Points to Ponder

Vayetze 5780

**וַיֵּצֵ֥א יַֽעֲקֹ֖ב מִבְּאֵ֣ר שָׁ֑בַע Yaakov left Beer Sheva (28:10) - Rashi** notes that the double language is based on the impression that a Tzaddik has and leaves on a community when he is there and leaves. **Kli Yakar** adds that the Tzaddik can only make an impression if the people left behind are able to detect the impact he leaves. **Beis HaLevi** adds that in most cases people travel FROM somewhere or travel TOWARD a destination. Yaakov was able to keep himself focused on both missions and was thus able to achieve them both.

**וְאוּלָ֛ם ל֥וּז שֵֽׁם־הָעִ֖יר לָרִֽאשֹׁנָֽה: The city was known as Luz (28:19)** - The Talmud (Sotah 46b) notes that the Malach HaMaves was not allowed into the city of Luz. Hence, no one died there. **Rav Elyashiv ztl.** asked how a city with such overt success can simply disappear?  He explained that a place without destiny may not have death but it also does not have life. Life is something you create -- with value and energy based on what you put into it. But if you do not put into it, it leaves you behind.

**וְהָאֶ֣בֶן הַזֹּ֗את This stone (28:22**) - Stones abound this Parsha. The stone reassures Yaakov when he is afraid. It needs to be removed when he is at the well and it serves as a divider from Lavan at the end. What is the role (Roll?) of the stones? **Rav Dr. Norman Lamm Shlita** suggested that the greatest boulder in life is that which the shepherds stated to Yakov when they said “Lo Nuchal” that they could not move the stone off the well. The argument of “Lo Nuchal” is the ultimate impediment from success. Yaakov does not see boulders as things that hold him back, he uses them to be stepping stones to greatness.

**וַיִּשָּׂ֥א אֶת־קֹל֖וֹ וַיֵּֽבְךְּ: And he raised his voice and he cried (29:11) - Rashi** notes that he cried because he was sad that he had come empty-handed. Why would the spiritual Yaakov think it critical to cry over coming to meet Rachel this way? **Rav Simcha Zissel Broide ztl.** suggested that Yaakov was afraid that if he came unprepared it was an indication that Hashem was not with him in achieving the Shidduch here. Being afraid of not proceeding in the path Hashem had for him, was a reason for Yaakov to be quite distressed.

**עֵינֵ֥י לֵאָ֖ה רַכּ֑וֹת** **Leah’s eyes were tender (29:17) - Rashi** explains that this was because she was crying because of the rumors that people spread about whom she was going to wind up with. **Rav Meir of Primishlan** noted that she cried excessively on purpose not to attract Eisav. The **Ben Yehoyada** goes one step further adding that when she saw that the younger brother had no effect on the older, wicked one, she saw much to cry about in her potential lot.

**וַיְהִ֣י בַבֹּ֔קֶר וְהִנֵּה־הִ֖וא לֵאָ֑ה In the morning, behold it was Leah (29:25) - Rashi** notes that at night Yaakov did not realize it was Leah since Rachel had seen the potential embarrassment facing her sister and gave her the signs. Why was Rachel not concerned about the lie and loss to Yaakov. After all, he HAD worked 7 years for her hand? **Rav Chaim Greineman ztl.** explained that Rachel understood that Yaakov might have decided in the future to divorce Leah but at least the public humiliation would be avoided. This alone, was reason enough for her to take the chance.

**וַיִּ֥חַר לְיַֽעֲקֹ֖ב And Yaakov got angry with Lavan (31:36)** - It is hard to believe that the man who was swindled by Lavan for 20 years and did not respond is suddenly getting angry. What changed? **Rav Mordechai Eliyahu ztl.** explained that when it comes to physical matter -- Gashmiyus, there is room to be Mivater. However, in spiritual matters one does not need to, and cannot, “just give in.”

**Haftara:  וַיַּֽעֲבֹ֚ד יִשְׂרָאֵל֙ בְּאִשָּׁ֔ה וּבְאִשָּׁ֖ה שָׁמָֽר: Yaakov worked for a woman there and for a woman he was saved (Hosea 12:13)** - Why does the Torah use the double reference to “a woman”? **Rav Schachter Shlita** suggested that there is a reference to Rachel and to Leah here. Why did Shidduchim come so hard to Yaakov -- so much so that he had to work for 14 years to get one? Rav Schachter would often remind us that things worth keeping often come with hard work -- not simply. Yaakov’s Shidduch was particularly important insofar as it would be the source of all of the Shevatim. He worked hard to have and hold onto the relationships and the hard work paid off.