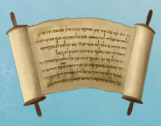
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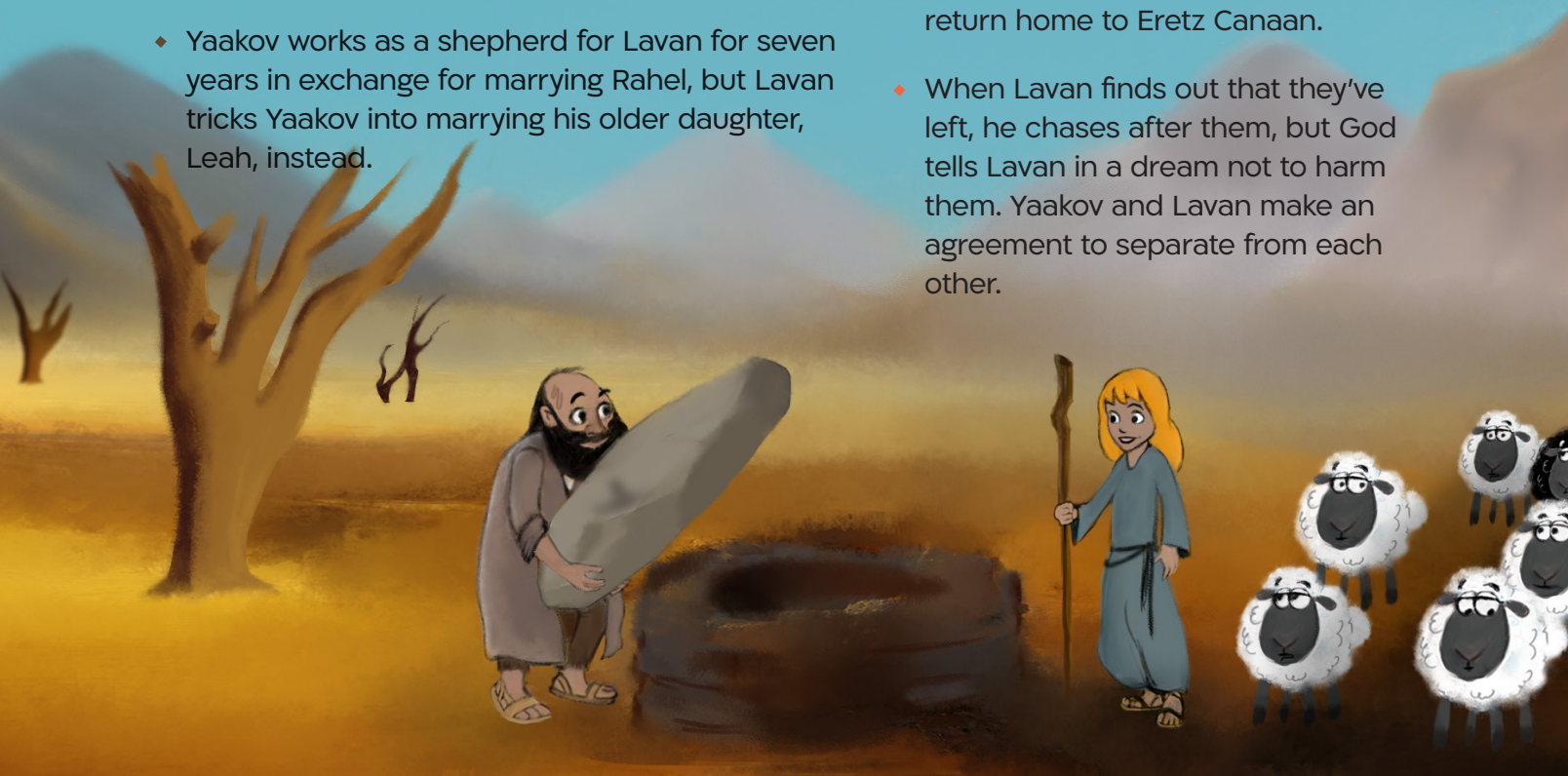
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מָה בְּפָרָשָׁה • In This Week's Parashah

- Yaakov runs away from Be'er Sheva and travels to the home of his uncle, Lavan.
- Yaakov dreams of a סֻלָּם (sulam, ladder) going up to the heavens with angels going up and down it.
- God tells Yaakov that his descendants will inherit אֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן (Eretz Canaan, the Land of Canaan) and that God will protect him.
- Yaakov continues his journey until he encounters a well, where he meets Rahel, daughter of Lavan.
- Yaakov works as a shepherd for Lavan for seven years in exchange for marrying Rahel, but Lavan tricks Yaakov into marrying his older daughter, Leah, instead.
- Yaakov agrees to work for an additional seven years in exchange for marrying Rahel as well.
- Rahel and Leah, along with their servants Bilhah and Zilpah, give birth to 11 boys and one girl in total.
- Yaakov continues to work for sheep as payment, but says that Lavan hasn't treated him fairly, so Yaakov, Rahel, and Leah decide to return home to Eretz Canaan.
- When Lavan finds out that they've left, he chases after them, but God tells Lavan in a dream not to harm them. Yaakov and Lavan make an agreement to separate from each other.



פְּשַׁט הַפְּסוּקִים • Understanding the Verses

Yaakov is fleeing to Haran to escape Esav's anger and also to find someone to marry. On his way, he lies down to sleep, and he has an amazing dream.

Bereishit 28:12-13

Yaakov dreamed. And behold: There was a ladder standing on the ground, and its head reached the heavens.
And behold: Angels of God were going up and down on it.

And behold: God stood there and said, "I am the Lord, God of your father Avraham, and God of Yitzhak.
This land where you are sleeping – I will give it to you and your children."

בראשית כח: יב-יג

וַיַּחֲלֹם וְהִנֵּה סֻלָּם מֻצָּב אַרְצָה
וְרֹאשׁוֹ מַגִּיעַ הַשָּׁמָיְמָה
וְהִנֵּה מַלְאֲכֵי אֱלֹקִים
עֹלִים וְיֹרְדִים בּוֹ׃

וְהִנֵּה ה׳ נִצָּב עָלָיו וַיֹּאמַר
אֲנִי ה׳ אֱלֹקֵי אַבְרָהָם אָבִיךָ וֵאלֹקֵי יִצְחָק
הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה שֹׁכֵב עָלֶיהָ
לְךָ אֶתְּנֶנָּה וּלְזַרְעֶךָ׃

- What is the meaning of the angels on the ladder? Do they connect to God's message?
- What do you notice about the direction the angels were going? What direction would you expect angels to travel?
- How many times do these pesukim say וְהִנֵּה (vehinei, and behold)? What do you think this repetition means?
- How do you think this dream might have made Yaakov feel? (The Torah tells us a bit about Yaakov's reaction: **Look it up!** Bereishit 28:16-17.)
- Have you ever had a dream that made you feel better about something going on in real life? What kinds of dreams do you wish you could have?

Before or after Shabbat, scan to listen to a discussion of these pesukim on the Vayeitzei episode of Torah Time!

מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

Bereishit 28:10

Yaakov left Be'er Sheva, and went to Haran. He came upon a certain place and stopped there for the night, for the sun had set...

בראשית כח:י

וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב מִבְּאֵר שָׁבַע וַיֵּלֶךְ חָרָנָה:
וַיִּפְגַּע בַּמָּקוֹם וַיָּלֶן שָׁם כִּי בָא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ...

The place where Yaakov stops is the place he dreams about angels going up and down a ladder, and where God speaks to him.

But the order of events here is a bit confusing. In the first pasuk, it sounds like Yaakov went to Haran. But then, in the next pasuk, we hear about him stopping at a place along the way to Haran. What's going on here?



This aggadeta (midrash in the Gemara) explains with a story.

Talmud Bavli Hullin 91b

R. Yitzhak said: ... Yaakov arrived in Haran and realized: 'I just passed a place where my ancestors prayed, and I didn't stop to pray there!'

Since he wanted to return to that place, a miracle happened. The land became smaller, so Yaakov could quickly jump right back to that place.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת חולין דף צא עמוד ב

אָמַר ר' יִצְחָק: ...כִּי מְטָא לְחָרָן אָמַר אֶפְשָׁר עָבַרְתִּי עַל מָקוֹם שֶׁהִתְפַּלְּלוּ אֲבוֹתַי וַאֲנִי לֹא הִתְפַּלַּלְתִּי?!

כַּד יָהֵיב דַּעְתֵּיהּ לְמֵיהַדַּר קָפְצָה לֵיהּ אַרְעָא מִיָּד.

The miracle that Yaakov experiences has a special name: קְפִיצַת הַדֶּרֶךְ (kefitzat ha-derekh). It literally means "jumping the way," and it describes a miracle when a path gets shorter in order to speed up long journeys! According to this gemara, Avraham's servant also experienced kefitzat ha-derekh on his way to find a wife for Yitzhak in Parashat Hayyei Sarah. And this gemara also says the same miracle happened to a warrior named Avishai ben Tzeruya on his way to save King David from a Pelishti giant!

Content and editing by Anna Leah Berstein Simpson, Yitzhak Bronstein, Elie Kaunfer, Chana Kupetz, Shoshie Lockshin, Jeremy Tabick, Ethan Tucker, Effy Unterman. Illustration by Chaim File. Design by Jen Klor.



- What might be special about kefitzat ha-derekh? Do you see any clues for why Yaakov got to experience this miracle?
- Think about the reasons that Yaakov left Be'er Sheva. How might he have been feeling on his journey? How would a supernatural experience have affected Yaakov?
- Even though you probably haven't experienced kefitzat ha-derekh, have you ever felt like you are on a mission, on the way to doing something important, and God is supporting you along the way? How can we notice the small and big ways God helps us?



פֵּרוּשִׁים • Commentary

Leah names her fourth child Yehudah.

בראשית כט:לה

וַתַּהַר עוֹד וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן וַתֹּאמֶר הַפַּעַם אוֹדֶה אֶת ה'

עַל כֵּן קָרְאָה שְׁמוֹ יְהוּדָה...

Bereishit 29:35

She again became pregnant and gave birth to a son and she said: "This time I will thank (odeh) God."

That's why she named him Yehudah...

Our פַּרְשָׁנִים (parshanim, commentators) wonder: **What was it about Yehudah's birth that made Leah want to give thanks?**



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Rashi (France, 1,000 years ago)

This time, I will thank — Because I got more than my share, from now on I should give thanks.

רש"י

הַפַּעַם אוֹדֶה – שֶׁנָּטַלְתִּי יוֹתֵר מֵחֶלְקִי, מֵעַתָּה עָלַי לְהוֹדוֹת.

Rashi draws from a midrash that Leah believed it would be fair for her to be the mother of three tribes. That's because she knew, through prophecy, that there would be 12 in total, which meant that Leah, Rahel, Bilhah, and Zilpah could each have the same amount: three. When Leah had a fourth, she realized she had more than her fair share, and she said a special thanks to God for that gift.

Targum Pseudo-Yonatan

This time, I will thank God, that from this son kings shall come forth. This son will be an ancestor to King David, who will give thanks before God...

תרגום המיוחס ליונתן

הָדָא זִמְנָא אוֹדֵי קֳדָם ה' דְּמִן בָּרִי דֵּין עָתִיד לְמִיפַּק מַלְכִין וּמִינֵּיהּ פּוּק דָּוִד מַלְכָּא דְּעָתִיד לְאוֹדוּיֵי קֳדָם ה'...



- Can you explain, in your own words, what was special about Yehudah's birth, according to Rashi and according to the Targum?
- Leah is married to Yaakov, but the Torah tells us that Yaakov loves Rahel more. How do you think Leah might have felt?
- If you look at the names Leah gives her first three children, you can see her yearning for Yaakov's love (see p. 10 and Bereishit 29:32-34). As far as we know, at the time of Yehudah's birth, Leah's relationship with Yaakov hadn't changed. What can we learn from Leah's ability to give thanks?
- When is it easy for you to give thanks? When is it more difficult?

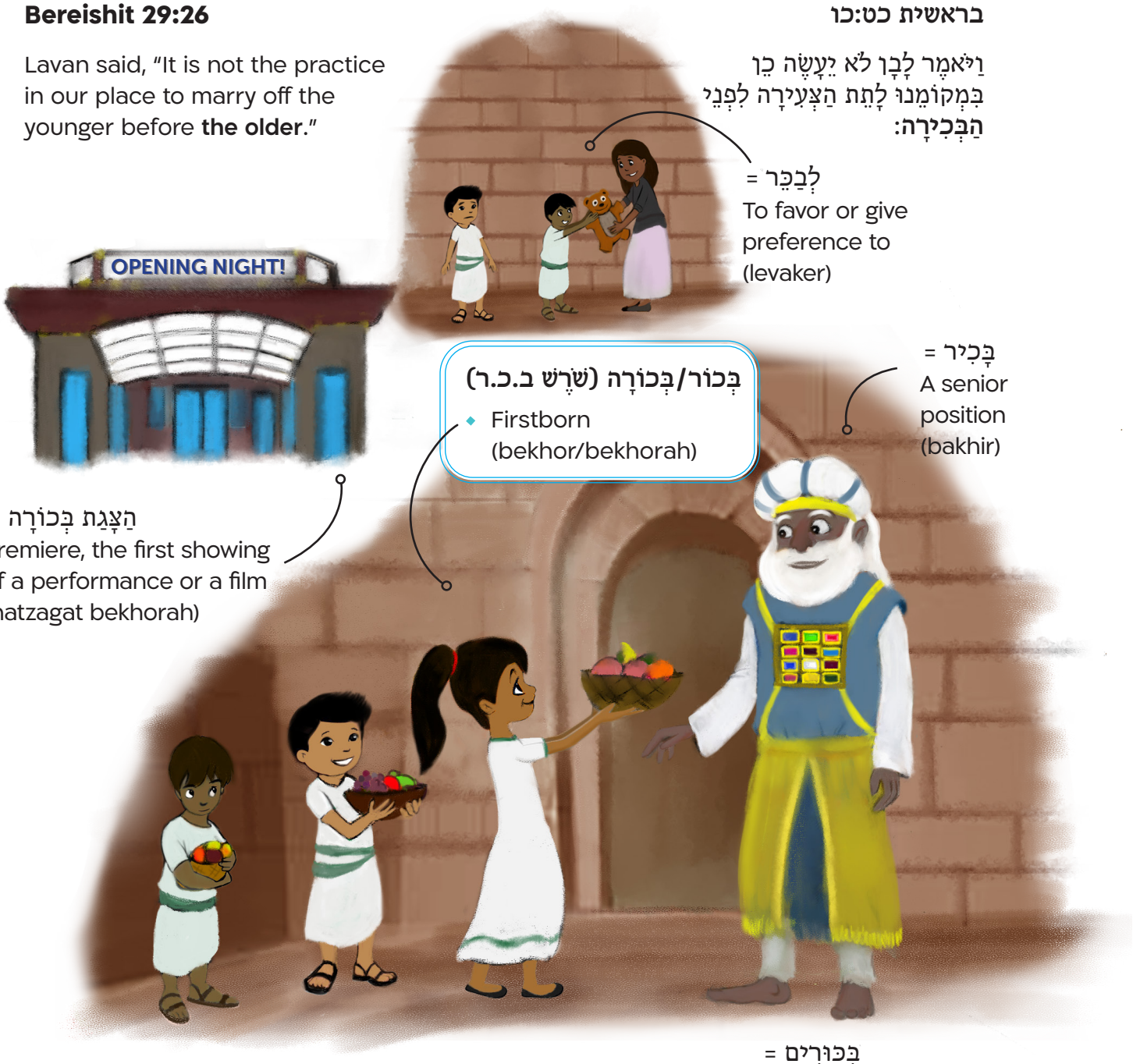
רֶגַע שֶׁל עִבְרִית • A Moment of Hebrew

Bereishit 29:26

Lavan said, "It is not the practice in our place to marry off the younger before **the older**."

בראשית כט:כו

וַיֹּאמֶר לָבָן לֹא יֵעָשֶׂה כֵן בִּמְקוֹמֵנוּ לָתֵת הַצְּעִירָה לִפְנֵי הַבְּכִירָה:



לְבַכֵּר =
To favor or give preference to (levaker)

בְּכוֹר/בְּכוֹרָה (שֹׁרֶשׁ ב.כ.ר)

- Firstborn (bekhor/bekhorah)

בָּכִיר =
A senior position (bakhir)

הַצָּגַת בְּכוֹרָה =
Premiere, the first showing of a performance or a film (hatzagat bekhorah)

בִּכּוּרִים =
Bikkurim: first fruits grown in Eretz Yisrael that would be brought to the Beit Ha-Mikdash

Find the Word!

Check out Devarim 21:15-17. Can you see how this שֹׁרֶשׁ (shoresh, root) is used in two different ways in these pesukim? What does the Torah's ruling tell us about the status of the firstborn?



דַּקָּה שֶׁל דִּיּוּן • One-Minute Debate

Yaakov thought he was marrying Rahel, but Lavan tricked him into marrying Leah (Bereishit 29:21-27).

Debate: Lavan should not have tricked Yaakov.



How to play:

- Here are some arguments to get you started, but try to come up with your own. Then debate someone!
- For a true one-minute debate, give each side 30 seconds to make its best case.





Agree!

- Yaakov worked really hard for Lavan for seven years, with the goal of marrying Rahel. Lavan didn't keep up his end of the deal, and that wasn't fair.
- Honesty is the best policy.

Disagree!

- It would have been socially unacceptable for Rahel to marry before her older sister, Leah.
- Yaakov and Rahel were married just one week later.
- Lavan's scheme saved Leah from marrying Esav (which, according to midrashim, she really, really wanted to avoid).
- Since Yaakov tricked his own father, Yitzhak, in last week's parashah, it's not really that unfair that Lavan tricked him in this one.



הֲלָכָה • Halakhah



Learn one way the parashah practically impacts our lives

Deception

In Vayeitzei, Yaakov runs away without telling Lavan. Notice how the Torah describes this:

Bereishit 31:20

Yaakov stole the heart of Lavan the Aramean, by not telling him that he was running away.

בראשית לא:כ

וַיִּגְנֹב יַעֲקֹב אֶת לֵב לָבָן הָאֲרַמִּי עַל בְּלִי הִגִּיד לוֹ כִּי בֹרֵחַ הוּא:

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גְּנֵבַת דַּעַת (geneivat da'at, stealing someone's mind) is one way of talking about deception. This is because deceiving someone means you steal a true picture of reality from them (by preventing them from knowing the truth). In Yaakov's case, deception might have been justified because Lavan no longer liked him and was out to hurt him. (See Bereishit 31:1-2.)

But normally it is forbidden to deceive people; we are expected to be honest and straightforward. This is particularly true when it comes to business and personal relationships:

Shulhan Arukh Hoshen Mishpat 228:6

It is forbidden to trick people in business, or to deceive them. If there's a flaw in an object you're selling someone, you must tell them... It is even forbidden to deceive people just with words, by making it appear that you are doing something for them that you aren't. How so? You shouldn't plead with someone to come over for a meal when you know they can't make it, and you shouldn't offer them lots of gifts when you know they won't accept them...

שולחן ערוך חושן משפט רכח:ו

אָסוּר לְרַמּוֹת בְּנֵי אָדָם בְּמִקָּח וּמִמְכָּר אוֹ לְגָנְבָם דַּעְתָּם, כְּגוֹן אִם יֵשׁ מוּם בְּמִקָּחוֹ צָרִיךְ לְהוֹדִיעוֹ לַלּוֹקֵחַ...וְאַף לְגָנֹב דַּעַת הַבְּרִיּוֹת בִּדְבָרִים, שֶׁמַּרְאֶה שֶׁעוֹשֶׂה בִּשְׁבִילוֹ, וְאֵינוֹ עוֹשֶׂה, אָסוּר. כֵּיצַד? לֹא יְסַרְהֵב (בַּחֲבֵרוֹ) שֶׁיִּסְעַד עִמּוֹ, וְהוּא יוֹדֵעַ שֶׁאֵינוֹ סוֹעֵד, וְלֹא יַרְבֶּה לוֹ בְּתִקְרֹבֶת וְהוּא יוֹדֵעַ שֶׁאֵינוֹ מְקַבֵּל...

These rules recognize that it is natural to consider doing some of these things, but we have to push ourselves to be honest. Other ways to avoid geneivat da'at include:



- Not bidding on something in an auction just to drive up the price, even if it's for charity (Minhat Yitzhak III:97)



- Never deceiving the government in order to get more public funding, even if it's for good causes like schools (Iggerot Moshe HM II:29)



- Refusing to copy someone else's work in school, which would deceive the teacher (Peninei Halakhah Likkutim II 2:19)

aliyot:

1) Bereishit 28:10 to 28:22

2) 29:1 to 29:17

3) 29:18 to 30:13

4) 30:14 to 30:27

5) 30:28 to 31:16

6) 31:17 to 31:42

7) 31:43 to 31:55

Haftarah: Hoshea 11:7 to 12:12 for Sefardim and 12:13 to 14:10 for Ashkenazim

שְׁאֵלוֹת הַשָּׁבוּעַ • Parashah Scavenger Hunt

The answers to the first seven questions can be found in the matching numbered aliyah in the Torah reading. **The answers to questions 8 and 9 are harder and can come from anywhere in the parashah. The answer to question 10 is in this week's Haftarah.**

Good luck!

1. What did Yaakov do with the rock that had been under his head while he slept?
2. Who kisses whom in this aliyah?
3. What is Zilpah's job?
4. What is the name of Leah's youngest child?
5. What kinds of sheep and goats belonged to Yaakov under the deal he made with Lavan?
6. How long does it take for Lavan to discover that Yaakov had run away?



7. What place has two names?
8. How many years did Yaakov work for Lavan in total?
9. Of the 12 children born in the parashah, how many does Yaakov name himself?
10. **Haftarah for Sefaradim:** Where did Yaakov supplant his brother? **Haftarah for Ashkenazim:** What does Hoshea recommend we take with us, in order to return to God through תְּשׁוּבָה (teshuvah)?

* Look for the answers on page 11!

בּוֹאוּ נְדַבֵּר עַל זֶה • Tell Me More About This!

In our פַּרְשָׁנוּת / Commentary section (p. 4), we paid special attention to Yehudah's name and its meaning.

In fact, 12 children are born in this week's parashah—to four different mothers. Nearly each child's name comes with an explanation. Together, the names tell a story.

- What emotions can you detect in these names? How are Rahel and Leah feeling when they give each name? What are they learning? What changes might be happening in the family relationships?

Rahel

- **יוֹסֵף (Yosef)** "May God add (יֹסֵף/yosef) for me another son"

  The previous pasuk has a possible other meaning as well: "God has taken away (אָסַף/asaf) my shame."

5

Leah

- **יִשָּׂשכָר (Yissakhar)** "God has given me my reward (שְׂכָרִי/skhari)"
- **זְבֻלוּן (Zevulun)** "God has given me a great gift (זֵבֶד/zeved)"
- **דִּינָה (Dinah)** No explanation is given for this name, but its meaning connects to judgment (What other name here does Dinah's connect to?)

4

Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

1. He set it up as a pillar and poured oil on it (28:18)
2. Yaakov kisses Rahel (29:10), Lavan kisses Yaakov (29:13)
3. Leah's maidservant (29:24)
4. Dinah (30:21)
5. Brown sheep, along with all spotted and speckled sheep and goats (30:32)
6. Three days (31:22)
7. The place where Lavan and Yaakov make their agreement—Lavan calls it Yegar Sahaduta and Yaakov calls it Gal-Eid (31:47)
8. 20 (31:38)
9. None! (But Yaakov does name Binyamin in next week's parashah)
10. Haftarah for Sefaradim: In the womb (Hoshea 12:4)
    Haftarah for Ashkenazim: Words (Hoshea 14:3)

Leah

- **רְאוּבֵן (Reuven)** "God saw (רָאָה/ra'ah) my suffering, and now my husband will love (יֶאֱהָבַנִי/ye'ehavani) me"
- **שִׁמְעוֹן (Shimon)** "God heard (שָׁמַע/shama) that I am hated"
- **לֵוִי (Levi)** "My husband will be attached (יִלָּוֶה/yilaveh) to me"
- **יְהוּדָה (Yehudah)** "I will thank (אוֹדֶה/odeh) God"

1

Here's the order in which the Torah describes the children being born and getting names.

Zilpah

(children named by Leah)

- **גָּד (Gad)** "Luck (גָּד/gad) came!"
- **אָשֵׁר (Asher)** "In my fortune (בְּאָשְׁרִי/be'oshri), daughters will count me fortunate"

3





Bilhah

(children named by Rahel)

- **דָּן (Dan)** "God has judged me (דָּנַנִי/danani)"
- **נַפְתָּלִי (Naftali)** "I am connected (נִפְתַּלְתִּי/niftalti) to my sister"

2



- Why do you have your name (Hebrew or English), and what does it mean? Were you named after someone else? Was it because of hopes your parents had for you? Or because of something that was going on in your parents' lives at the time?





תְּפִלָּה • Prayer in the Parashah

In our parashah, Yaakov has a dream about angels going up and down a ladder to heaven. When he wakes up, he is startled and he says, "Wow, I had no idea that God was in this place!" (Bereishit 28:16)

Yaakov's dream helps him realize how special this place was. One midrash explains what his state of mind had been before:

Midrash Sekhel Tov

"I had no idea" - and I wanted to pass it by, if not for the sun setting right then and delaying me.

מדרש שכל טוב (בובר)

וְאָנֹכִי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי - וְהָיִיתִי חָפֵץ לַעֲבֹר לוּלֵא כִּי בָא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְאִחַרְתִּי.

Have you ever felt like you were in such a rush, that you weren't able to notice the place you were in? Sometimes when we stop for a moment to look around, it's possible to see more in our surroundings. Then we can find beauty, or even holiness, where we are.

Tefillah can help us do this. When we take time to pray, we slow our pace, and we transform the place where we are into a place of prayer. That can make us more able to recognize God where we are.

- Can you think of ways to slow down and better appreciate the space you are in?
- Are some places holier than others? If God is everywhere, why do some places feel more holy?
- Can you think of ways to add holiness to places that don't stand out or seem so special all on their own?

