



- In This Issue**
- [HaRav Nebenzahl on Parshat Vayishlach](#)
 - [Staff Dvar Torah by Rav Eliyahu Zadok](#)
 - [Student Dvar Torah by Evan Shapiro, Shana Bet, HAFTR](#)
 - [Dedication, Visitor Log, Mazal Tov's, Tehillim List](#)

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Parshat Vayishlach

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Cleveland Shabbaton

We are proud to announce that there will be a mini-Shabbaton with HaRav Bina Shlit"a on Shabbat Parshat Vayechi (December 17-18) in Cleveland, Ohio. Rav Bina will speak at a joint Bnei Akiva/NCSY Oneg Shabbat.

Alumni and their family are invited to join Rav Bina for Shabbat lunch. Motzai Shabbat there will be a melave malke/ open house at the home of Dr. Jonathan (5748) and Adena Klineman for alumni as well as juniors and seniors of the Mizrahi school and their parents.

For more information contact jonklineman@gmail.com.

Stay tuned for more details.

Spotlight

Shana Alef just completed a 3-day trip to Eilat.



Rabbi Uri Zohar (famed former entertainer) came to address Shana Bet and stayed for an extended Q & A.

Shabbat Davening Times- (Out Shabbat)

- Mincha Erev Shabbat 4:20 PM
- Shachrit 5:35 AM, 8:30 AM
- Mincha 4:00 PM in the home of Rav Bina

HaRav Nebenzahl on Parshat Vayishlach

HaRav Nebenzahl asks that his Divrei Torah are not read during Tefillah or the Rabbi's sermon.



Printer Friendly Sicha

ACTING LESHEM SHAMAYIM

BROTHERS

"And it came to pass on the third day, when they (Shechem) were in pain, that two of Yaakov's sons, Shimon and Levi, Dina's brothers, each took his sword and they came upon the city confidently and killed every male" (Bereisht 34:25).

Just before he dies, Yaakov Avinu assembles his sons around him and gives each one a blessing. In his words to Shimon and Levi he refers to this incident. He rebukes them by saying "Shimon and Levi are brothers" (Bereishit 49:5). Rashi remarks that the emphasis on their being brothers comes to stress that they acted "with one mind".

When Scripture presents a listing of different items as well as the sum total of items (e.g. "two of Yaakov's sons, Shimon and Levi") this generally implies a similarity, a common bond. For example, as part of the Yom Kippur service, the Torah commands the Kohen Gadol to take "two goats - one goat for Hashem and one for *azazel*" (see Vayikra 16:5). If the Torah tells us that there is one goat for Hashem and one goat for *azazel*, do we need to be told that there are two goats? Chazal derive from here that the goats must be of the same type: "they should be alike in appearance, in height, in value, and in their simultaneous purchase" (Yoma 62a).

We can contrast this with the Torah's description of the tragic deaths of Aharon's sons: "the sons of Aharon, Nadav and Avihu each took his fire pan" (Vayikra 10:1) - not only are they not referred to as brothers, they are not even referred to as "two of Aharon's sons". We can conclude from here that Nadav and Avihu did not act in "one mind" as

Shimon and Levi had, rather each elected on his own to bring an unauthorized fire to the Mishkan. Each of them was under the assumption that "even though the fire comes down from heaven, there is a mitzvah to bring fire from ordinary sources" (Yoma 53a). Had Nadav known that Avihu was bringing a fire, he would not have brought one.

Shimon and Levi, for their part, waged a battle against Shechem, in which case "two are better than one" (Kohelet 4:9). It was in their best interest to band together and work as "brothers". Rashi explains that Shimon and Levi are referred to as Dina's brothers - "because they risked themselves for her" (Rashi Bereishit 34:25). Similarly we find Miriam being referred to as "the sister of Aharon" (Shmot 15:20) because Aharon had come to her aid during her time of need when she was afflicted with *tzaraas*.

The commentaries differ regarding what sin the city of Shechem were guilty of to deserve such punishment. Some opine that they worshipped *avoda zara* while others are of the opinion that they were guilty of theft. It goes without saying that Shimon and Levi would not kill anyone unjustifiably - they obviously had judged them and found them guilty of capital crimes under Noachide law. Whether or not they were justified, Yaakov did not condone their acts: "Yaakov said to Shimon and Levi: 'you have discomposed me, making me odious among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanim and among the Perizzim'" (Bereishit 34:30).

Yaakov had complete faith in their judgment, but he believed that this was not a good time to punish Shechem for he feared that carrying out justice would result in friction between Yaakov and the local population, as he said: "I am few in number and should they band together and attack me, I will be annihilated - I and my household" (ibid.). He believed that there should be no provocation of the nations until the end of the four hundred year exile-to-come, at which time the Jewish nation would need to fight to conquer the Land. Of course the people of Shechem were guilty but the potential danger that could result from punishing them far outweighed any other considerations.

YAAKOV'S SILENCE

Shimon and Levi argued: "should he treat our sister like a harlot?" (Bereishit 34:31) to which Yaakov did not respond. Did his silence imply agreement? Yaakov's parting words to his sons in *Parshas Vayechi* indicate otherwise: "their weaponry is a stolen craft, into their conspiracy, may my soul not enter, with their congregation, do not join, O my honor! For in their rage they murdered people and at their whim they hamstringed an ox" (Bereishit 49:5-6). Although the commentaries differ regarding whether Yaakov's rebuke also included the sale of Yoseph, all are in agreement that he was referring to their massacre of the people of Shechem. If Yaakov did not accept their argument why did he remain silent? Why did he delay his reprimand until several years later when he was on his deathbed?

We can ask the same question regarding another incident recorded in our *parsha* - "Reuven went and lay with Bilha his father's concubine and Yisrael heard" (Bereishit 35:22). Yaakov was clearly aware of what had transpired and here too saved his rebuke until he was about to die when he said: "water-like impetuosity you cannot be foremost because you mounted your father's bed" (Bereishit 49:4). Rashi elucidates that Yaakov explained to Reuven: "I am telling you why I did not rebuke you all these years. It was so that you should not leave me and go join up with Esav my brother" (Rashi Devarim 1:3). Did Yaakov really fear that a *tzaddik* the caliber of Reuven would leave the fold because of a few words of rebuke? I believe Rashi is telling us that Yaakov was concerned that being rebuked could cause Reuven great pain. While the reprimand may have been justified, the feeling of having been hurt, even at the subconscious level, could grow slightly stronger with each succeeding generation until it reaches a point that could cause one of his descendants to abandon the house of Yaakov and join the house of Esav, G-d forbid. We can derive an important lesson from this incident - before reprimanding someone we must carefully weigh all the potential consequences, for the punishment may not be worth the resultant damage, in which case it is better to remain silent. Perhaps this explains why Yaakov elected not to admonish Shimon and Levi harshly immediately after the incident.

The Gemara relates the following incident: "there is a town in Bavel called Birta DeSatin and today the residents of that town have strayed from Hashem. This is because one Shabbat the fishpond in that town overflowed with fish and the residents of the town went and fished in the pond on the Shabbat, and R' Achai ben R' Yoshiah excommunicated them for doing this and they became apostates" (Kiddushin 72a). The *rishonim* have a difference of opinion regarding what point the Gemara is trying to make. One view claims, similarly to what we have just discussed, that in this particular case excommunication was not the proper course of action, as is clear from the result that people abandoned the faith. Others see the reverse side of the coin - even when anticipating a negative reaction one may not sit idly by and witness *chillul Shabbos*.

Rashi's commentary on the incident involving Reuven sides with the first interpretation - at times it is better to remain silent.

AN INCONSISTENCY

Within Yaakov's words to Shimon and Levi we find an inconsistency of style. He reprimands them: "for in their rage they murdered people and at their whim they hamstringed an ox, accursed is their rage for it is intense, and their wrath for it is harsh; I will separate them within Yaakov, and I will disperse them in Israel" (Bereishit 48:6-7). The general style of his parting words to his sons is poetic in nature with parallel themes linking the beginning and end of each sentence. For example the sentence which begins with "accursed is their rage for it is intense" ends with "and their wrath for it is harsh". Rage and wrath are similar as are the words harsh and intense - the phrases at the beginning and end of the sentence convey a similar message. Similarly, the next sentence begins with "I will separate them within Yaakov" and ends with "I will disperse them in Israel". If so, how does the phrase "for in their rage they murdered people and at their whim they hamstringed an ox" fit this pattern, rage and whim do not have the same implication?

Perhaps the ideas we have just developed can help explain this. Shimon and Levi's decision was the right one, yet there was an inherent danger in implementing it at this point. True they were driven by family honor, but the potential danger involved should have caused them to think twice before acting so hastily. Yaakov's silence meant that in principle he agreed with their decision but he believed that the time was not ripe - they should have waited. Then there was the sale of Yoseph. What happened to that strong family bond? Even if Yoseph really was a *rodef*, which appears preposterous, was Yoseph not part of their family, had they not just demonstrated that family ties take precedence over avoiding potential danger? Conversely, if avoiding potential danger and carrying out justice against Yoseph takes precedence over family honor, then they should have waited before destroying Shechem! Yaakov saw the contradictions in their actions. He was unable to reprimand them at the time of their action against Shechem because the inconsistency did not become apparent until after the sale of Yoseph. It was only in his later years that Yaakov was able to rebuke them: "For in their rage they murdered people" - on the one hand Shimon and Levi killed the people of Shechem for family honor, while at the same time, "at their whim they hamstringed an ox" - here family honor was not such an important consideration. The two halves of this statement combined, comprise Yaakov's rebuke - he was not criticizing them for a specific act, but for their inconsistency!

There are differing views among the commentators regarding whether Yaakov Avinu was actually aware of the sale of Yoseph. What we have just said concurs with the view that he was aware of the sale. If we subscribe to the view that he was not aware of the sale and therefore the rebuke does not refer to their inconsistent behavior, how do we explain why Yaakov did not immediately respond to Shimon and Levi's wiping out the city of Shechem?

"OUR SISTER!"

The answer is there was no need for Yaakov to respond at the time, Shimon and Levi themselves became aware of their mistake the moment they justified their actions to Yaakov: "should he treat our sister like a harlot?" They began by claiming that Shechem "had committed an outrage in Israel by lying with a daughter of Yaakov - such a thing may not be done!" (Bereishit 34:31) Why should "such a thing not be done"? Because: "the nations of the world restricted themselves from sexual immorality because of the flood" (Rashi). What a terrible sin, what a terrible affront to the honor of heaven - we must fight to uphold the honor of Hashem! This sounds very noble, but what does "our sister" have to do with it? Would they have been any less concerned with the honor of heaven had it been someone else's sister? The sincerity of their zealousness was now slightly compromised. Their motivation was no longer purely in defense of the honor of Hashem and the Torah but they also wished to avenge the terrible act committed against their own sister. Yaakov had no need to criticize, they said it all themselves - they were at least partly driven by personal biases. Perhaps at the time of their act they were not fully cognizant of their feelings but by the time they made that statement they certainly were aware of them.

A TIME OF JEALOUSY

The brothers judged Yoseph as a *rodef*. Far be it for us to criticize the holy tribes, yet we are obligated to try to understand within the confines of our own limitations what the Torah is teaching us. The brothers felt threatened by the stories Yoseph was telling their father. They feared that perhaps Yaakov would take away their spiritual inheritance and give it all to Yoseph. Where did they go wrong? How could they even entertain the notion that a *tzaddik* such as Yoseph was a *rodef*?

The Torah relates: "now Israel loved Yoseph more than all his sons since he was a child of his old age, and he made him a fine woolen tunic. His brothers saw that it was he whom their father loved most of all his brothers so they hated him" (Bereishit 37:3-4). Chazal tell us: "on account of two *selaim* of fine wool that Yaakov gave to Yoseph in excess of what he gave to his other sons, his brothers became jealous of him and the matter evolved until Yoseph was sold by his brothers, and our forefathers descended to Egypt" (Shabbat 10b). Look at what the jealousy of the brothers over this garment lead to! They certainly were not aware of this, for had they been aware of their bias against Yoseph they most certainly would have disqualified themselves from judging the case against him. They had other options - they could have had Yoseph judged in Shem's *Beis Din* as was the case later on with Tamar. Perhaps they could have asked Yaakov for his view on the matter. They believed that they were driven purely by *ruach hakodesh* and that everything was done *LeShem Shamayim*. The measure of the brothers' spiritual level is clear from the fact that Hashem joined their silence on the matter. It did not dawn on people of such a stature that they were even slightly driven by jealousy.

Similarly, Shimon and Levi believed that their zealousness was purely *lishma* - they had a mitzvah to defend the honor of the Torah. They were not aware that within this *lishma* was intertwined even the slightest bit of *lo lishma* that skewed their normally straight way of thinking. They only came to the realization that their zealousness was not pure when they found themselves referring to Dina as "our sister".

PERFORMING CHESED FOR A GUEST

The *pasuk* states: "*ki Hillel rasha al taavat nafsho*". The simple interpretation is: "when the wicked man glories (hillel) in his personal desire" (Tehillim 10:3). Some explain that the word hillel does not refer to the verb "to glory" but refers to the *Tanna* Hillel. Chazal relate that when Hillel would take leave of his students in the *Beis Midrash* he would walk out with them. His students would ask: "Rebbe, where are you going?" He would reply: "to perform a kindness for a particular guest in my home." Day after day, Hillel would respond in this fashion to this question, until finally his students asked him: "do you really have a guest in your house every day of the year?" He replied: "this unfortunate soul, is it not a guest within my body? It is here today and gone tomorrow" (Vayikra Rabba 34:3). The guest for whom Hillel performed an act of *chesed* was his own soul! If his soul needed lunch, then he would have to feed it, just as he would feed a stranger staying in his house. This act of *chesed* in fact is even

greater than that with a stranger, for if I don't invite the stranger into my home we can assume he has another place to go. This guest, however, has nowhere else to go and therefore takes precedence over all other guests. Hillel viewed eating as an act of *chesed* for his soul, as the *pasuk* states: "a man of kindness brings good upon himself" (Mishle 11:17).

The *pasuk* "*ki hillel rasha al taavat nafsho*" teaches us that a *rasha* who eats for his own enjoyment may claim that he is no different than Hillel - Hillel eats and so do I! There is one major difference - Hillel eats "*LeShem Shamayim*" while the *rasha* eats only to fulfill his personal desire. Few of us are on Hillel's level that we consider eating to be an act of kindness towards our soul.

This of course was said in fun and is not the true intent of the *pasuk*. There is however a place in *Tanach* where we find a more explicit reference to such behavior. Amos said of the people of his generation: "they sing along to the tune of the lute considering themselves like David with their musical instruments" (Amos 6:5). How are they different from David? David played music and they too play music! David's music, however, is "*LeShem Shamayim*" - his music brings honor to the A-mighty and is the basis of the book of *Tehillim*. His music was inspired by *ruach hakodesh* and was imbued with holiness. A *rasha* plays music solely for pleasure and claims that he is emulating David HaMelech. He may even delude himself, thinking that he is acting *lishma* without realizing that for every ounce of *lishma* there is plenty more *shelo lishma*. How can he possibly compare himself to David HaMelech?

The prophet teaches us "the heart is the most deceitful of all, and it is fragile - who can know it". (Yirmiyahu 17:9) The heart is very perverse - it deceives us into thinking that all our actions are "*leShem Shamayim*" when in fact they are very far from that.

DELUSIONS OF LESHEM SHAMAYIM

In *Pirke Avos* we learn: "let all your deeds be for the sake of heaven" (Avot 2:17). The Kotzker Rebbe asks: what is the extra emphasis on all? He explains that all of one's actions, even a person's "*leShem Shamayim*" must be "*leShem Shamayim*". A person can constantly delude himself into believing that whatever he does is for the sake of heaven. Why does he hate a particular person? *LeShem Shamayim*! In this way he justifies speaking *loshon hara*, being lenient in a case where the Torah dictates he should act stringently, and acting stringently when the Torah instructs him to be lenient. Everything is purely "*leShem Shamayim*". "The heart is the most deceitful of all, and it is fragile who can know it?" What is the answer to this question - who can truly know a person's heart? The very next *pasuk* tells us: "I, Hashem, plumb and test the innermost thoughts" (Yirmiyahu 17:10). When a person reaches the heavenly courts he will have no excuses for his actions. A human judge can be fooled, but in the *Beis Din Shel Maala* this will not work.

"A man's soul is the lamp of Hashem, which searches the chambers of one's innards" (Mishle 20:27). The *baalei mussar* call attention to the fact that Hashem's candle is required to penetrate the darkness means that there must be enormous darkness within a person. Others give the opposite interpretation - the candle must be so powerful if it is able to penetrate such darkness. Both approaches are in fact correct - the candle is powerful and there is tremendous darkness. We all constantly fool ourselves into thinking our motives are sincere.

In the *haftarah* for *Parshas Toldos* we read how the prophet Malachi rebukes the nation: "'I loved you', says Hashem, but you say 'How have You loved us'" (Malachi 1:2). This phrase "but you say" repeats itself throughout Malachi's prophecy. Time and again Malachi rebukes the Jewish nation and each time the nation responds that they do not know to what he is referring: "... the *Kohanim* who scorn My Name, yet you say 'how have we scorned Your Name?' You present on My altar loathsome Food' and you say 'How have we loathed You'" (ibid. 6-7). "Your words have become harsh against Me, says Hashem, but you say, 'How have we spoken against You'" (Malachi 3:13). How are we to understand this? If Malachi's charges are correct then why do the Jewish people respond "what do you want from us"? A person caught red-handed with stolen goods can try to justify his actions, but he cannot deny the fact that he stole!

Malachi is chastising the nation about violations of which they themselves are not even aware. "But you say ..." is not a lie, it is not mere lip service, it is the truth! They are not attempting to deceive the prophet - they truly do not understand for what they are being rebuked. Their wrongdoings are so deep inside them that they are not at all aware of them. We can compare this, *lehavdil*, to when Hashem asks Avraham: "why is it that Sarah laughed, saying: 'Shall I in truth bear a child, though I have aged?' Is anything beyond Hashem" (Bereishit 18:13-14)? Sarah denies it all claiming: "I did not laugh" (ibid. 15). Did the prophetess Sarah who had attained a higher level of prophecy than Avraham Avinu truly believe that she could deceive Hashem? Certainly not! Her laughter was so internal, so deeply unconscious that she convinced herself that there was no lack of faith on her part. Hashem, however, Who knows a person's innermost thoughts, spotted a hairsbreadth of a lack of faith on her part (of course not in our terms, but in terms appropriate for someone on her level). Similarly, Malachi accused the people of his time of things buried so deep in their hearts that they themselves were not aware of them and therefore they had difficulty understanding what he was referring to.

Malachi's final allegation against the nation is: "Your words have become harsh against Me, says Hashem, but you say, 'How have we spoken against You'". Are we speaking against Hashem? G-d forbid! Says Malachi: You are! "You have said 'it is useless to serve Hashem'" (ibid. 14). Malachi, as we have said, is not accusing them of openly making such a claim, they did not form a political party with the slogan "it is useless to serve Hashem! Vote *Meretz!*" All the people were devout observers of Torah and mitzvah. The prophet however is alleging that in the depths of their hearts they did not sufficiently value serving Hashem. One with a true desire to serve Hashem will search for *hiddurim*, for ways in which he can fulfill the mitzvah in the best manner possible. One who feels that serving Hashem is a burden will search for the easy way out, for *kulos*, for ways to avoid having to perform this particular mitzvah.

A TREE OF LIFE

The Torah is "the tree of life for those who grasp it" (Mishle 3:18). It is like a log of wood floating upon the water, a log which a person drowning in the river can grab hold of and be saved. Will a person in such a state search for *kulos*? Will he start to calculate that perhaps holding on to the tree with one hand is sufficient? Will he reason maybe I can save my life by holding on with only three fingers? Certainly not! Such a person will grab the log with both hands and hold on with all his might! If possible, he will wrap his legs around it as well! He understands that his life depends on it. The Torah is our tree of life! Malachi is stating that deep in the people's hearts they do not realize that it is the Torah that gives us life, they feel "it is useless to serve Hashem!" When someone does not understand that without Torah there is no life, their mitzvah observance becomes lax.

The people said: "It is useless to serve Hashem what gain is there for us that we have kept His watch, and that we walk submissively before Hashem, Master of Legions so now we praise the wicked, evildoers are built up" (Malachi 3:14-15). They did not appreciate the good life of the *tzaddik*, all they saw was "*tzaddik vera lo, rasha vetov lo*" "that misfortune befalls the righteous, while the wicked prosper" (*Berachot 7a*). Because that was all they perceived, they concluded that "it is useless to serve Hashem". The prophet then said in the Name of Hashem: "your words have become harsh against Me" - you are fooling yourselves. You ask "how have we spoken against You", you certainly have! Deep inside your hearts lies this feeling of "it is useless to serve Hashem".

PURITY OF HEART

To purify our hearts and to rid ourselves of such feelings is a formidable task. How do we keep our thoughts and feelings pure? One way is to follow the words of the prophet: "those who fear Hashem spoke to one another" (Malachi 3:16) - we can help each other, if we are not aware of what we are guilty, perhaps our friend or neighbor would be and we can consult with them.

Despite being fewer in number, with Hashem's help the *Chashmonaim* managed to defeat the Greeks. Later battles were doomed to failure such as the revolt at the time of the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash* and the Bar Kochva revolt. What was the secret of the success of the *Chashmonaim*, they were no greater in number than others who took on the ruling authority of the time?

What characterized the *Chashmonaim* was that they fought with a purity of heart. They were not fighting for independence. Despite their heavy tax burden, they never rebelled against the Greek rule. Their fight was purely for the honor of the A-mighty. They fought because the time was a *shaas hashmad* - the Greeks wished to convert the Jewish people to their religion and they defiled the *Beis HaMikdash*. It was the *Chashmonaim*'s sincerity, the fact that their cause was purely *leShem Shamayim* that accounted for their victory. Perhaps those involved in the other rebellions also fought with "the lofty praises of G-d in their throats, and a double-edged sword in their hand" (Tehillim 149:6) - perhaps they too were sincere. Yet, so long as there was a personal interest as well, so long as even subconsciously they also wished to rid themselves of the unfair tax burden or of the Roman oppression, their fight could not be classified as being purely *leShem Shamayim*.

While the Romans destroyed the *Beis HaMikdash* and other holy sites and objects, the period cannot be classified as a *shaas hashmad* because *mitzvah* observance was only banned after the Bar Kochva era. The people of the time claimed that their revolt against the Romans was completely for Hashem's honor, yet in reality it was not completely *lishma*. Because there were some personal interests intertwined with their noble intentions, their war could not succeed.

This may not have been the only reason for their failure, their generation as a whole was guilty of senseless hatred and they also did not have *tzaddikim* on the level of the *Chashmonaim*. First and foremost, however, their *lishma* was not pure and their zealotness was therefore of no value.

The *Chashmonaim* battled not only the Greeks but they fought the enemy from within as well - the Hellenists. People have often asked why we do not wage a similar war today, a battle to protect the honor of Heaven, the honor of the Torah, and the honor of our *gedolim*. Firstly, today cannot be classified as a *shaas hashmad*, but even if it were, we would never be able to even approach the purity of the *lishma* that characterized the *Chashmonaim*, when they waged their war. We may think that our motives are sincere, but we are only fooling ourselves, at best our actions would be comparable to "considering themselves like David with their musical instruments".

The miracle involving the flask of oil alludes to the essence of purity. There were other oils available, but Hashem performed a miracle specifically with oil that was completely pure. Today rather than waging war "it is preferable to sit and refrain" (Eruvin 100a) - we should sit in the *Beis Midrash* and strengthen our Torah learning. We must also strengthen our level of *tefilla* and increase our acts of *chesed*. This is what will help to bring about a true Kiddush Hashem, and a fulfillment of the *bracha* recited by the *Kohanim* (and of course the *Chashmonaim* who won the war against Hellenism were *Kohanim*): "may Hashem illuminate His Countenance for you and be gracious to you, and May Hashem lift His Countenance to you and establish peace for you" (Bamidbar 6:24-25).

Staff Dvar Torah by Rav Eliyahu Zadok

POSITIVE OUTLOOK

"They journeyed from Beth-el and there was still a stretch of land to go to Ephrat, when Rachel went into labor and had difficulty in her childbirth. And it was when she had difficulty in her labor that the midwife said to her: 'have no fear, for this one, too, is a son for you. And it came to pass, as her soul was departing - for she died - that



she called his name Ben Oni but his father called him Binyamin". (Bereishit 35:16-18).

In this parsha we are informed of the birth of Binyamin, the youngest of the tribes, whom the Divine Presence resides in his midst. However, a bitter taste accompanies the birth and that is the passing of our matriarch Rachel.

"And it came to pass, as her soul was departing - for she died - that she called him Ben Oni but his father called him Binyamin."

What did Yaakov Avinu do? Why did he change the name given to him by his mother? Why was this name change so important to him that he did so immediately? Is there not a mitzvah to fulfill the words of the deceased? Furthermore, would the name give the child by Rachel not be something to remember her by?

In order to answer this question, let us first analyze the two names.

The name Ben Oni according to Rashi means the son of my pain, the source for this is the Midrash Rabba - Rachel called him by this name to express her painful childbirth. Rachel very badly wanted another son and she was blessed with one. However, this birth was filled with pain. Rachel wished to eternalize her pain in childbirth by alluding to it in her son's name.

Yaakov, however, called him Binyamin, Rashi explains - "ben yamin" - son of the right, what does the right imply? The right signifies chesed, while the left signifies judgment. Yaakov, in spite of the great pain he felt at the passing of his beloved wife Rachel, prefers to eternalize the chesed of the birth of righteous Binyamin.

Why was it so important for Yaakov to change his son's name that he could not even wait?

We find in the Torah: "the sons of Binyamin: Bela, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard" (Bereishit 46:21), ten children. However, in the book of Bamidbar just before the Jewish people enter Eretz Yisrael we find only five of these sons listed: Bela, Ashbel, Achiram, Shefufam, and Chufam (Bamidbar 26:38-41). What happened to the other five sons?

Rashi explains that Rachel's prophecy was now partly fulfilled, while the rest was destined to be fulfilled in Pilegish B'Giva. How frightening!

Rashi is teaching us when Binyamin was born Rachel saw in a prophecy that the descendants of this son would suffer much pain and tragedy. Half will die before entering the Land. Following their entering the land, they will suffer from the incident known as Pilegish B'Giva in which almost all of them will die, all but 600.

Rachel saw a very difficult prophecy while giving birth.

Rachel asked that this pain be eternalized in her son's name and to call him Ben Oni. Yaakov however understood that this is not the proper outlook. Even though the child's mother died at childbirth, and even though many of his descendants were destined to die later, nevertheless there is a chesed here, despite the many sad components of this momentous event. Incredible! This is the outlook we should have, which Yaakov Avinu teaches us in our parsha. (We are not, G-d forbid, coming to criticize Rachel and certainly we are speaking of very deep ideas which are beyond our understanding, nevertheless we are trying to understand and explain things based on the level we are on).

We must have a positive outlook: at times we are meritorious and receive a great gift, yet are filled with doubts and fears. We must understand that no matter what happens it is a great chesed from Hashem. We certainly may have doubts, but if Hashem gave it to us then we must praise Him and cry out: "ben yamin" "son of the right"! This is the way we must lead our life - to praise and thank the Creator for all the chesed He showers upon us.

May we merit always realizing Hashem's great chesed and to thank Him with a full heart at all times.

Student Dvar Torah by Evan Shapiro, Shana Bet, HAFTR

As Yaakov prepared for his meeting with Esav, he beseeched Hashem: "please save me from the hand of my brother from the hand of Esav" (Bereishit 32:12). On the surface Yaakov appears to have made the same request twice. Is Esav not his only brother? Why then did he have to state: "from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esav"? Would it not have been more concise to simply state: "please save me from the hands of Esav". The Beit HaLevi explains that Yaakov was asking to be saved from Esav on two levels - spiritual and physical.



By the same token, we often pray to Hashem to save us from our enemies and not to allow them to physically harm us, we should also ask to be saved from possible spiritual harm in this exile of Edom we find ourselves in.

When the time will come to leave Yeshiva, we must be aware that it will not be easy to retain the high level of spirituality which the Yeshiva has given us. We must pray to Hashem that He help us retain what we have gained.

Dedications, Visitor Log, Mazal Tov's, Tehillim List



[Eilat Picture Gallery](#)

This Week's Dedications

- Parnas Hayom was sponsored on 10 Kislev I'y Lui nishmat Leah bat Moshe Chaim.
- HaRav Bina's Halacha Shiur was sponsored on 7 Kislev by Richard (5751) and Daphne Soclof and family I'y Lui nishmat their father Eliyahu Ben Avraham Abba.



Mazal Tov's

Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh would like to wish a mazal tov to:

- [Dovid](#) Greenberg (5764-65) on his engagement to Rachel Kramer.
- [Benjamin](#) (5762-63) and Jacki Abed on the birth of a baby boy, Mordechai Chaim.
- [Michael](#) Slomnicki (5761-62,66) on his engagement to Tamara Rubel.
- HaRav Aharon and Malke Bina on the birth of a granddaughter, daughter to Chaya and Yaakov Katz.

Baruch Dayan Emet

Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh regrets to inform you of the loss of:

- Jason Bennett Lerner (Yehoshua Binyamin, 5756). Shiva will be observed at the Lerner residence, 8842 Lowell Terrace, Skokie, Illinois.

Tehilim List

[Printer Friendly Tehillim List](#)

The following members of our extended YNA family need our tefilot:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| ● Miriam Rivka bat Adina Leah | ● Ada Bat Miriam |
| ● Rachel bat Chana | ● Reuven ben Tova Chaya |
| ● Yehuda Pinchas ben Asna | ● Aharon ben Simah |
| ● Sagit bat Esther | ● Shayna bat Chava |
| ● Fruma bat Ita | ● Zev eliezer ben Chaya Shaindel |
| ● Chaya bat Grunia | ● Avram Gershon ben Tzippa |
| ● Tamara Nechama bat Karmela | ● Freydil Tzivya Bas Rochel |
| ● Ester bat Chaya | ● Ari ben Rivka |
| ● Binyamin Yonatan ben Leikah | ● Yosef ben Golda |
| ● Chaya Chana bat Alta Rivkah | ● Esther bat Brana |
| ● Yosef ben Hilda | ● Miriam bat Shulamit |
| ● Maron ben Hadas Esther | ● Rivka Chava bat Rachel |
| ● Chaya Meira Mindel bat Chava Golda | ● Margalit Chaya bat Rachel |
| ● Chinoam Rina bat Avital Hoday-ya | ● David ben Leah |
| ● Ditzza bat Vardit Tali bat Devorah Bina | ● Elizabeth bat Annette |
| ● Akiva ben Gittel | ● Edmund Ben Nazira |
| ● Marcel Ben Pninah | ● Shmuel Chai Ben Hadassa |
| ● Evelyn Bat Dina | ● Alyza Sarah Bat Yehudit |
| ● Mordechai Eliezer Hacoheh ben Esther Miriam | |



And of course we are always davening for the safe return of Gilad Shalit (Gilad ben Aviva)

[Submit Names](#) to the list.

[Send Us Your Announcements](#)

Please, if you have any smachot or chas v'shalom, less happy occasions, [let our office know](#) so we can keep everybody updated. **Are you visiting Israel?- [let us know!](#)** We'd love to host you for a shabbat meal, davening, a shiur and would love for you to stop by.

Shabbat Shalom,
Rav Bina, Netiv Aryeh
Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh