

**And he took the stone that was under his head (28:18)** – Rashi famously cites the Midrash that the stones fought over whom would be allowed to have the Tzaddik rest his head and Hashem fused them into one single stone. The **Maharal** notes that the binding of the stones came about because each one decided that he alone had the “right way” to be the bedrock of the future generations. **Rav Dr. Benny Lau Shlita** notes that stones play a bigger role in the Parsha. Yaakov needs to push off the stone from the well and refers to the Shepherds as Achai and later a stone identifies the markings of Galeid. But who were the brothers he spoke to then? Rabbi Lau explains that the real secret of the original drash and the subsequent possukim is in the fact that Yaakov teaches us that the true Tzidkus comes through solidarity. Instead of focusing on the individual stones, he recommends that we focus on why and how they came together.

**We cannot (29:2)** – How was it that the strong shepherds could not push off the stone but the young Yeshiva Bochur was able to pull it off? **Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm Shlita** suggested that the difference was in the fact that they said Lo Nuchal and Yaakov lived a life wherein he never allowed himself to quit. He had the proper attitude that helped him work for 14 years for his beloved and see it as nothing. It was the same attitude that helped him overcome the battle with the Sar of Eisav and got him to realize that VaUchal – with the right attitude anything is possible.

**Leah’s eyes were soft (29:17)** – Rashi explains that her eyes were soft from constant crying about her potential to be married to Eisav. **Rav Meir of Primishlan** notes that she cried on purpose not to get Eisav’s interest. **The Ben Yehoyada** adds that when she saw that the Tzaddik Yaakov couldn’t influence Eisav so how would she?

**Marked, striped and spotted (30:39)** – **The Slonimer Rebbe ztl.** noted that this section of the Torah contains many deep secrets. He understood at one level that the different styles refer to ways of serving Hashem. At first one uses the basics of Emunah—to know the general rules. This is the reference to “marked (akudim)”. After that one gets to dotted which refers to feeling the Emunah in the heart – a concentrated Emunah that is liked a dot (hence the Nekudim). Yet – that Emunah needs to be actualized which it is as it is carried through the spine to all of the limbs that make the Emunah go to action. Hence the stripes --- a reminder of the spine.

**And Yaakov saw the face of Lavan (31:2)** – **Yalkut Shimoni** notes that a person’s heart changes itself between good and bad – Hashem told Yakov to see that change and pick himself up and return to his parents. **Rav Altusky ztl.** adds that Yaakov’s realization of this change allowed Lavan’s influence over him to be severely limited. By recognizing that the person he thought he was controlled by, changing, Yaakov allowed himself to distance himself and distinguish himself and his family from Lavan.

**You know that I worked with my whole force for your father (31:6)** – **Rav Schachter Shlita** noted that each person who works needs to put his whole force into his work – all following the societal norms. The gemara notes that this is part of the difference between the Shomer Chinam and the Shomer Sachar. The Shomer Chinam needs to watch something in the way that the Baal HaBayis does. The Shomer Sachar, based on Yaakov’s practice here, needs to provide BETTER Shmirah than the Baal HaBayis. The Shomer Sachar is a Poel who needs to put his whole force into the work. Rambam, when citing this rule, refers to Yaakov as a Tzaddik for this – we need to put our full effort into our jobs.

**Then Rachel & Leah answered him is there any inheritance for us in our father's home? (31:14)** – Why did they give such a strong introduction to their response? Why respond as if listening to Hashem was a by-product of having nothing else? **Rav Elya Lopian ztl.** explains that Rachel and Leah were teaching us that we are not to view listening to Hashem as a burden. They were showing that leaving was not going to be a sacrifice to them and that this is how serving Hashem was meant to be done – knowing that the happiness in serving Hashem lies in shunning the falsehood of the vain pleasures of this world.

**Haftorah: Hosea - Rav Moshe Lichtenstein Shlita** points out that the connection between the Parsha and the Haftorah is in the fact that both describe the absence of faithfulness in exchange for the pursuit of money and monetary gain. Like Hosea's rebuke of the people in this regard, Yaakov's challenges in Charan were not going to be based primarily on overt antisemitism. Rather, it was to be in being in the face of those who trade loyalty, personal fidelity and financial compromise in exchange for monetary concerns. The end of the process is Shuvah Yisrael (14:2), but this repentance can only come in the wake of the rending of the closed hearts. The repentance which occurs at the end of the haftara is born out of a feeling and situation of failure, and not out of religious awareness in and of itself. Efrayim comes to repentance only because the way of sin does not succeed; the source of repentance is not spiritual thirst, but only the feeling of failure.