



# Parshas Vayeitzei

מתוך "ליקוטי שמואל"

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# Thanking Hashem Must Also Include a Plea for the Future

Parshas [Vayeitzei](#)

**Rav Frand**

The *pasuk* in Parshas VaYetzei says, "She conceived again, and bore a son and said, 'This time I will give thanks to *Hashem*,' therefore she called his name Yehudah, then she stopped giving birth." (Bereshis 29:35). Before Rochel had even one child, Leah already had four sons. The Ibn Ezra notes here that the fact that she stopped giving birth was a **punishment** for not asking for more children. Somehow, thanking Hashem for the birth of Yehudah indicated that "I am now happy with what I have, I do not need any more children."

This comment of Ibn Ezra requires analysis. What was Leah supposed to say after having four sons? In fact, *Chazal* comment that there was no one who expressed gratitude to the *Ribono Shel Olam* until Leah came along and said (after the birth of Yehudah) "This time I will thank Hashem!" *Chazal* praise her for giving thanks, so how can this be interpreted as some kind of *aveira* (sin)?

The answer to this question lies in a Rambam. The Rambam (Hilchos Berochos 10:26) writes a rule: "A person should always cry out for his future needs, asking for mercy and giving thanks for what he received in the past, and thanking and expressing gratitude according to his ability." In other words, a person always needs to not only thank the *Ribono Shel Olam* for what he was already given. He must always also ask for his future needs. Our thanks must include a *bakasha* (request) that Hashem continue giving to us in the future.

Gratitude that just expresses “thanks” and stops there is incomplete. This is because the word *hoda’ah* in Hebrew means more than just giving thanks. *Hoda’ah* also means admitting (as in the term *modeh b’miktzas* (partial admission) or as in *ho’da’as ba’al din k’meah eidim dami* (the admission of a debtor is equivalent to the testimony of a hundred witnesses)). In the ethical world of the Torah, *hoda’ah* needs to include two components: I **thank** You and I **admit** that I cannot exist without Your help in the future. If that second component is missing – the fact that I am cognizant of my desperate need for Your ongoing help – then something is missing from the expression of thanksgiving.

In practical terms, imagine that I just won the big prize in the Powerball lottery. I just won 450 million dollars. By all rules of nature, I will not need another penny in my life. In such a case, it is inappropriate to turn to Hashem and say “*Ribono Shel Olam* – I have it made! Thank you! *Yasher koach*. Now I don’t need you anymore. See you later.” No! I need to thank you, *Ribono Shel Olam*, for the \$450,000,000, and also ask, “Please don’t forget me, *Ribono Shel Olam*, in the future, either. I will need you in the future as well, and I readily admit that fact.”

With this idea in mind, we can gain new insight into the structure of the daily *Shemoneh Esrei*. We come to Hashem with a long list of our requests (all the “intermediate *berochos*”) and then we say “*Modim anachnu lach*” (We thank You). Period! Why doesn’t *Shemoneh Esrei* end there? The answer is because thank you needs to include a *bakasha* for the future as well. What is that *bakasha*? *Sim shalom* (grant peace). Why peace? Because “the Almighty found no vessel worthy of holding blessing for Israel other than *shalom*” (Uktzin 3:12). I need this receptacle to receive His blessing. That is why *Shemoneh Esrei* needs to end with this “*tz’aka al ha’asid*” (request for the future). Our *tz’aka al ha’asid* is for

the biggest *beracha* of all – the blessing of peace. That is why *Shemoneh Esrei* does not end with *Baruch Kel ha'hoda'os*, but rather with *Hamevarech es amo Yisrael ba'shalom*.

### **Even the Midas Hadin Needs to Acknowledge Rochel's Zechus**

Finally, Rochel had her own child! "G-d remembered Rachel; G-d hearkened to her and He opened her womb." (Bereshis 30:22). The Medrash asks "What is this reference to **remembering**?" The Medrash answers that the *Ribono Shel Olam* remembered Rochel's silence so as not to embarrass her sister when their father Lavan pulled the deceitful "switch," at the time of Yaakov's wedding. Not only did Rochel keep quiet, she actually gave a secret sign to her sister whereby Yaakov would think that he was marrying Rochel that night, and would not protest the marriage. There is a word that should jump out at us twice in this aforementioned *pasuk*. The *pasuk* uses the word "**Elokim**" to represent the *Ribono Shel Olam*. However, seemingly, it should not say "*Vayizkor **Elokim***" (using the Divine name of *midas hadin* (judgment)), but rather, it should say "*Vayizkor **Hashem***" (*yud-kay-vov-kay*, using the Divine name of *rachamim* (mercy and compassion)). In fact, this *pasuk* uses the name **Elokim** not once, but twice: "*Vayizkor **Elokim** es Rochel*" and "*Va'yishma eileha **Elokim***". Is this not a misuse of the name **Elokim**, which always connotes the *midas hadin*?

The answer is that the *pasuk* is teaching the power and great *zechus* (merit) of "*shtikah*" (silence). The fact that Rochel kept quiet and let her older sister get married is so great that even the *midas hadin* needs to say "It is time now for you too to have a child." That is why the *pasuk* uses the name **Elokim**.

And what is the great *zechus*? The great *zechus* is the sensitivity displayed towards an older sister. Rochel was terribly worried that

now that Leah married cousin Yaakov, she herself was going to wind up with Yaakov's twin brother Eisav. This was going to ruin her life. Rochel wanted Yaakov as a husband more than anything. Nevertheless, to prevent the pain and humiliation of her sister, Rochel kept silent. The *zechus* of that sensitivity was so great that it even overwhelmed the *midas hadin*, such that **Elokim** recognized the need to reward Rochel.

I saw the following true incident in the sefer *Me'Orei Ohr*:

A girl in Bnei Brak got engaged. The father of the kallah went to look for an appropriate apartment for the new couple. Lo and behold, he found the perfect apartment in Bnei Brak. It was a beautiful apartment. The price was right. It had everything that they could want. It would be a 50-50 partnership so the father of the kallah called the father of the chosson and invited him to come to see the apartment. The *mechutan* came. He liked the apartment and he was ready to join the deal.

The last step was to get the *kallah's* buy in. This, after all, was the place where the new couple would live. The kallah saw the apartment. She was happy. It was everything she had dreamt of. Fine. They walked out of the apartment and the kallah said to her father, "I can't do it. I can't take this apartment." The father was flabbergasted: "But you just told me inside that it was a beautiful apartment. The price is right. Why can't you take the apartment?" The kallah explained that she couldn't take the apartment because she had a friend with whom she went to seminary who lived in that same building, and she was not yet engaged. Not only was she not engaged, but she had an older sister who was also not engaged yet. "If I will move into this beautiful apartment with my beautiful *chosson* and beautiful parents and beautiful *machutanim* and everything is wonderful, every time this girl sees me, her heart will drop, and even if her heart will not

drop, the heart of her older sister will drop! I can't take this apartment."

Her father said, "That is a beautiful thought, but come on – you need to be practical!" These people are *ehrlische Yidden*, so what did they do? They went to Rav Chaim Kanievsky to pose the question to the *gadol hador*. Is the *kallah* right? Should they give up the apartment just because it will make her seminary friend and the friend's older sister feel bad? Rav Chaim Kanievsky sat there and thought and thought. This was not Rav Chaim's normal mode of operation. He was usually very quick and terse with his answers. But this *shaylah* gave him great pause. Finally, he deferred the question. He said "Ask Reb Leib Shteinman," as if to say "This *shaylah* is above my pay grade."

The father of the *kallah* and the *mechutan* then went to Rav (Aharon) Leib Shteinman and they told him over the *shaylah*. They also told him that Rav Chaim deliberated at length and could not come to a resolution. Rav Leib Shteinman also thought at great length and finally he advised them **not** to take the apartment. It was not worth causing pain to another girl, and especially to the older sister.

The two *mechutanim*, who were businessmen but were also *ehrlische Yiden*, were not about to argue with the *gadol hador*. They then asked, "Is it okay if we buy it as an investment and at the appropriate time, we will have what to do with it?" Rav Shteinman gave them the okay to buy it as an investment.

They made arrangement for the young couple to live elsewhere, and then on the very night that this *kallah* got married, the older sister of her seminary friend became a *kallah*. Then, within a few months, the friend also became a *kallah*. Both sisters got married and then after both sisters got married, the original couple moved into that original apartment...and lived happily ever after.

# Rabbi Frand on Parshas Vayeitzei

Parshas [Vayeitzei](#)

Rabbi Yissocher Frand

Gematria of Ladder Equals Money

At the beginning of this week's parsha, Yaakov must leave home, the house of his parents, and the environment of "Yaakov the simple man who dwelled in the tent (of Torah learning)" and he must go to Charan, the country of his ancestors, to find an appropriate wife.

The Torah tells us that he needed to lie down, for the sun had set, and he had a dream. This is the famous dream of the ladder based on the ground whose head reached towards Heaven, with Angels of G-d ascending and descending upon it.

The fact that Yaakov had this dream at this particular time, at this juncture in his life, is obviously telling us that Yaakov Avinu had to hear this message specifically now. He did not have this dream while he was growing up in the house of his father. He did not have this dream while he was learning in the Yeshiva of Shem and Ever. Now, suddenly, on the way to the house of Lavan, he has this dream.

What is the significance of the ladder? The Baal HaTurim points out that the Hebrew word for ladder has the same numeric value as the Hebrew word for money (sulam b'gematria mammon).

According to the Baal HaTurim, the image of the ladder is supposed to send a message to Yaakov Avinu about money. What is that message?

At this moment, Yaakov is going through a major transition. If we put it in modern-day terms, he is going from the life of a "yeshiva bochur" into the "real world". In the house of his father, he sat and

learned. He learned in the Yeshiva of Shem and Ever for 14 years. He established a reputation as an “ish tam yoshev ohalim” – a pure man, who sits in the tents (of learning). He had no worries of finances. He did not need to make a living. He did not need to worry about a family. He lived the life of a Yeshiva student – a life that can be devoted to spiritual growth and self-improvement. Now he was going into the “real world”, one that would not be as cloistered and insulated as that of the Yeshiva. He is going to need to deal with Lavan, the quintessential con-man.

The message of ladder = money is that Yaakov’s success in the “real world” would hinge on how he would deal with that issue that stays with us for most of our adult lives – how we deal with making a living. This issue can become the focus of a person’s life. It can overtake a person and upset him and his spiritual goals in life. Life is like this ladder – there can be tremendous ascent and there can be tremendous descent. It depends to a very large extent on how one deals with the issue of money. It is not inevitable that when one leaves Yeshiva, his spiritual growth may be over and everything spiritual may be “downhill from now on.”

On the contrary, a person can grow through challenge and adversity. When he recognizes the challenges and the lack of peace of mind that he had in his youth, if a person can cope with those difficulties and grow under those situations, then he can ascend rather than descend. He can rise from the ground to heaven! If, on the other hand, he allows the challenges of earning a living to consume him, then a person can suffer a tremendous spiritual descent. That is why, at this moment and at this juncture in his life, Yaakov has the dream of the ladder.

Rav Moshe Feinstein makes a similar comment in his sefer Darash Moshe. Rav Moshe buttresses this idea with support from a Gemara (Chullin 91b). The Talmud says that when

Yaakov Avinu reached Charan, he asked himself: “Is it possible that I passed the place where my fathers prayed and I neglected to pray there?” He returned, and at that point “the place jumped toward him”.

Rav Moshe said that we are familiar with the concept of “kefitzas haderech” [the road jumps] from elsewhere. When Eliezer went from Canaan to Charan he had a “kefitzas haderech” – he made it back and forth in one day. However, every place where this idea is mentioned in the Talmud, it refers to someone travelling a journey in a shorter than expected time. However, the “kefitzas haderech” of Yaakov is unique. He did not travel at all. All of a sudden, G-d took Mt. Moriah and brought it to Yaakov in Charan.

This is a miraculous “jumping of the place” that is not found anywhere else in the Talmud. The symbolism of this, says Rav Moshe, is that it is possible to have the Beis HaMikdash in Charan. You can be stuck in Galus [exile] with Lavan the con man for twenty years, constantly dealing with a boss who is trying to short-change and cheat you, but you can have the Temple Mount there with you at the same time.

Yaakov was successful at having the Beis HaMikdash with him in Charan. In next week’s parsha, he says “with Lavan I resided (garti)” to which the Rabbis add “and I kept the 613 (taryag) commandments without picking up his evil traits.” Yaakov was successful at bridging the gap between the tents of Shem and Ever and the business environment of Lavan. He brought the Temple to him in the place where he was working.

In Pesachim [88a], we are taught that each of the patriarchs referred to the place of the Temple in a different terminology. Avraham called it a mountain; Yitzchak called it a field, but Yaakov called it a “house”. Avraham saw it as a place that was difficult to ascend. Yitzchak saw it as a lonely field. Yaakov,

This is a challenge for each and every one of us.

I have refined my mussar lecture to my students since receiving this letter. It may not be the best years of their life; it is just the easiest years of their life. It is the easiest time in a person's life to grow and to study, and to become a more spiritual person. But it does not end there. >From there on out, it becomes difficult – like a ladder, one must ascend step by step carefully and with exertion. However, it is a tremendous accomplishment to continue to grow in spite of all that is thrown at you. The years in Yeshiva are the easiest, but not necessarily the best. Which are the best depends on what one makes of their subsequent challenges while facing the “outside world”.

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Written by Daniel FINE

Yaakov had worked seven years for the hand of Rachel in marriage, but on the night, Rachel swapped with Leah so that Leah would marry Yaakov.

Yaakov had suspected that Lavan would try to swap Rachel with Leah, so he had given Rachel certain signs (simanim) that she would tell Yaakov on their wedding night to make sure it was her. But Rachel gave these signs to Leah (Rashi 29;25) so her sister would not be embarrassed.

But there is more to the story.

What were these simanim?

The da'as zekeinim says that they were the mitzvos of niddah, chalah, and candle lighting (the 3 'female' mitzvos) – so Rachel taught them to her sister Leah. Later in the sedra, Leah accuses her sister of marrying Yaakov when she did not necessarily want Rachel as a co-wife (30;15). Leah did not know that Rachel had given her the simanim; she thought that Rachel just taught her hilchos niddah, chalah, and hadlakas haner for no apparent reason (she did not know that these were the simanim). And the greatness of Rachel is that not only did she do this massive favour to her sister without her sister even knowing what Rachel had done for her, but she never told Leah subsequently at all. She did not respond, 'you owe me one..' or anything of the sort.

That's true selfless kindness.

## פרשת ויצא p d | תר· ע' ◻

Written by Yaakov Hibbert

In this week's סדרה we find that יעקב passed by ירושלים and ended up in חרן. Realizing that he had passed the place where his ancestors had davened, he decided to go and pray at this auspicious place. רש"י [i] based on a גמרא [ii] says that he set off on the way and upon reaching בית אל was זוכה to קפיצת – the land contracted towards him.

The רמב"ן [iii] however, argues on רש"י because we don't actually find in the גמרא that יעקב even started walking towards

בית אל, he just "יהיב דעתיה למיהדר" – "set his mind to return"? From where did רש"י get it from that he actually walked this part of the way back?

Reb Ezriel Rosenbaum Shlita gave an answer he heard from Reb Leib Lopian Zatzal. When רש"י learnt the גמ', he understood that this has to be the פשט.

We know that to be זוכה to a נס, one has to do some type of השתדלות. But the mere fact that יעקב mentally decided to undertake the journey back was still only a theoretical idea, and not yet of real worth until he actually put it into

action. Nice fluffy ideas are not what Hashem wants; it has to be real action to be worthy of a נס.

Reb Leib compared this to that which we find in הלכה that an acquisition is considered to be binding if there is גמירת דעת – complete consent on behalf of the buyer and seller. But חז"ל said that this consent is only shown when you do a certain action e.g. pick it up, or write a legal document. This is because only action proves that your thoughts of really למעשה and you really want to do it. It's good to want to give lots of צדקה and to talk about getting up for שחרית, but only the actual deed amounts to anything of worth.

This idea of putting out hypothetical thoughts into action in order to show concrete commitment was brought out by R' Dovid Kaplan Shlita on the פסוק [iv] which describes after the עקידה how אברהם was told “אל תשלח ידך אל” – “don't stretch your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him”. רש"י is bothered by the superfluous expression “and do nothing to him”. He answers that being told “not to stretch his hand forth” meant not to shect יצחק. But אברהם said “if I do not shect him then I came here in vain, so I will slightly cut יצחק just enough to bring forth a bit of blood”, whereupon Hashem added, “do nothing to him, don't even give him a מום”.

What was the point of giving יצחק a scratch? asked R' Dovid? Why would this make his whole journey worth it? He answered that what we see from here is that all the tremendous התעוררות – arousal that אברהם experienced, would have gone to waste had he not translated this into some type of action. This small action would have served to be מוציא לפועל – to bring forth his internal desire into real, tangible intended action[v].

[i] בראשית כח: יז ורש"י ד"ה כי אם בית אלקים [i].

[ii] חולין צא:

[iii] רמב"ן בראשית כח: יז.

[iv] בראשית כב: יב ורש"י שם.

[v] ויש להוסיף ובמה שרואים שה' לא רצה אפילו המעשה קטן מגלה לנו שאצל אברהם [v] אבינו המחשבה היה ממש כמעשה, ולא צריך להוכיח ע"י המעשה.

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Written by Ben Rose

Eisav sends his son Eliphaz to kill his uncle, Yaakov. Eliphaz, hunts down Yaakov immediately. But when he sees Yaakov, he has trouble pulling the trigger. Why? Because Eliphaz grew up in the Yeshiva and under the influence of his grandfather Yitzchok. So what does he do? Uncle Yaakov sells him a “Shtickel Toirah.” *If you*

*take my money, then it is as if I am dead. This way, you can both do your Kibbud Av and not murder. OH Gevaldik!!! Eliphaz takes his loot and goes home.*

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz says this warped thinking can only come from someone whose Neshama is a chaotic mix of good and evil. What happened to the Halacha that if your father tells you to murder, you are not obligated to listen? That one somehow slipped his mind. With all his years of learning Eliphaz proved that he was still the son of Eisav. The gemara Shabbos (81a) says that Torah is like a powerful drug that can either bring life or death. Learning is no guarantee that you will have a sterling character. It depends on why you learn, how you learn, and what attitude you have towards your learning.

In this case, the chaotic mind of Eliphaz that contained both Toras Yitzchok and Maasei Eisav bore the greatest enemy of the Jewish nation Amalek.

## Humor

**I asked my partner what sort of engagement ring she'd like.**

"One that's a bit like you," she said.

"Full of sparkle?"

"Cheap and round," she replied.

**A few moments after the daughter announced her engagement...**

Her father asked, "Does this fellow have any money?"

The daughter shook her head sadly...

"Oh Daddy! You men are all alike," sighing deeply, she replied,  
"That's exactly what he asked me about you"

**Marriage is a three ring circus: engagement ring, wedding ring**

And suffering.

**My fiance broke up with me about a year ago.**

But she and the engagement ring still remain close.