

# THE KTM DAF PARSHA

BRINGING A TASTE OF ISRAEL TO MONTREAL



TORAH תורה  
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## THE MERIT OF ERETZ YISRAEL

BY RAV ARI FAUST (ROSH KOLLEL)

On his way to Haran, Yaakov experiences a lofty spiritual experience in the form of a prophetic dream. It is clear that his departure from Eretz Yisrael – and especially the circumstances of that departure – trouble him. Thus, upon awakening, he is inspired to undertake an oath (Bereishit 28:20-22):

יְיָדָר יַעֲקֹב וְדָר לֵאמֹר אִם יְהִיָּה אֱלֹקִים עִמָּדִי וְשָׁמְרָנִי בְּדַרְדְּרֵי הַדֶּשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ וְנָתַן לִי לֶחֶם לֶאֱכֹל וּבִגְדָה לְלַבֵּשׁ וְשָׁבְתִי בְּשָׁלוֹם אֶל בֵּית אָבִי וְהָיָה ה' לִי לְאֱלֹקִים. וְהָאֶבֶן הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַתִּי מִצֵּבָה יְהִיָּה בַּיִת אֱלֹקִים וְכָל אֲשֶׁר תָּתֵן לִי עֲשֹׂר אֲעֲשֶׂרְנֹה לָךְ.

And Yaakov uttered a vow, saying, “If God will be with me, and He will guard me on this way, upon which I am going, and He will give me bread to eat and a garment to wear; And if I return in peace to my father’s house, Hashem will be my God; Then this stone, which I have placed as a monument, shall be a house of God, and everything that You give me, I will surely tithe to You.

What does Yaakov mean when he says “Hashem will be my God” – could there have been a concern that Yaakov would have another God? How can Yaakov set this as a condition to the fulfillment of his vow?

Rashi explains that the condition was not about his own belief, but rather that of his children. Understood as such, this was a form of prayer that Yaakov’s children not become corrupt during his time in Haran. Peer pressure and societal influences can play a huge part in our children’s upbringing. Pediatrician Gurinder Dabhia comments: “A teenager’s brain is only about 80 percent developed... the prefrontal cortex is underdeveloped, which makes teens more sensitive to peer pressure and risky, impulsive behavior.” This concern was acute in Yaakov’s case, before he journeyed to the house of Lavan – who was corrupt and malicious.

Ramban, however, takes a different approach and comments that this stipulation was in fact part of Yaakov’s promise. According to Ramban, Yaakov said: “If I return to my father’s home, then I will serve Hashem in the chosen lands in the spot of this stone which shall be a house of God...” To put it bluntly, Yaakov is saying that as long as he is not in Israel, Hashem will not be his God. This is a radical idea – how can Yaakov condition his worship of

Hashem upon his return from Haran? Surely this is not how belief in God is meant to work?

Ramban connects his interpretation to the Gemara (Ketubot 110b) which states:

**Any one who lives outside of the Land of Israel is comparable to one who doesn’t have a god.**

Judaism is not a religion like other religions. The Torah is not a book of laws for an individual to achieve salvation and closeness to Hashem. Rather, the goal of Judaism and the Torah is to create a society inspired by the divine; one which is anchored on the principals of righteousness, tzedakah, loving kindness and tzniut – values that highlight the “divine image” that mankind is created in. Jews can, and have, create outstanding communities outside of Israel, but the only place we can build a Jewish society is in our sovereign homeland, in Israel. Judaism is a shadow of itself in chutz la’aretz, and the tzelem elokim is only fully manifested in a society grounded upon that foundation.

According to Ramban, it was not enough for Yaakov that his children be shielded from corruption. Yaakov saw a bigger mission that his offspring would be tasked to fulfill, to establish a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Shmot 19:6).

An additional dimension to Yaakov’s words is taught by Rabbi Yissachar Shlomo Teichtal, hy”d. Rabbi Teichtal was a Rabbi in Czechoslovakia and Hungary during the Holocaust, and was murdered during the death marches from Auschwitz in 1945. Rabbi Teichtal’s spiritual upbringing was in the weltanschauung of Hungarian Hasidic anti-Zionism, however while hiding from the Nazis he revised his position and in 1943 published a book in support of Zionism. He writes that Yaakov mentions his return to Eretz Yisrael that it should stand as merit. And he adds that just as it stood as merit in Yaakov’s days, so too it should be at his time: “The merit of Eretz Yisrael will protect me and my family, that no harm should befall us, and no harm should befall all of Israel...”

So too, in our days, may it be in the merit of Eretz Yisrael that our brethren in Israel are kept safe, that our soldiers are unharmed and the captives return safely home to their families.

PARSHA VAYETZEI  
KISLEV 12 5784  
NOVEMBER 25TH 2023

CANDLE LIGHTING: 3:58 P.M.  
HAVDALAH: 5:05 P.M.

### THIS WEEKS ARTICLES

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BY MICHAEL SLOMINSKY  
& YAAKOV JACKSON

THE DAF PARSHA, AND ALL  
LEARNING AT KTM DURING  
THIS TIME, IS DEDICATED TO  
THE SPEEDY RESOLUTION OF  
THE SITUATION IN ISRAEL, THE  
RETURN OF THE CAPTIVES, THE  
HEALING OF THE INJURED, &  
THE PROTECTION OF OUR BRAVE  
SOLDIERS. MAY HASHEM LEAD  
THEM TO VICTORY, AND THEN  
HOME.

IN HONOUR OF THE BAR  
MITZVAH OF TOBIAS  
LIEBERMAN



## TRANSCENDING THE PAST-PRESENT-FUTURE

BY DANIELLE WEINBERG

In this week's parasha, Yaacov was compelled to flee from Esav, leaving him completely isolated. In exile, he was pursued by his brother and his father-in-law. Yet, despite these challenges, his unwavering faith persisted. His steadfastness serves as a lesson for us all.

Every Jew holds the belief that כל מה שעושה (Berachot 60b) - all that God does is for the good. We understand that the Holy One's guidance with His creations is entirely rooted in kindness and mercy. However, for many among us, this understanding primarily resides in the realm of intellect and less so in the domain of sensory perception. We witness two distinct modes of Hashem's conduct - judgment and mercy. While all actions of God are inherently good, in the material and sensory realm, this conduct manifests in two ways: a tangible display of

God's kindness that an individual senses, and a concealed kindness that we believe to be exceedingly good, though we may not directly perceive its goodness. For each of these we offer the brachot of "ברוך הטוב והמטיב" and "ברוך ד"ן האמת", respectively.

In the future, the Hashem's conduct will be uniform, and the goodness within everything will be perceptible before our eyes.

Yaacov proclaimed, והיה ה' לי לאלוקים - And Hashem will be a God for me. The word 'והיה' comprises the same letters as Hashem's ineffable name. Our forefather Yaacov deeply understood that God continuously sustains the world in every moment, and in relation to God, there exists no past or future. Hashem is inherently good, always. Yaacov connected the past to the present and future. From his perspective, all is one vast existence. Yaacov affirmed, 'Indeed, at present, I am in exile, pursued. However, in the near or distant future, it will become evident that this lengthy exile I am enduring

now was ultimately for the good.'

Yaacov teaches us that the past and present are intertwined and linked to the forthcoming future. All occurrences and their developments, each specific detail, represent progress toward the true ultimate goal according to the hidden divine plan, beyond human perception.

We too live in challenging times. The Jewish people have suffered a severe and deeply agonizing blow. It is precisely in these trying moments that we need to fortify our connection to our roots. We learn from our forefather Yaacov, whose life was anything but easy, how to confront challenges. How to connect the past, present, and future, and to remember and trust that everything the Almighty does is ultimately for the good. It is all part of a divine plan, and no evil emanates from above, even amidst the darkest of times.



## SPIRITUAL ECILPSE?

BY DAVID WEINBERG

Did you ever catch yourself thinking, "What difference does it make to the world

the quality or amount of mitzvot I perform? True, I'll be a better person, but there are already so many tzadikim (righteous people) in the world, so what does the world need me for? Why do I need to be so religious? Aren't there already enough "Tzaddik pictures" to put up in the Sukkah?"

**"And Yaakov left Be'er Sheva and went to Charan." (21:10)**

Rashi explains that it would have sufficed for the Torah to write only that Yaakov went to Charan — what need was there to emphasize that he also left Be'er Sheva? Once we know he went to, it is obvious that he left from! Rashi answers that when a tzaddik leaves a place it leaves an impression. When a tzaddik

is in a city, his presence causes radiance and a luminous, spiritual brilliance to settle on the city, and when he leaves the radiance is lost.

The question arises, was Yaakov the first tzaddik to leave a city? Didn't both his father Yitzchak and his grandfather Avraham both leave places? Why does the Torah emphasize Yaakov's leaving over theirs?

The difference is that when both Avraham and Yitzchak left places, they left no tzaddik of their stature behind, whereas when Yaakov left Be'er Sheva he left his parents, Yitzchak and Rivka, two great tzaddikim in their own right. One might have thought that since Yitzchak and Rivka remained, Yaakov's departure would not dim the spiritual light of the place. Therefore, it is specifically here that the Torah emphasizes the reverse — holiness never eclipses itself. The spiritual

light that three holy people radiate is much greater than two.

When we think that our meager efforts at being close to Hashem are eclipsed by the great and the holy people of our generation, we should remember that holiness is never eclipsed, that our every holy thought or action adds immeasurably to the cosmos.

## PARNESS HAYOM :: KISLEV

3 KISLEV | Adrienne and Shlomo Drazin, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his grandmother, Bertha Sand z"l

17 KISLEV | David Zukor, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his father, Leslie Zukor z"l

18 KISLEV | Chaviva Lifson, in honour of the Yahrzeit of her mother, Sandra Katz z"l

20 KISLEV | Susan Lieberman and family, in honour of the Yahrzeit of her husband, Aron Lieberman z"l

22 KISLEV | Alex Spira, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his father, Abraham Spira z"l



## IN THEIR DEATH, THEY COMMANDED US LIFE

BY MICHAEL SLOMINSKY

In the past week, we have been hearing about our soldiers who are currently fighting in Gaza, along with some stories of heroism and hardships in the battles taking place there. These tales of heroism remind us that in every war Israel has waged, its soldiers have fought with extraordinary bravery, sometimes at the cost of their lives. In this article I would like to present five stories of heroism and bravery from different wars.

**The War of Independence** - Yitzhak Armoni (18 years old) participated as a fighter in the Palmach's Third Battalion during this war. His unit fought in Nebi YOSHUA (Upper Galilee). At some point he remained alone to cover his comrades while they retreated to rescue the wounded. He himself was wounded in this battle, and eventually died because of that.

**Operation Kadesh** - Yehuda Ken-Dror's unit commander urgently needed a volunteer to draw Egyptian fire in the Mithala. Yehuda promptly volunteered, speeding into harm's way in a jeep. Despite being hit and losing control, he steered the jeep forward,

diverting enemy attention. After the jeep came to a halt, Yehuda, injured and with gunfire above, crawled to safety. Around two months later he succumbed to his injuries (he was 21 years old).

**Six Day War** - While under heavy Jordanian fire during the battle for Jerusalem, **Shlomo Epstein** (26 years old), an army medic, treated the wounds of Yosef Haggual who had been hit by a missile. Disregarding calls to seek shelter he shielded Haggual with his body when another missile struck. Sacrificing himself, he saved Haggual's life. He is remembered in the famous ballad "Ballad for the Medic".

**Yom Kippur War** - **Sergeant Ram Cohen** (27 years old) led an armored unit towards the Suez Canal. The unit was surprised by an Egyptian commando ambush and suffered heavy losses. Ram Cohen started to evacuate the casualties, and despite intense enemy fire, he repeated this process multiple times. Ultimately, as he returned to evacuate the last wounded, Cohen was killed by enemy fire.

**The Lebanon War** - During the first Lebanon Golani Brigade encountered a mined area

on their first night. **Yoarm Gantz** (20 years old) refused to abandon the wounded and volunteered to re-enter and treat the injured soldiers who were in the minefield. Unfortunately he stepped on a mine himself, but despite suffering significant blood loss he continued to cheer the other wounded. Tragically, he succumbed to his injury.

Indeed, there are endless stories like this. We are a nation of heroes.



## ISRAEL IN FOCUS: ARIEL

BY REUT DOKOW

Ariel is a city located in the heart of the Samaria region, near the Trans-Samaria Highway. The city of Ariel has a population of 21,000 residents, and in its surrounding area there are many small settlements. Between the years 1978–1988, the community established its status as an urban centre for the Jewish population in the vicinity. Four hospitals, three elementary schools, Yehuda and Shomron College (now Ariel University), a cultural center, a sports hall, and a synagogue were built during this period.

Ariel is a predominantly secular-traditional city. Despite it being one of the largest cities in Yehudah v'Shomron, it could be considered for territorial swipe if ever there was a deal with the Palestinianians. This is in contrast to blocs like Maalei Adumim or Gush Etzion, and is due to the fact that it causes significant interruption in territorial consistency with Arab settlements.

In 1998, Ariel was officially declared a city. The city has experienced significant growth and development and currently serves as a regional hub for many residents in Samaria.



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## OG MELECH HABASHAN

BY YAAKOV JACKSON

In the Book of Bamidbar (Chapter 21), we learn about Moshe fighting and taking control of the eastern side of the Jordan River. During one of the battles, Og, the king of Bashan, goes out to fight against the people of Israel. Moshe gets scared, which is a bit surprising because it doesn't describe him being afraid in any other battle. So God tells Moshe not to worry because he's going to win the war.

The Midrashim explain some reasons for what was so frightening about King Og:

Og was a descendant of the giants who lived before the flood and was the only one who survived the flood, alongside Noach and his sons. It is said that he used to eat 1000 cattle every day to satisfy his appetite and that he had a grave that was more than 12 kilometers long!

Moreover, he had many merits:

One Midrash says that he informed our forefather Abraham about Lot being captured in war, and thanks to him, Lot was rescued. According to another, he was Eliezer, the servant of Abraham. So, it was through him that Isaac's wife was found. Another Midrash says that he had a Brit Mila, unlike the Israelites who did not perform circumcision while they were in the desert.

The Talmud (Berakhot, page 54b), explains how Moshe was able to win the battle:

A tradition was transmitted that Og, King of Bashan, sought to throw a mountain upon Israel. Og said to himself: "How large is the camp of Israel? It is 12 kilometers by 12 kilometers. I will go and uproot a mountain of that size, I will throw it upon them and then I will be victorious." So he went, uprooted such a mountain and carried it on his head toward the camp of Israel.

In order to protect the Jewish people, Hashem performed a miracle, and while the

mountain was on Og's head, He sent millions of ants that dug a hole in the middle of the mountain, and the mountain fell right on his neck. When Og wanted to remove the mountain from his head, Hashem performed another miracle and his teeth were extended to one side of his head and to the other so he was unable to remove the mountain.

This Midrashic story concludes: How tall was Moses? He was ten cubits (about 5 meters) tall. He took an axe ten cubits long, jumped up ten cubits, and struck Og in the ankle and killed him.

We can learn from this story the importance of trusting in Hashem; that even when situations in life seem to be difficult or even hopeless, we are never alone, and if we do our best, Hashem will take care of the rest.

## QUIZ

BY REUT DOKOW

## GRADE 1, 2:

1. WHO WAS LEAH'S ELDEST SON?
2. HO WAS RACHEL'S ELDEST SON?

## GRADE 3, 4:

3. WHO WAS THE OLDER SISTER RACHEL OR LEAH?
4. WHO WERE RACHEL'S AND LEAH'S HANDMAIDENS ?

## GRADE 5, 6:

5. WHAT WAS THE NAME OF THE PLACE FROM WHERE YAACOV LEFT FOR HARAN?
6. WHAT WAS THE NAME OF THE PLACE WHERE YAACOV DREAMED HIS DREAM?

- 1) Reuven
- 2) Yosef
- 3) Leah
- 4) Belha and Zelpa
- 5) Ber'el Sheva
- 6) Beit El

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