

Vayeitzei Wrap-Up

by Sammy Schaechter

Yaakov left Be'er Sheva and went to Charan, to his uncle Lavan's home. While on his way, Yaakov lied down to go to sleep. In a dream he saw a ladder going up to heaven with angels going up and down its steps. Hashem came to him and told him that He would give the land to his descendants, and that He would guard him until he returned to Canaan. Yaakov woke up, realized the holiness of the place he was at and he made a monument to Hashem, named the place Beit El and promised to give a portion of all his belongings when Hashem's promise of a safe return would be fulfilled. Yaakov continued on his way, and arrived at a well on the outskirts of Charan. Upon seeing Rachel, Lavan's younger daughter, arriving with her father's sheep, Yaakov single-handedly rolled off the heavy rock that was on top of the well, and gave water to the flock. Rachel told her father about Yaakov, and Lavan rushed out to greet him. Yaakov went to Lavan's home, and after spending

a month there, Lavan offered him the job of tending to his herds. Lavan had two daughters, Rachel, and her older sister Leah. Yaakov loved Rachel and offered to work for Lavan for seven years in order to marry her. After the seven years of working passed, Lavan arranged a wedding feast, but switched daughters, giving Leah instead of Rachel. When

Yaakov complained, Lavan offered to give Rachel too—in exchange for another seven years of work. One week later Yaakov married Rachel, and began working for an additional seven years. Leah gave birth to six children—Reuven, Shimon, Levi, Yehudah, Yissachar, Zevulun, and one girl Dinah—but Rachel remained barren. Rachel and Leah both gave their maids, Bilhah and Zilpah, to Yaakov as wives. Bilhah had two children—Dan and Naftali—and Zilpah also bore two children—Gad and Asher. Leah gave birth to another two sons—Issachar and Zebulun—and one daughter—Dinah. Eventually, Rachel, too, gave birth to a son, Yosef. At that point, Yaakov asked Lavan for permission to take his wives and children and return to Canaan. "Specify your wages," Lavan told Yaakov. "And I will give it!" Yaakov proposed that all the streaked and spotted sheep that would be born to Lavan's sheep would

be his payment. In return, Yaakov would continue caring for Lavan's animals. Lavan immediately removed all the spotted and streaked sheep from the herd and put them under his sons' charge—thus differentiating between the current ones, which belonged to Lavan, and the to-be-born ones, that would belong to Yaakov. Yaakov became very wealthy—despite Lavan's deceptive plan. After another six years of work, Hashem-d commanded Yaakov to go back to Canaan. Before they left, Rachel stole one of Lavan's idols and Lavan ran after them. On the night before he got to them, Hashem warned him in a dream not to harm Yaakov or his family. Lavan reached them and complained that he didn't get to say bye, and protested the theft of his idols. Lavan and Jacob made a peace treaty and made a monument to seal the pact.

TORAH COMICS

Yaakov runs away and dreams of angels going up and down a ladder.



Excerpt from ANDiDREW Torah Comics. Get the book or draw your own at TorahComics.com

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The True Owners

And Hashem blessed you for my sake (30:30)

The poor man stood before the Rebbe, at his wits' end. "Rebbe," he wept, "I can bear it no longer. I cannot see my wife in rags, my children hungry and shoeless, my home a wreck. I cannot bear this life of poverty. Help me, Rebbe?"

It was not in vain that R' Yehoshua Heshel of Apta was called the Oheo Yisrael. He bore in his heart a deep love for every Jew. And this pitiful man aroused his sympathy. He said,

"Here, take this letter and deliver it to Reb Shalom, a follower of mine who lives in a distant city. He is a wealthy man. I have asked him to give you two hundred rubles to help you out of your predicament."

The poor man thanked the Rebbe heartily and left. He had a long way to travel and no means. He went in part on foot, in part by begging for rides. It did not seem like such a long trip, however, for he was assured of the huge sum of two hundred rubles at the end of his journey. This sum would be enough to set him back on his feet and make him self-supporting, with the help of Hashem.

He finally reached his destination. Reb Shalom welcomed him as he would welcome any traveler and invited him to stay for a few days. The poor man rested up from his journey and ate well. Finally he came to his host with the letter in hand.

"I have special greetings to you from the Oheo Yisrael. He has sent me here and asked me to give you this letter."

Reb Shalom was overwhelmed. The Rebbe had sent him a message! What an honor! With trembling hands he tore open the envelope. But as soon as he began reading the letter his expression changed to a frown, then to a dark scowl. For you see, Reb Shalom was by nature a very stingy person. Generous in hospitality, a good man, but not able

to part readily with any considerable sum of money. He felt a conflict raging within him. He turned to the guest and said,

"Two hundred rubles is a huge sum! I cannot give so much money all at once. Or to one cause. Even if the Rebbe asks it. I'll tell you what, let me give you fifty rubles. That is also a large amount!"

The poor man shook his head. "I can only do what the Rebbe told me. He said I was to get two hundred rubles. I cannot accept any less. It is either that or nothing. It is not a bargaining matter. Either all — or nothing."

Reb Moshe had a terrible conflict. Of course he wished to please the Rebbe. He deeply revered him. Still, on the other hand, two hundred rubles at one time was a huge sum to part with... He was torn in two. Finally, his stinginess won out. He gave nothing.

The poor man left Reb Shalom's house crestfallen. All of his efforts for naught. His hopes were crushed. He had traveled so far and was returning emptyhanded. What a disappointment!

The trip back seemed so much longer and farther. The poor man dragged his feet all the way to Apta and came before the Rebbe, more discouraged than the first time.

He poured out his aching heart. The tears streamed freely down his cheeks. And the Ohev Yisrael's own heart went out to this luckless man. "I will give you a letter to a different chasid. This man is not wealthy. I cannot ask him for more than one hundred rubles. But I know that he will not let you leave his house without that amount. Rest assured that, he will do everything to raise that sum for you."

The poor man made his way to this second chasid. He was welcomed warmly. The chasid was overjoyed to receive a letter from the Rebbe and after he read it, begged the poor man to remain in his house until he gathered the money together. He borrowed here

and there, even sold some of his personal belongings. After a few days he had the entire sum. With joyful heart, he gave it to the poor man, wishing him well.

Meanwhile Reb Shalom was not faring well. From the time that he had rebuffed the poor man, his fortune had taken a turn for the worse. He incurred great losses and in a short while was transformed from a rich man to a beggar. After selling his house to pay his debts, he was left with nothing. Reb Shalom suffered the indignity of having to beg for a crust of bread. It was more than he could bear. He decided to leave his city and wander where people would not recognize him as the formerly wealthy man. As he trudged wearily along strange roads he could not help remembering the poor man who had visited him, asking for two hundred rubles which he really could have spared then, if he had wanted to... Those had been good times. Why had he not obeyed the Rebbe and given him the money?

Suddenly, it struck him that he was being punished. His situation now was a direct result of his stinginess then. Realizing this, he headed straight for Apta, to the Rebbe. He wished to ask forgiveness.

It was a long, arduous trip. He did not always have a roof over his head or bread in his belly. It was cold and windy and his shoes were worn through and through. How well he now understood the plight of that poor man whom he had refused to help. Finally, he reached Apta.

He went right to the Rebbe's house. He would fall down at the great man's feet and beg his pardon. "The Rebbe will surely forgive me," he thought joyfully, "and will bless me. Then everything would be alright again. I will return home and become a rich man once again..." Thus he daydreamed, but was rudely brought back to harsh reality. The Rebbe had sent orders barring

PARSHA STORIES

him from the court.

It struck Reb Shalom like a thunderbolt. How deep the pain! How bitter the disappointment! He sat down in the corner of the beis medrash and began weeping loudly. The chasidim rushed to his side to see if they could help. They asked him what ailed him and he confessed the entire shameful story. What was he to do now?

Someone suggested, "Why don't you stand under the Rebbe's window. Remain there day and night, weeping loudly. Surely, he will ask who is weeping under his window and when he learns that you are truly regretful, he may agree to see you."

Did he have a choice? It was the only way out! Reb Shalom went outside and sat under the Rebbe's window. He wept and wept, without cease. His cries reached the Rebbe's ears and the Rebbe asked about him. When he was told that it was Reb Shalom, he became thoughtful.

"We must have a din Torah, he and I. We must lay out our claims before a

judge." The Apta Rebbe set a date for the hearing, choosing the saintly Rebbe of Savran as the judge.

The chasidim were curious to see what would happen. The day finally arrived. The courtroom was packed. R' Yehoshua Heshel spoke first. He said:

"I was fated to descend to earth and be rich. But I had no use for riches and so refused to accept such a fate. I said, while still in heaven, that I preferred that my money be distributed among my future chasidim. The heavenly court agreed.

"Reb Shalom here, the man of former wealth, was one of my beneficiaries. He became rich on the money which was to have been mine. I recently asked him to give two hundred rubles to a certain unfortunate man, but when he refused, I decided to take back all of my money which was in his possession and grant it to a worthier man, one who would obey me if I requested charity for a luckless person."

After the Rebbe's explanation the court was utterly still. Reb Shalom stood

before the judge, now he flushed, now he turned pale. How he hated himself for not having realized the simple fact that his money had not been his, rather a deposit given to him for safekeeping. Why had he not used the money for its rightful purpose?! He had been a treasurer, but had misused his privilege. He now thought of his family and of how they must now live in poverty and disgrace for the rest of their days. The dreary prospect brought tears to his eyes and he wept unashamedly.

Suddenly the judge's voice rang out with his decision: "The defendant, Reb Shalom, has no claim on any of the money. It did not belong to him in the first place. But, if the Rebbe sees fit to take pity on him, he is free to arrange for Reb Shalom to have enough to keep him from starving or begging, enough to live on decently."

Reb Shalom begged the Rebbe's forgiveness and the Apta Rebbe granted it. Reb Shalom's position improved. And while he never became as rich as he had been, he and his family lived respectfully ever after.

TALES OF TZADIKIM

Who Broke the Agreement?

This mound is a witness (31:52)

When Yoav ben Tzruya, King David's commander-in-chief, went to fight against Aram Naharayim,

the people came out and said, "You are descended from Yaakov while we are descended from Lavan. Do we not

have an agreement between us not to harm one another as it says, 'Let this mound be a witness'? Why, then, have you come to wage war against us?"

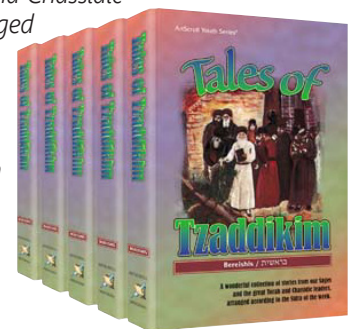
Yoav heard this and saw truth in their argument. He returned and came before the king. "Why," he asked, "did you tell me to wage war against Aram

Naharayim, if the peace agreement which Yaakov Avinu made with Lavan is still valid?"

David immediately convened the Sanhedrin to deal with the problem. They ruled thus: "It is true that there did exist an agreement between Yaakov and Lavan, but it has been violated. Did not Bilam the wicked say: 'From Aram did Balak, King of Moav, lead me'? And Kushan Rishasayim, King of Aram Naharayim, also enslaved the Jews, as it says, 'And the Jews served Kushan Rishasayim...' They are the ones who first broke the treaty."

King David and his general, Yoav, heard the ruling of the Sanhedrin and Yoav went forth again to battle against Aram Naharayim

Tales of Tzadikim by G. Matov is a wonderful collection of stories from our Sages and the great Torah and Chassidic leaders, arranged according to the Sidra. The five-volume set is available from your favorite Jewish book store, or online at artscroll.com.



PARSHA PUZZLERS

TEST YOUR PARSHA KNOWLEDGE

by Sammy Schaechter
and Dovid Saleman
Answers on page 7.

EASY Qs

1. Where did Yaakov stop to rest?
2. What was Yaakov's dream?
3. What did Hashem say to Yaakov in the dream?
4. According to Chazal, for how many years did Yaakov attend the Yeshiva of Ever?
5. Where did Yaakov stop as he got close to Charan? What did he do when he saw Rachel?
6. Why did Lavan run to greet Yaakov?
7. What were Lavan's daughter's names? Who was older?
8. How long did Yaakov work for Lavan in order to marry Rachel?
9. What were the names of Yaakov's four wives?
10. What were the names of Yaakov's children?
11. What did Rachel take before she left her father's house?

MEDIUM Qs

12. Why did Yaakov leave home?
13. Where and to whom was Yaakov going?
14. What did Yaakov do to prepare himself before seeing Lavan?
15. Where did Yaakov stop as he got close to Charan?
16. What did Yaakov do when he saw

Rachel?

17. Why did Yaakov cry when he met Rachel?

HARD Qs

18. When Yaakov traveled to Charan, the Torah stresses that he departed from Beer Sheva. Why?
19. On the night of his dream, Yaakov did something he hadn't done in 14 years. What?
20. G-d compressed the entire Land of Israel underneath the sleeping Yaakov. What did this symbolize?
21. Yaakov said "I will return with shalom." What did he mean by "shalom"?
22. Why did Rachel, and not her brothers, tend her father's sheep?
23. According to Chazal, why were Leah's eyes tender?
24. According to Chazal, how old was Yaakov when he married?
25. Why did Yaakov rebuke the shepherds?
26. What did Rachel find enviable about Leah?
27. Who was Leah's handmaiden? Was she older or younger than Rachel's handmaiden?
28. According to Chazal, who was Bilhah's father? Who was Zilpah's father?
29. "G-d remembered Rachel" (30:22). What did He remember?
30. What does "Yosef" mean? Why was he named that?

CRACK THE PARSHA CODE

by Rabbi Yaakov Levine
Answers on page 7.

1. Y S in the P of the B H
2. Y P 12 S's A his H
3. Y S a L with M G'ing U and D
4. Y was B'ed with C as M as the S of the S
5. Y R'ed a S off the O of the W
6. When L S Y, he H'ed and K'ed him
7. L had 2 D's, the O was L, the Y was R
8. Y W'ed for R for 7 Y's, but got L I
9. L had 6 S's. R S L Y Y and Z
10. L's D was D
11. R S the I's of L and H them under her S

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31. Who was Yaakov's fifth son?
32. G-d forbade Lavan to speak to Yaakov "either of good or of bad." Why didn't G-d want Lavan to speak of good?
33. Where are there two Aramaic words in this week's Parsha?

SUPER HARD Qs

34. How do you say dudaim in Arabic?

PARSHA PUZZLERS

TORAH RHYMES & RIDDLES

Answers on page 7.

1. When night came Yaakov thought it best
To stop his journey for a rest.
No bed, no pillow, far from home,
He lay his head upon a _____
2. My bottom's firmly on the ground,
My top slants towards the sky
Angels climb me, up and down.
Now tell me, what am I

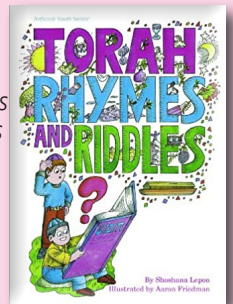
3. I met my cousin by the well
And hoped she'd be my bride.
I'd gladly work for seven years
To have her by my side
_____ and _____
4. Said Yaakov, "Bring my wife to me,

- Right now, without delay!"
But who was found beneath the veil
On Yaakov's wedding day? _____
5. When I was born my mother said
"Hashem has seen my pain.
Now I know that I'll be loved.'
She named me

 6. When I was born my mother said,
My family has grown.
Hashem has heard that I'm not
loved.
This son I'll name _____
 7. When I was born my mother
"With baby number three
My husband will be mine for sure!
And I was named _____
 8. Though I'm my mother's firstborn

- son,
Ten others came before me.
But more than any of the rest,
My father does adore me. _____
9. My father's idols I did steal,
To hide them from his eyes.
I hid them underneath my seat
And then refused to rise!

Torah Rhymes and Riddles by Shoshana Lepon (Author) and Aaron Friedman (Illustrator) is filled with rhyming riddles that test young children's comprehension of the weekly Parsha. For more great children's Torah books, visit artscroll.com



PARSHA STORIES

STORIES MY GRANDFATHER TOLD ME

The Difference

"And she called his name Reuven" (Bereishis 29:32)

R' Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, who always sought to find the good in any Jew, would parade his people's merits before Hakadosh Baruch Hu, declaring, "Israel is foremost among the nations."

Once, at midnight, R' Levi Yitzchak told his shamash, "Take a bottle of whiskey and a glass and come with me."

The two went to the bathhouse, where the town's poor and destitute slept at night — miserable and hungry. R' Levi Yitzchak instructed his shamash to pour a glass of whiskey. Then he woke up one of the poor men and

asked, "Would you like some whiskey?"

The man opened his eyes, saw the glass of whiskey, and said, "Sure, Rebbe. But without washing my hands and saying 'Modeh ani'?"

R' Levi Yitzchak went on to another man, and then another. With each of them, the reaction was the same. Not one of the destitute and starving men would touch the whiskey.

R' Levi Yitzchak then roused the "Shabbos goy," who was asleep among the others, and said to him, "Ivan, would you like a glass of whiskey?"

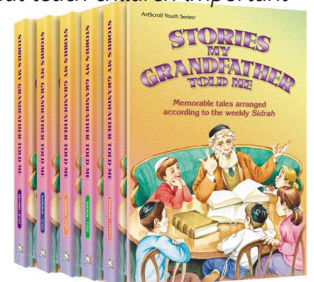
"Hand it over!" cried the gentile, and swallowed the drink in one gulp.

Raising his eyes skyward, R' Levi Yitzchak said, "Master of the Universe,

look down from Heaven and see who is like Your nation, Israel, a pure and holy people! No Jewish man will touch food or drink until he has washed his hands and rendered Your praise. Your Children are pleasing to You and You are pleasing to Your children."

Stories My Grandfather Told Me by Zev Greenwald (Author) Libby Lazewnik (Translator) and Tova Katz (illustrator) is packed with short pleasant stories that teach children important life

lessons from the weekly Parsha. The five-volume set is available from your favorite Jewish book store, or at artscroll.com.



Words to Warm the Heart

Yaakov said to them, "My brothers, where are you from?" (Bereishis 29:4)

R'Yaakov Kamenetsky once asked a question about Yaakov Avinu's criticism of the shepherds. A total stranger, he approached them and reminded them that the day was still long and it was not yet time to bring in the flocks. "Water the flock and go on grazing," he advised. Why, asks R' Yaakov, did the shepherds accept this criticism so mildly? One would think that such words, from a stranger, would make them bristle.

The answer lies in Yaakov's opening words: "My brothers." Though his message was one of rebuke, he began his speech with words of warmth and friendship!

A public issue once arose in the city of Kovno, with the community arguing on one side and a certain wealthy and respected member opposing the general opinion. In the end, the matter was resolved according to the majority view. Insulted, the wealthy individual retreated from contact with the community. He also nursed a grievance against R' Yitzchak Elchanan Spektor, Rabbi of Kovno, and cut off all contact with him as well.

Years passed, and the man's sense of injury only grew stronger. The man lived his life in isolation, refusing to attend public meetings or to interest himself in any community affairs.

By chance one day, this individual participated in a seudas mitzvah, at which the Rabbi of Kovno was also present. Contrary to custom, the rich man did not go over to greet the Rabbi or even stand up to honor him. Instead, R' Yitzchak Elchanan approached him, thrust out a hand in the most natural manner possible, and greeted the man. Taken aback by the Rabbi's humility, the man hurried to greet him in turn. The past was reconciled.

In the coming days, it became clear that the reconciliation between the man and the Rabbi would have far-reaching effects.

It was shortly afterwards that a devastating message reached the Rabbi: A false accusation had been made against the town's Jews, and the ruler had decreed that every Jew must leave Kovno. R' Yitzchak Elchanan tried through various means to influence a change in this decision, but his efforts came to nothing. Messengers were sent to speak to central figures in the

government, but they, too, returned empty handed and unsuccessful. There seemed to be no escape from the harsh decree.

Suddenly, a ray of hope appeared. Someone told the Rabbi that the ruler was on good terms with the wealthy man who had severed relations with the Jewish community so many years before. R' Yitzchak Elchanan hastened to send messengers to this now-elderly man, to plead for his help. Now that whatever happened between them was forgiven, the man responded favorably to this request. He spoke to the ruler and the decree was rescinded.

When the excitement had died down, R' Yitzchak Elchanan remarked to his secretary, R' Yaakov Lifshitz, author of *Zichron Yaakov*, "When I made peace with that gentleman, people complained that I had overlooked my own honor to do so. But who was right — I, who took the first step to reconciliation, or those who were so careful of my honor? How has my honor been damaged by what I did? And if we had not made peace, what would have been the fate of all the families doomed to exile and homelessness?"

A Crumbling Shul

"How awesome is this place! This is none other than the abode of G-d" (Bereishis 28:17)

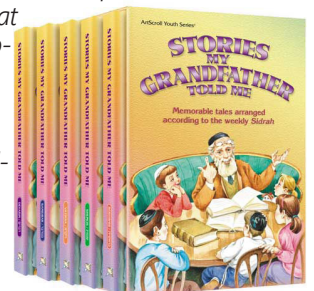
A shul in a certain Galician town was in very poor repair. Indeed, pieces of it fell regularly onto those standing inside. Once, R' Meir of Premishlan entered the shul to daven. As he opened the door, R' Meir stood and surveyed the wreckage inside. Then he called out, "Mah nora hamakom hazeh. Ein zeh ki im beis Elokim." ("How awesome — or, in this case, awful — is this place! This is none other than the abode of

G-d.")

The chassidim who accompanied him were at a loss to understand these words. Surely, they thought, there must be some hidden meaning to them. Noticing their bewilderment, the Rebbe explained, "Mah nora hamakom hazeh" — How awful is this place; it is truly dangerous to walk in here. "Ein zeh ki im beis Elokim" — and the reason for that is because this building has no owner to care for it. All the other houses in town are in good repair, while this shul appears ready to crum-

ble to its foundations."

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JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

Judy Feld Carr

born in 1938

Judith Feld Carr is a Jewish Canadian musician and humanitarian, who lives in Toronto. Judy was born in Montreal, but spent much of her childhood in Sudbury, Ontario. She is best known for sneaking thousands of Jews out of Syria. She did this in over 25 years in a secret operation. She used money privately donated money, to negotiate the release of Syrian Jews from the Syrian government. The funds were used to literally buy Syrian Jews passage out of the country. The process took over 25 years to complete. The project was performed in complete secrecy to protect the lives of the Syrian immigrants as well as the leaders of

the project. The Jews that were escorted out of Syria migrated to Israel and the United States. It is estimated that, in all, Judy Feld Carr facilitated the escape of 3,228 Jews. Judith Feld Carr has received a lot of awards for her amazing work saving thousands of Jews.



PUZZLERS ANSWERS

TEST YOUR PARSHA KNOWLEDGE

1. Luz
2. A ladder was going up to the heavens with angels going up and down
3. His children would be countless like the sand and would spread and Hashem would always protect Yaakov and his descendants
4. 25:17 - 14 years.
5. A well with a big rock covering it. Pushed the rock off the well by himself
6. Lavan thought Yaakov had lots of money
7. Rachel and Leah, Leah was older
8. 14 years
9. Rachel, Leah, Bilhah, and Zilpah
10. Leah- Reuven, Shimon, Levi, Yehudah, Yissachar, Zevulun, and Dinah. Bilhah- Dan and Naftali, Zilpah- Gad and Asher, Rachel- Yosef and Binyamin
11. Lavan's idols
12. Esav promised he would kill him
13. Charan to his Uncle Lavan's house
14. Learned Torah in the Yeshiva of Shemv'Ever
15. A well with a big rock covering it
16. Pushed the rock off the well by himself
17. 29:11 - He saw prophetically that they would not be buried together; or because he was penniless.
18. 28:10 - The departure of a righteous person leaves a noticeable void in that place.
19. 28:11 - Sleep at night lying down.
20. 28:13 - That the Land would be easy for his descendants to conquer.
21. 28:21 - Completely without sin.
22. 30:27 - Her brothers weren't born yet.
23. 29:17 - She cried continually because she thought she was destined to marry Esav.
24. 29:21 - Eighty-four.
25. 29:7 - He thought they were loafing, stopping work early in the day.
26. 30:1 - Her good deeds, thinking they were the reason Leah merited children.
27. 30:10 - Zilpah. She was younger.
28. 31:50 - Lavan.
29. 30:22 - That Rachel gave Leah the "signs of recognition" that Yaakov had taught her, so that Leah wouldn't be embarrassed.
30. 30:24 "Yosef" means "He will add." Rachel asked G-d for another son in addition to Yosef.
31. 30:5 - Dan.
32. 31:24 - Because the "good" that comes from wicked people is bad for the righteous.
33. 31:41 - Yagar Sahaduta, meaning "wall of testimony."
34. 30:14 - Jasmine (Yasmin).

PARSHA CODE

1. YAAKOV SLEPT in the PLACE of the BAIS HAMIKDASH
2. YAAKOV PUT 12 STONES AROUND his HEAD
3. YAAKOV SAW a LADDER with MALACHIM GOING UP and DOWN
4. YAAKOV was BLESSED with CHILDREN as MANY as the SAND of the SEA
5. YAAKOV ROLLED a STONE off the OPENING of the WELL
6. When LAVAN SAW YAAKOV, he HUGGED and KISSED him
7. LAVAN had 2 DAUGHTERS, the OLDER was LEAH, the YOUNGER was ROCHEL
8. YAAKOV WORKED for ROCHEL for 7 YEARS, but got LEAH INSTEAD
9. LEAH had 6 SONS. REUVEN SHIMON LEVI YEHUDA YISSACHAR and ZEVULUN
10. LEAH's DAUGHTER was DINA
11. ROCHEL STOLE the IDOLS of LAVAN and HID them under her SADDLE

TORAH RHYMES & RIDDLES

1. Stone.
2. Yaakov's ladder.
3. Yaakov & Rachel.
4. Leah.
5. Reuven.
6. Shimon.
7. Levi.
8. Yosef.
9. Rachel

PARSHA GAMES

Ladders and Ladders

by Sammy Schaechter

GOAL: To teach the kids about Yaakov's dream and the land of Israel through an interactive quiz.

TYPE: Moderate, indoor, group game

PREPARE IN ADVANCE: prepare a board before Shabbat. Make a giant board with 100 squares numbered 1-100 with random ladders scattered throughout the board going from one square to another. Square #100 (the highest one) should be decorated and even named as Israel.

HOW TO PLAY: Shortly talk about Yaakov's sleep and dream. Discuss things like the angels from Israel changing with those from out of Israel, speak about how all the land of Israel gathers up under Yaakov, and how he is promised the land of Israel forever. Then get to the game with questions about Israel that is so spoken in this Parsha. First team to square 100 wins!! We're playing chutes and ladders!!!! But only with ladders! Remember that the Parsha begins with Yaakov's Ladder. Split them up into a few teams, and create playing pieces before Shabbat as well for each. When a team arrives at the top/bottom of a ladder, they answer a question. If they get it right, they either go up the ladder, or stay at the top (depending on where they are), and if they get it wrong they either stay where they are, or go down (once again, depending on where they are). Here are some

optional questions, You can use the Parsha Questions as well as Israel trivia questions from www.jewish-trivia.com

DISCUSSION: Yaakov wakes up from his dream in which he saw the ladder reaching up to heaven. His reaction was "surely the Almighty is in this place and I did not know" (Gen. 28:16). We say every day in our prayers, "MELO CHOL HA'ARETZ KEVODO", the entire universe is filled with His Glory. Hashem is everywhere. Why was Yaakov surprised when he realized that Hashem was in that spot? When Yaakov went to sleep in that place he realized how desolate the area was. He had to find stones to rest his head. There were no conveniences there. He was fleeing from his brother and was all alone. He had nothing to his name. He felt sure that in a place like this Hashem would not stay and that He had abandoned him. He saw, however, through means of the dream that Hashem could be even in this desolate spot and under these miserable conditions.. We find ourselves in many situations where we feel that Hashem is not around. If He had been there, things would not happen as they do. This is true in personal times of tragedy and in national periods of danger. Our belief teaches us that no matter what is happening, Hashem is there. We may not understand why certain things happen. That is because our vision is limited. We should have faith that this is the will of Hashem. Hashem is everywhere.

TEFILAH TREASURES

Shema, part 2

The first paragraph of Shema is found in Devarim, we read: "And you shall teach them to your sons and speak of them—when you sit in your house, and when you walk on the way, and when you lie down and when you rise up." Our Rabbis explain that the words "when you lie down and when you rise up" means we should say Shema every morning and evening. Shema includes three paragraphs. The theme of the first paragraph is loving Hashem, learning Torah, and passing

on the Jewish tradition to our children. The second paragraph talks about the rewards of following the Torah and keeping the mitzvot as well as the punishments if you don't. The third paragraph talks about the mitzvah of wearing tzitzit as well as remembering Yitziyat Mitzrayim. The reward for saying Shema at the right time is greater than the reward for studying Torah during the rest of the day, and Torah study is considered greater than all the other mitzvot.

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