

**And Yaakov left Be'er Sheva and he came to Charan (28:10)** – Actually, Rashi notes that the trip was not direct. Rather Yaakov studied Torah in Yeshivas Shem V'Eiver for 14 years. **Rav Yaakov Kamenetzsky ztl.** explains that when one goes into exile, he needs to learn and prepare by studying Torah HaGalus and thus, Yaakov's time spent there was well spent and part of the mission. What was so special about Shem V'Eiver's Yeshiva that the one of Avraham and Yitzchak didn't suffice (See Yoma 38b)? **Rav Yaakov Yosef of Polonoye ztl.** suggested that Yeshivas Shem V'Eiver was a place where one learned that when the outside world was not in sync with one's personal values and spiritual strivings, one created a distance to contemplate and plan the next move in order to be on the proper internal stance to confront the outside. Had Yaakov followed Avraham and Yitzchak, he would not have been prepared to know how to proceed when he was on his own (See Biblical People, Places and Things "Yeshivas Shem V'Eiver 2013).

**And he took from the stones of the place (28:11)** – **Rav Mordechai Greenberg Shlita** explained that Yaakov used the stones as a test as to whether he was destined to raise the Shevatim. He added that often people assume that Shalom equals unity of thought. Nothing could be further from the truth. The multiplicity of thought clarifies the color of life and its complexities. The Ketores needs Chelbana and the Tefillah need Poshei Yisrael. Gefen too, gets its sweetness from the leaves and the protection that they provide. Both the leaves and the Pri daven for one another. The same needs to be true for us as well. We too, need to appreciate all the facets of the Jewish people. The stones fused together because they recognized the value of the other stones and made room for them under the head of the Tzaddik.

**And he dreamed and behold there was a ladder (Sulam) on the ground and its head reached the heavens (28:12)**- **The Baal Haturim** notes that the Gematria of Sulam is also the Gematria of "Zeh Kisei HaKavod", "Kol", "Sinai", "Mammon" and "Oni." What is the connection between these disparate words? **Rav Aharon Soloveitchik ztl.** explained that Yaakov tried to make a bridge between heaven and earth – between Torah and secular living. The Torah highlights that the ladder must be firmly on the ground but it must be directed Heavenward. Comparing Sulam and Oni, the Baal Haturim notes that we need not only think of our personal security but with society as a whole and we need to raise the "Kol" to that as well.

**And he also loved Rachel even more than Leah (29:30)** – What is learned from the word "Gam"? **Rav Moshe Weinberger Shlita** once noted that Rachel and Leah represented 2 types of love – and while Yaakov valued the fiery passion he had with Rachel, his long term "Bread and butter" relationship came from the daily responsibilities and commitment that his relationship with Leah represented. A person is measured by that daily commitment, dedication and dependability throughout life whether in joyous or difficult times.

**Give me children and if not I am dead (30:1)** – **Rav Schachter Shlita** would often point out to us that the great distress of Rachel Imeinu was her diametric opposition to the song "Hei'Avar Ayin V'HeiAsid Adayin Daaga Minayin. For Rachel cried out to her husband that if she won't have any children she will consider herself as if she were dead and as if she had accomplished nothing in her lifetime. Even though such an individual identifies with the past, that is not sufficient; one must have children to be able to link up with the future as well. For only a Rasha has a very brief life indeed, considering that he lives only in the very brief moment of the present.

**Come to me because I have rented you with the Dudaim of my son (30:27) – Sforno** notes that this strange story demonstrates that the idea of having and raising children was not for their own benefit but rather for Hashem's. **Rav Wolbe ztl.** commented that this is proof that a marriage can and ideally should be built upon a base of love which when bedrocked in Yirat Shomayim brings the souls together – not just the physical. This is perhaps the Zohar's explanation of why Yaakov waited 7 years for Rachel originally --- to show he really had a connection to her – not just a physical desire for her.

**The sheep that were lagging belonged to Lavan (32:40) –** Why did Lavan specifically get THESE sheep? **The Birkas Avraham of Slonim ztl.** explained that when things lag behind --- they lack purpose. That was the case with Lavan as well. Lagging behind meant it lacked Deiah and direction. We have no purpose in that **(See Derasha Vayetze 5776) .**

**Haftorah: And Yaakovl ran away to Aram and Yisrael worked there for a wife and for a wife he watched (Hosea 12:7) –** The obvious connection to the Torah reading is the running away of Yaakov as is chronicled in the Parsha too. However, the duality of action – Avodah and Shmirah – imply 2 different approaches. **Rav Yehuda Shaviv Shlita** explains that this duality --- implying both active and passive steps – is similar to the situation that Hashem takes with us too. He waits for us to get close to him and, when necessary, guides us to the proper path – hence the conclusion Shuva Yisrael.