

SEDRAH SELECTIONS PARSHAS VA'YEITZEI 5775 BS"D

Ch. 28, v. 10: "Va'yeitzei Yaakov miB'eir Sheva" – And Yaakov left from B'eir Sheva – Rashi comments that the departure of a righteous person from a city makes a mark. Rabbi Dovid of Tolna once came to a town and remarked that he sensed a special aura of sanctity there. People told him that the Holy Baal Shem Tov had visited the town. He entered the town Beis Midrash and immediately was drawn to a specific seat, again sensing its spiritual aura. He was told that this was the exact seat on which the Holy Baal Shem Tov sat. He said that this is the intention of our Rabbis with their saying that the departure of a righteous person makes a mark. Even after he has left a mark of sanctity remains.

Ch. 28, v. 10: "Va'yeitzei Yaakov miB'eir Sheva va'yeilech Choronoh" – And Yaakov left from B'eir Sheva and he went to Choron – Rashi comments that a word that needs a prepositional Lamed, meaning "to," can alternatively have a Hei at the end to mean "to." Why is Rashi raising this point here, as it occurs regularly? Another question is why the verse itself didn't simply say "l'Choron," and totally leave out "va'yeilech."

We would have diminished the letters Vov-Yud-Chof, as the Lamed would be needed as the prepositional prefix, and also the Hei at the end of Choronoh. These four letters in the order Yud-Hei-Vov-Chof are a well known Name of Hashem that guards a person while traveling. It is extracted from the final letters of "KI malochoV yitzhaveH loch lishmorhco b'chol drochecho" (T'hilim). Rashi points out the added Hei to bring the extra letters in the verse to form this Name, which Yaakov took with him on his travels. (Rabbi Zvi Elimelech of Dinov)

Ch. 28, v. 10: "Va'yeilech Choronoh" – And he went to Choron – The Chid"o in Nachal K'dumim clarifies our verse based on the gemara Kidushin 29b according to the understanding of Rabbeinu Tam cited in Tosfos. When one reaches marriageable age, should he continue studying Torah and push off marriage, or should he marry and then attempt to learn even though he now has a "millstone on his neck" and he must earn, not just learn. Those who resided in Eretz Yisroel, who are financially secure should marry first, as they will have purity of mind and will continue to learn long hours given their financial ability to provide a family. Those who live in Babylonia, who are in the main poor, should study Torah for longer, as if they were to marry earlier they would not be able to provide sustenance for their family and would have to leave the hallowed halls of Torah study.

When Yaakov left home he had funds and jewellery, so he thought he was headed directly to Choron to find a wife. This is "Vayeilech Choronoh." When he was accosted by Elifaz and relieved of his funds and jewellery he became like one of the bnei Bovel and had to change his course. He then decided to study further in Yeshivas Eiver.

Ch. 28, v. 11: "Va'yikach mei'avnei hamokome" – And he took from the stones of the location – Rashi cites the gemara Chulin 91b that Yaakov took numerous stones and they fused and became one, as indicated in verse 8, "Va'yikach es ho'evven," singular. Tosfos ad. loc. says that the change to singular can easily be resolved by saying that he took one stone from the available stones.

Why does verse 8 stress that he took the stone that he had placed for his head? What difference does it make which stone he took as an altar?

The Ponim Yofos asks how Yaakov was allowed to use a stone from the mountain as an altar. The gemara A.Z. 45a says that you can be sure that any elevation in the land Canaan was used for idol worship.

The Beis Yoseif asks the most famous kashya in the Torah world. Why are there eight days of Chanukah given that there was only a seven day miracle with the oil, as there was sufficient oil for one day of lighting. The Baal Sho'eil Umeishiv asks that since they wanted to use only pure oil, why didn't they concern themselves with the fear of "tumas hesset," an impurity that is not counter-indicated even with a sealed bottle. He answers that they were concerned but had no choice. However, once they witnessed a miracle that there was still oil left for another day they realized that the oil was in fact pure, as Hashem does not perform miracles with impure objects. Thus the need for a miracle on the first day was necessary to guarantee that they had pure oil.

Similarly here, once a miracle was performed with the stones that Yaakov placed for his head he was assured that they were not used for idol worship, and he used only these stones/stone. (T'cheiles Mordechai)

Ch. 29, v. 7: “Lo eis hei’o’sEIF hamikneh hashku hatzone ulchu ru” – It is not yet the time of gathering the cattle offer drink for the sheep and go to graze – The time has not yet come to collect Hashem’s sheep, the bnei Yisroel. In the meantime give them drink and food. Supply them with ample sustenance.

This seemingly light level of “drush” was told to the Brisker Rov on Shabbos when he was very weak and near his end, so as to lift his spirits. He responded that this is not a “vertel.” A great person must have said this. He himself repeated it at the third “seudoh” and added that it is sourced from the Holy Zohar. He added that based on this there is a section of “birkas hamozone” that is now well understood. We first say, “V’al habayis hagadol v’hakodosh” and then “r’einu zuneinu par’n’seinu.” We are asking Hashem to bring back the glory of Yerusholayim, the kingly household of King Dovid, and the Beis Hamikdash. We then request that in the interim Hashem please sustain us, R’einu zuneinu par’n’seinu v’chalk’leinu.” The insight on the verse was said by Rabbi Meir of Primishlan.

Ch. 29, v. 25: “Va’y’hi vaboker v’hinei hee Leah” – And it was in the morning and behold she was Leah – B.R. 70:19 relates the morning conversation between Yaakov and Leah. He said to her, “You trickster the daughter of a trickster. I called out Rochel and you responded that you were Rochel. Leah said back to Yaakov, “You likewise responded in the affirmative to your father when he asked you if you were Eisov.” Although the M.R. ends off with Leah saying that she had Yaakov as a teacher in impersonation, this dialogue can be explained on a deeper level. With Yaakov’s receiving the primogeniture blessing he absorbed the spiritual destiny that Eisov theoretically could have had. In essence he was now Yaakov and the positive aspect of Eisov. The talk of the day was that Lovon had two daughters and Yaakov had two sons. The older of each, Eisov and Leah would marry, and the younger of each, Yaakov and Rochel would marry. Leah told Yaakov that since he impersonated Eisov and received Eisov’s blessings, he embodied Eisov. If so, she was his appropriate wife as well, independent of any consideration of his also taking Rochel as a wife. (Avodas Yisroel of Kozhnitz)

Ch. 29, v. 26: “Lo yei’o’sEH chein bimkomeinu” – Thus is not done in our place – What kind of flimsy excuse is this!? Lovon clearly agreed to give Yaakov his daughter Rochel as a wife, notwithstanding that she had an older sister. Kol Yehudoh answers that Lovon said, “LO yei’o’sEH KEIN bimkomeinu,” NO is made into YES in our place. It is perfectly acceptable here in Choron to say one thing and then say the opposite.

Ch. 29, v. 31: “Ki snuoh Leah” – That Leah was hated – Heaven forbid to say that the righteous Yaakov would hate his wife. Rather Hashem saw that Leah was hated by herself, meaning that she came down hard on herself for perceived shortcomings in her service of Hashem. (Rabbi Simchah Bunim of Parshizcha in Kol Simchah)

Ch. 30, v. 1: "Hovoh li vonim v'im ayin meisoh onochi" – Give me children and if not I am dead – In the next verse Yaakov responds with “Hasachas Elokim onochi ashem mona mi’mEICH bonim,” am I in the place of G-d Who has withheld from you children?” These words are explained by Rabbi Yehoshua Admor of Belz as follows: When a person prays directly to Hashem for some salvation, Hashem sometimes grants it to him even if the petitioner is in doubt if Hashem would deliver. This is not the case when he uses an intermediary, in this case Yaakov. Since Rochel entertained the possibility of “v’im ayin,” and if not, Yaakov could no longer be her conduit for this wish. This was his response. “Am I in the place of Hashem, Who responds positively even if you are in doubt? The source of withholding children is you, “Asher mona me’meich” because of your doubt.

OROH V'SIMCHOH - MESHECH CHOCHMOH ON PARSHAS VA'YEITZEI BS"D

Ch. 28, v. 18: "Va'yikach es ho'evven asher som m'raashosov va'yo'sem osoh MATZEIVOH" - Rashi on Dvrim 16:22 d.h. "asher" says that a "matzeivoh" is a one stone altar, while a "mizbei'ach" is made of numerous stones. The MESHECH CHOCHMOH says that Yaakov was particular to sanctify a "matzeivoh" altar and not a mizbei'ach altar so that idol worshippers would not use it afterwards. There was no fear in Avrohom's days of their using a single stone altar as per Rashi on Dvrim 16:22 (Sifri piska #146) that a "matzeivoh" was not used by idol worshipper in the days of the Patriarchs, and the reason that the bnei Yisroel were later prohibited to build a "matzeivoh" was that the idol worshippers copied our Patriarchs and instituted the use of a one stone altar only, so we should not emulate them. The MESHECH CHOCHMOH

adds that Yaakov awoke at night as indicated by verse 16 and our verse, and yet waited until the morning before setting the stone as an altar, because through his actions Yaakov was doing the spiritual groundbreaking, "maa'seh ovoe siman labonim," of sanctifying this place as the future site of the Beis Hamikdosh, as is explained in the Sifri Dvorim piska #354. The Beis Hamikdosh may not be built at night, as per the gemara Shvuos 15b that derives this from "u'v'YOM hokim es haMishkon" (Bmidbar 9:15). On a most simple level, we can say that Yaakov preferred to take the stones that had experienced Heavenly intervention, as the many stones he placed around his head became one, as pointed out by Rashi in verse 11 d.h. "va'yo'sem." Since they fused and became one stone, it was a "matzeivoh" and not a "mizbei'ach."

Ch. 29, v. 35: "Hapaam odeh es Hashem" - Rashi (M.R. 71:6) says that after the birth of her fourth son, Leah found it appropriate to offer special thanks to Hashem for bestowing upon her the merit to give birth to four sons. Since Yaakov had four wives and it was known to them that he would have 12 sons, if his wives would equally give birth to these 12 sons, each would have 3 sons. Now that Leah gave birth to a fourth son, more than her portion, she gave special thanks to Hashem.

The MESHECH CHOCHMOH in a homiletic manner explains that we do not make a blessing on three of our senses, sight, hearing, and touch. However, the gemara Brochos 43b derives from the words "Kole hansomoh t'ha'leil Koh" (T'hilim 150:6) that we make a blessing when we SMELL fragrant objects. Thus upon the birth of Reuvein, whose name is based on "seeing" (verse 32), of Shimon, whose name is based on "hearing" (verse 33), and of Levi, whose name is based on "touching" (verse 34 as per Targum Onkeles on the word "yilo'veh," "yis'chabar") there was no blessing of Hashem. Yehudah is the patriarch of the kingly tribe from whom Melech Hamoshiach will come, about whom the verse says, "VAHARICHO b'yiras Hashem" (Yeshayahu 11:3), - and he (Melech Hamoshiach) will be able to judge by SMELL.

CHAMISHOH MI YODEI' A – FIVE QUESTIONS ON THE WEEKLY SEDRAH – PARSHAS VA'YEITZEI 5775 – BS"D

1) Ch. 28, v. 10: "Va'yeilech Choronoh" – And he went to Choron – At the end of the previous parsha (28:2) Yitzchok commanded Yaakov to go to Padan Arom. In verses 5 and 7 it says that he went to Padan Arom. If so, why does our verse say that he went to Choron?

2) Ch. 28, v. 11: "Va'yikach mei'avnei hamokome" – And he took from the stones of that location – Why didn't Yaakov have a pillow?

3) Ch. 28, v. 13: "Elokei Avrohom ovicho v'Eilokei Yitzchok" – The G-d of your father Avrohom and the G-d of Yitzchok – Although we have an axiom that grandchildren are considered like children, hence we could understand why Avrohom is called Yaakov's father (Rabbeinu Menachem), but it is most unusual to have the verse call Avrohom Yaakov's father and in the same breath mention Yitzchok without saying that he is Yaakov's father.

4) Ch. 28, v. 20: "Va'yidor Yaakov neder leimore" – And Yaakov made a vow thus saying – The Ohr Hachaim Hakodosh says that "leimore" teaches us that Yaakov did not make this vow in his heart only. He verbalized it, as otherwise it would not be binding. This is most puzzling, as based on the gemara Shvuos 26b, commentators derive that when the vow is made to sanctify something for the service of Hashem, even a thought to do so is binding. In verse 22 he sanctified a tenth of his property for Hashem.

5) Ch. 29, v. 14: "Va'yeishev imo chodesh yomim" – And he resided with him a month of days – Rashi comments that Lovon was willing to take Yaakov into his home because he was his relative, but it was not gratis. He had Yaakov work as a shepherd. In the middle of this Rashi says, "v'chein ossoh," and he did like this. Mahar"i Chalavoh explains that Rashi is telling us that Lovon kept his word. What has Rashi accomplished in clarifying our verse by telling us this point of information?

ANSWERS:

#1

- 1) Although Lovon originally resided in Padan Arom, after the death of Terach he moved to Choron to take control of property he inherited from Terach that was located there. Yitzchok was not aware of the move. After not finding Lovon there he was apprised of his move to Choron. (Baa'lei Tosfos)
- 2) Our verse simply means that to get to Padan Arom he went in the direction of Choron. (Rashbam)
- 3) This means he went with the anger of Eisov upon him. (Baa'lei Tosfos)
The letter Hei at the end of this word, meaning TO, requires clarification.
- 4) Choron and Padan Arom are one and the same. (Chizkuni)

#2

Medrash Habiur says that he did not use a pillow because coddling oneself brings to forgetting Torah knowledge.

#3

Tzror Hamor explains that the verse teaches us that Yaakov has a greater connection to the primary characteristic of Avrohom, which is kindness, than he has to his own father Yitzchok, whose primary trait is strict judgment, hence "ovicho Avrohom" but not "ovicho Yitzchok." Mahari"k explains that "ovicho" refers to Elokim.

#4

Perhaps, thought alone is not binding because it was a conditional vow.

The Rambam hilchos arochin 6:1 says that even though a person's promise to sanctify something that has never come into existence is not binding, if he vows that he will sanctify it, the vow is binding. Thus the item, when it comes into the donor's possession is not automatically sanctified, nevertheless, he must sanctify it when it becomes his. The Rambam cites verse 22 as his proof. Our problem is now solved. Although sanctifying something in one's heart is binding, here where the items to be tithed were not yet Yaakov's, he was limited to a commitment by vow to later sanctify it. The vow surely needs to be verbalized, and this is the intention of the Ohr Hachaim Hakodosh.

This answer might be refuted. The Rivo"sh in responsa #228 says that before the Torah was given one could create a binding transaction, such as selling an item, that is not yet his. He cites the sale of the primogeniture birthright that Eisov sold to Yaakov as his proof. If so, the Rambam's proof seems to be negated. However, the Rambam himself in hilchos m'lochim writes that a ben Noach is not bound by "lo yacheil d'voro," that one not desecrate his word, i.e. one is committed to keep his word. If so, what sort of proof does he have from Yaakov's promise to later sanctify a portion of his possessions? We perforce must say that he understood that Yaakov wanted his commitment to be a stringency, based on the laws that would govern the bnei Yisroel after their receiving the Torah. The laws that would govern the bnei Yisroel after their receiving the Torah include that one cannot sanctify an object that is not yet his. Therefore we must say that nevertheless there is a commitment to do so by virtue of a vow.

There is more on this subject in responsa Chasam Sofer Y.D. #243. (Pardes Yoseif)

#5

Perhaps he is bothered with the word "imo," with him. As expanded upon a number of times, but especially in parshas Bolok, there is a nuance of difference between "imo" and "ito." ITO simply means WITH HIM, even without a united purpose, as a group of disparate people flying on an airplane, albeit to the same airport, but each to a different destination and for a different purpose. IMO would be used when a group of people is flying together to attend the same wedding.

Given this, how did Yaakov reside IMO for a month? The answer is that Yaakov embodied the character trait of EMES, truth. This one time Lovon kept his word and not only told Yaakov that he may stay with him for a month, but also actually had him as his guest for the month, not evicting him earlier. This is the key to understanding IMO. (Nirreh li)

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