management during childbirth.

Her doctor asked her at which stage of labor she wanted the epidural administered.

Her response: "Just meet me in the parking lot!"

New Model

"My uncle in Detroit tried to make a new kind of car. He took the engine from a Ford, the transmission from an Oldsmobile, the tires from a Cadillac, and the exhaust system from a Plymouth."

"Really? What did he get?"

"Fifteen years."



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In Memory of Chaim Muzzer ז"ל



תומכי שבת דיראקלנד קאנטוי
לד"ג ר' חיים בן ר' שמואל צבי

AD DEADLINE DECEMBER 30, 2024



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RABBI SCHEINER'S NIGHT KOLLEL SHIUR



Night Kollo
UNDER THE DIRECTION OF RABBI NACHUM SCHEINER שליט א
CHAVRUSA LEARNING IN A WARM ENVIRONMENT

Currently Learning
הלכות קריאת התורה

8:15 - 9:45 pm
18 Main Bais Medrash

THE SHALOM BAYIS PANEL AT THE YARCHEI KALLA



RABBI DANIEL COREN SHILT'A
BY THE HACHNASAS SEFER TORAH
TO BAIS MEDRASH CHANCHEEN IN MONTEBELLO



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